

“Standing Firm in the Grace of God Series”
Lesson #6 “The Basic Principles of Christian Life”
1 Peter Chapter 4:7-11

Scripture: 1 Peter 5:6-7 “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, 7 casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.”

Introduction:

At work one day my boss and good friend Jerry Wallace told me that his wife’s car needed to be taken to the shop for repairs where it would need to stay for several days. I offered to take the car to Claremore, some 16 miles away to the dealership at lunch time and have him pick me up and bring me back to work and he said that was great.

So we set out for Claremore. The problem that the car had was that it wouldn’t shift past second gear. Have you ever driven a car that wouldn’t shift past second gear. Man talk about frustrating. To know you have all those ponies under the hood and be stuck out on the road not able to go over 40 MPH.

As I drove along every second seemed to be gruelingly slow. I listened to the engine race...it too seemed to know it was built for more. I tried everything from punching the gas peddle hard to manually messing with the gear shifter. It was all for nothing...I was stuck in second gear!

I have to tell you all the grand of illusions of speeding along on the Auto bond with a racing helmet and goggles and the wind in my hair....Don’t laugh, seemed so distant as I waved people around me.

Volks Wagon used the term “Fargegnugen” to describe some experience of being at one with the your car....Let me tell you, me and this car were no-where close to being on the same page. If I had a stick of dynamite...well maybe we shouldn’t go there.

Transitional Statement:

Spiritually, have you ever felt like your somehow stuck in second gear? Frustrated because you know your made for more but seemingly unable to get there. I am really excited about today’s lesson because today Peter is going to help us get into over drive....smoothed out and running great spiritually... and what better way to start 2008.

Lesson:

I. We are to Live with the end in mind.

1 Peter 4:7a
“The end of all things is near;”

A. First, what end is Peter talking about?

1. An end of their current suffering?
2. Is he pointing to the shortness of their lives?
3. Maybe Peter is talking about Christ's second coming?

-He does say "all thing"

-But, that was 2000 years ago

*Possible all these things are in view!

B. I got to thinking about just how long I have lived on this earth. As of today I have lived 14, 429 days.

1. It has been the same way day in and day out for all my time.

-The sun rises ever day and goes down in the evening.

-I eat everyday, unless sick

-My eyes open everyday

-An Lord willing at 10:00pm I am in bed.

2. It's real easy for me to expect the same will continue to happen tomorrow and the next day also.

C. It seems to me that Peter is telling us here to live with the end in mind.

1. This is a key for successful Christians.
2. Dr. Dan McCarrin, a friend of mine shared this idea with me of living your life with the end result in mind.

-So, taking this seriously, I sat down and wrote my own funeral

-Its true I've been to my own funeral

-I know its really weird.....maybe even sick

-But, I even wrote the Epitaph for my head stone.

*I know it sounds creepy but as a result of seeing the end of my life...I understood better where I was and where I wanted to go.

*With my own end in view I wrote a personal mission statement for my life and it is on the wall of my office above my desk.

-I read it once in a while to remind me of my focus

3. With the end in mind.....

-When my dad understood he was going to die from his cancer.

-He lived differently each day

-He actually put to words thoughts usually keep to himself.

-He didn't miss a chance to say I love you

-He even went to the Tulsa Fair

*But the important thing was his relationship with God increased daily....we could all see it in him.

-And in a final letter to the family, which mom found a few months ago. Besides some personal things for mom he wanted the whole family to "Keep the faith...he said it's all that really matters in the end."

4. Church, what I am saying is that living with the end in mind changes the way you live today.

-It helps you see what is really important and what is not.

-It helps you stay on the path toward heaven

-And it draws you closer to God

5. Its no wonder that so many times in the New Testament that God basically tells us to live with the end in mind.

***We must live with the end in mind!**

II. We are to guard our relationship with God.

1 Peter 4:7b

"...therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer."

A. Here Peter is talking about our relationship with God. And at the root of relationships is both listening and talking.

B. So, Peter says for the purpose of talking to God, which is prayer, there are two things that are vitally important.

*The NIV does a good job here with these words!

1. First of all be Clear minded.

a. Do you ever find it hard to stay focused while you are praying?

- Maybe work is on your mind
- Money problems
- Difficulty with your kids
- Marriage or relationship problems
- Maybe your tired.

*Things get in the way and you just can't seem to stay focused.

b. Satan love to cloud your mind with lots of worries, problems and concerns because this breaks down your opportunity to share and reveal your heart to God and grow your relationship with Him.

c. Keeping a clear mind for prayer doesn't come easy

-First, we must plan our prayer time responsibly

- Not when the kids are rowdy and need attention
- Not when you know the phone will ring soon
- Not when you have an appointment to keep.
- Not when your spouse needs attention
- Not when we are tired

*Falling asleep on God

*But when its quite and full concentration can be given

-That's what we do, we make time for the things we care about.

***In 2008 we need to stop limiting our relationship with God because of our busy schedules.**

d. Then, clearness of thought demands simplification. Ron shared with us his mission trip to Kristmas Island. He mentioned how much happier they were because they didn't have all the luxuries of life vying for their time and attention.

-Maybe, for the sake of our relationship with our Father in heaven we need to make some adjustments. Maybe we need to cancel some meetings, maybe we need to give up some extra work that takes us away from God, maybe we need to get rid of some hobbies or activities that we have put in place of time with God.

e. Church, the fact is that God wants our undivided attention!

2. Secondly prayer requires, Self Controlled.

a. Self control involves taking ownership and responsibility for our thoughts and actions.

-First we need to own up to and admit to the Father what is hampering our prayers....the thoughts that are getting in the way and ask Him to help us.

-We must own up to our weakness and resolve to correct them.

-Not saying I can't help

-Even confessing it to our brethren if needed.

-So, we need to take charge of our minds.

-God has given us the ability to control our thoughts

2 Corinthians 10:5

"We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,"

-He has given us the ability to focus in on things.

-The bottom line is that we make a choice to focus on the things that are important to us.

-i.e. Self control involves priority.

-God wants to be a priority in our lives.

-In other words, I might miss some sleep or I might get fired but I will make time for my God in prayer....resolving that nothing will keep me from it. Like Daniel in the Old Testament.

***Church if we are going to build a relationship with God, we must take seriously our charge to guard our prayer life.**

III. We are Above all to Love each other

1 Peter 4:8

“Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another...”

A. Then Peter makes this sweeping statement...

-“Above all”

- More than work
- More than family
- More than pleasures
- More than sacrifice

***ABOVE EVERYTHING!**

B. Love each other

a. Have we run into that statement anywhere else in scriptures?

- Our study of John Epistles has the Love one another topics.
- The Apostle Paul give a whole Chapter on love in 1 Cor. 13
- And love is the binding thread of the New Testament

b. Here Peter clearly adds that our love for each other is to be fervent or deep

-The ocean is often referred to the deep...in Genesis chapter 1

-The idea is that it is boundless

-The bottom so far awaythat it really doesn't even matter.

-The volume so vast that it boggles the mind.

-i.e. its is huge, enormous and overwhelming.

c. Church this is how we are to love each other.

-Enormously

-Jesus loved us enormously on the cross and it changed the world.

-When we love each other enormously it will change our lives.

d. Peter goes on to say that "...love covers a multitude of sins."

-This draws our mind back to the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross

-He reminds us that it was Love for us that flowed from His veins and covered our sins.

-In the same way love promotes righteousness and stops sin in its tracks.

-Love provides

-Patients and understanding

-Promotes opportunities

-Love builds relationships

*Ultimately Love puts out the fires of sin!

***We must love each other deeply**

IV. We are to be excited about each other

1 Peter 4:9

"Be hospitable to one another without complaint."

A. In view here is our relationship with other people.

B. God wants us to be hospitable

-Hospitality has to do with being fond of guests

-We are supposed to be inviting to each other

-Glad to see each other coming.

C. Not with the mindset of tolerating each other because we have to

-Merely putting up with each other

*Sighing under our breaths

*Or cutting each other down behind our backs

D. But, truly caring for each other

-Taking ourselves out of view

-Considering others as more important than ourselves Phil 2:3

- D. We should be excited like a puppy dog who meets us at the door glad that we are home.

***Church God calls us to have a fond, genuine affection for each other**

V. And we are recognize our gifts and use them for service

1 Peter 4:10

“As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”

- A. God has individually given each of us gifts

-1 Cor 12:12ff

- Good at leading songs
- Voices wonderful prayers
- Some ladies bake wonderful breads for visitors
- Sandy Ingle Knows how to put all those power point announcements together.
- Class teachers connect with the kids
- Deep thinker
- Encouragers

*All gifts

- B. We need to find our gift and use it

*After all God has assigned it to us

-Perhaps we even tend to forget that we will be accountable for our gifts...

-They are not electives left for us as options....

*They are for employment in kingdom business

-Sometimes I find myself trying to do to many things and then I forget to give specific attention to my own gifts.

-I end up being the Jack of All Trades and the master of none.

-Have you been there?

-We need to stop dabble in many things and excel in God's gifts in our lives.

C. God's gifts have a general purpose and that is the serving of others.

-Church, i.e. we are built to have an outward focus.

-Like Jesus in one of the most profound teachings of the New Testament in John 13, we too need to gird ourselves with a towel and wash each others feet.

-His purpose was to serve Matt 20:28

-We are to be faithful stewards of God's grace.

***We must put our gifts to work in kingdom service**

VI. Then, we are to let God flow through us

1 Peter 4:11a

"Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies;..."

A. When we speak it needs to be in consideration of what God would have us say.

-And we know what God would have us to say be familiarizing ourselves with His word.

B. When we serve

-It won't always be easy

-But, God will supply the strength

***We must let God flow through us!**

Conclusion:

1 Peter 4:11b

"...so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

1. Live with the end in mind
2. Guard your relationship with God
3. Love each other deeply
4. Be excited about each other
5. Recognize our gifts and use them for service
6. Let God flow through us

*Would you like to spiritually shift gears today in 2008?