

Back To Basics

Sunday, October 23, 2022

One of the hardest things as a pastor is to watch people - especially young people, but people of any age - come into a relationship with God, begin to grow, be on fire for Him, and then over time - or sometimes immediately without warning - grow cold in their relationship with Him, walk away from the church and many times their faith as a whole.

We often talk among ourselves (pastors, youth pastors, children's pastors, leaders in the church) and wonder what happened? Where is the love for God that we witnessed in their lives? Where is the seeds of faith that were carefully planted and watered for years?

A couple of verses, that one of our missionaries shared in a recent newsletter, grabbed my attention this week and the Holy Spirit began to speak to my heart about getting back to basics

Hosea 6:1-3 (NLT)

1 "Come, let us return to the Lord.

2 ...so that we may live in his presence.

3 Oh, that we might know the Lord! Let us press on to know him.

Hosea 10:12

12 Sow righteousness for yourselves, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, until he comes and showers his righteousness on you.

For the next five weeks I want us to get back to the basics of what it means to follow Christ... to evaluate where we are at... to *return to the Lord*... no matter how little or how much we may have wandered from Him.... To truly *know* Him and *live in his Presence*. To *press on to know Him* even more... To... *Sow righteousness*... To *reap the fruit of unfailing love*... To *break up unplowed ground*... To *seek the Lord, until he comes*.

As we talk about getting **BACK TO BASICS**, I would like for you to keep the picture of Basic Training (Boot Camp) in mind as an illustration of what we need to do

BASIC TRAINING

Army Basic Training

Basic Training (BCT), consists of the first ten weeks of the total Army Basic Training period. This is where individuals learn about the fundamentals of being a soldier, from combat techniques to the proper way to address a superior. Army Basic Training is also where individuals undergo rigorous physical training to prepare their bodies and their minds for the eventual physical and mental strain of combat. One of the most difficult and essential lessons learned in Army Basic Training is self-discipline, as it introduces prospective soldiers to a strict daily schedule that entails many duties and high expectations for which most civilians are not immediately ready.

Basic Combat Training is divided into 3 parts, each lasting 3 weeks:

- [Red Phase – Weeks 1, 2, and 3](#)

During Red Phase, recruits are subject to “Total Control”, meaning their every action is monitored and constantly corrected by drill sergeants. As may be expected, recruits are often subjected to group “corrective action” for even minor infractions. The purpose of red phase being to develop an acute attention to detail as well as foster a sense of common responsibility among the unit.

- [White Phase – Weeks 4, 5, and 6](#)

“White Phase”, is where soldiers begin actually firing weapons.

Additionally, there is continual, intense physical training, as well as drill and ceremony training. At the conclusion of White Phase, soldiers are expected to demonstrate proficiency with the various weaponry in which they trained,

- [Blue Phase – Weeks 7, 8, and 9](#)

“Blue Phase” or “Warrior Phase” is the culmination and the most challenging of all the training phases. During this phase, there is a final official PT test. Those that pass will move on to “field problems” (camping) and FTX (Field Training Exercises), such as nighttime combat operations and MOUT (Military Operations in Urban Terrain) training. There is no access to the dining facility during these exercises, so meals are given in the form of either MREs (Meal Ready to Eat). Drill sergeants will make much of this an adversarial process, working against the recruits in many of the night operations, trying to foil plans, etc. Week 2 of Blue Phase (the 8th week of Basic Training) culminates in a special tactical FTX (Field Training Exercise), during which the drill sergeants will advise, but allow recruit platoon leaders and squad

leaders to exercise primary decision-making. They attempt to make virtually every one of these exercises different. Because being a soldier is potentially an extremely hazardous job, recruits must demonstrate extreme aggression and fearlessness, tempered by intelligence and common sense. Only those that demonstrate these vital attributes will be permitted to move on to AIT. (Advanced Individual Training)

You've been recruited by the one who wants you in His family. Your decision to believe in Him and follow Him was your signature stating I am your recruit. I want to belong to your family. I am ready to follow you and receive your training

Matthew 28:18-20

18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **19** Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20** and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Jesus told his disciples to recruit people for the Kingdom of God. He told them to let them know that He wants a relationship with them (make disciples... baptizing them... I am with you always) and then he said teach them to obey my commands. Train them how to walk in that relationship

Which brings up another point... Just as it is in Basic Training... You don't get to make up the rules... And you don't get to pick and choose which ones you will follow...

Illustration: Samantha singing... "I am a C... I am a CH... (and then proceeded to sing the wrong letters) When I corrected her she said, "Well that's the way I sing it." I thought, that's what so many people do with Christianity. They pick and choose and make up their own version to suit their desires.

The Basics Begin by understanding...

It's All About Relationship

Hosea is all about relationship... Return to the Lord... Live in His presence... Hosea was a living parable to God's love and desire to have relationship with His people.

In Revelation The Spirit of God also calls us to remember or return to the basics of a relationship with God

Revelation 2:1-7

2 “To the angel of the church in Ephesus write:

These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands. 2 I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. 3 You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.

4 Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. 5 Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. 6 But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

7 Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

Maybe you have heard someone says we need to focus on our relationship. Our faith walk begins as we come to realize that God wants a relationship with us and through Jesus has made a way for that to be possible

He's a real God who meets real people in real ways... He wants to have a real relationship with you

But you can't regain what you never had... You can't restore what was never there

IT'S A TRANSFORMING RELATIONSHIP

When I think of transformation I think of...

Mary Magdalene in who there were seven demons, but after Jesus delivered her and set her free became one of the most faithful of His followers, who loved Him so much that she was one of the first ones to the tomb and the first one to see the resurrected Christ...

When I think of transformation I think of...

The Demoniac who had a legion of demons and ran naked and crazy among the tombs screaming and crying, cutting himself and unable to be restrained. Yet after he met Jesus, his life was transformed and he sat clothed and in his right mind. His

deepest desire was to go with the one who transformed his life; but Jesus told him to go and tell others about the relationship that God wanted to have with them

Mark 5:19-20

19 Jesus did not let him, but said, “Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.” 20 So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.

When I think of Transformation I think of Paul's words to the Corinthian believers...

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

9 ..Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men 10 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Getting back to basics means remembering what God did for us and how He has transformed us and wants to continue to transform us.

(the height from which we have fallen)

Romans 12:2 (NLT)

2 Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

IT'S A PASSIONATE RELATIONSHIP

God's passion for us, but also our passion for God

Jeremiah 31:3

3 ...I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness.

Ephesians 3:17-19

17 ...I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18 may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Mark 12:30

30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'

The believers in Ephesus were still doing things for God; but it seems that the passion and excitement of their relationship was missing. (Forsaken the love you had) They were simply going through the motions.

Getting back to basics means reigniting our passion for God

IT'S A PRIORITIZED RELATIONSHIP

The spirit told the Ephesian believers that they had forsaken their first love. Getting back to basics means putting God first in our lives.

What is more important than Jesus?

Matthew 16:24 (NLT)

24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me.

Getting back to basics means recognizing and thanking God for the transformation He has already made in our lives and giving Him permission to continue the transformation process. Getting back to basics means evaluating the level of our passion for Christ and when we find it waning, recommitting ourselves to loving God with ALL of our heart, soul, mind and strength and, like David, asking God to "restore the joy of our salvation and to renew a right spirit within us." (Psalm 51:12). It involves worshipping Him and telling Him how much we love and living it out on a daily basis. Getting back to basics means being honest about our priorities and make sure our relationship with Him is at the top of the list.