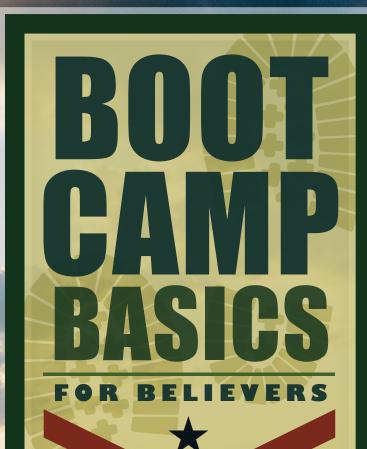


SERMON GUIDE



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## **Bootcamp Basics For Believers - Part 1**

Ephesians 2:8-9

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Some of my most vivid memories from my childhood come from when I played football. I remember being so excited when I finally got the chance to suit up in junior high to play tackle football. But before the season began, I had to make sure I had all of the right equipment. I had to get cleats, shoulder pads, a helmet, a mouth guard. Each piece of equipment was important for success and protection as I played football. In a lot of ways, suiting up to play football is similar to suiting up as believers. The Bible talks about how as followers of Jesus, we are always in the midst of a spiritual battle. We are fighting against unseen forces every day to further the Kingdom of God and push back against the enemy. If we are going to be successful in this battle, it is important that we suit up. And to suit up correctly and effectively, we have to understand where we fit on God's team. Let's take a look at three things that are true of us as members of God's army.

#### **KEY POINTS**

# 1. We must understand we are sinners in need of God's forgiveness.

In Ephesians 2:8-9, Paul says, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast." These verses make it clear that we are only able to be followers of God by grace. We have done nothing to earn a spot in His family. In fact, the only thing we're capable of doing correctly is sinning. The only way to be forgiven of our sin is to have an encounter with Jesus Christ. Once we acknowledge this truth, we begin to gain a better understanding of who we are in Christ.

# 2. We must understand that we have the offer of salvation through Jesus Christ.

When we look at the second chapter of Ephesians, it teaches us that not only are we in desperate need of God's forgiveness, but we have the offer of salvation through Jesus. He is the only one who can change us, transform us, and redeem us.

We haven't earned His love. We don't deserve His love, but God still loves us, and He cares about us. When we experience that draw from the Holy Spirit, we must turn from sin and place our faith in Christ. We can then receive God's grace and experience God's love.

# **Bootcamp Basics For Believers - Part 1**

Ephesians 2:8-9

# 3. We must understand that we must have a life-changing encounter with Christ.

Do you remember the day when you were headed in one direction, had an encounter with Christ, and turned in the opposite direction? You gave control of your life to Him, turned from your sin, and placed all of your faith in Him. You must have a lifechanging encounter if you want to become a Christian, if you want to join Him in His battle against the enemy.

Romans 10:13 says, *"For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."* God has not made the most important decision in your life difficult. He has made it easy! All He wants you to do is call out to Him and invite Christ to be the Lord of your life. My prayer is that if you haven't already made this decision, that today would be the day you turn from your sin and place your faith in Him. I promise it will be the best decision you will ever make.

# **Bootcamp Basics For Believers - Part 1**

Ephesians 2:8-9

- 1. Do you find yourself trying to earn God's forgiveness in your own strength?
- 2. Have you accepted Jesus' free gift of salvation? If so, is there someone you can share the good news of this gift with who may not have received it yet?
- 3. When did your life-changing encounter with Christ take place?

## **Bootcamp Basics For Believers - Part 2**

2 Timothy 3:12

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Have you ever trained for something before? Maybe you trained to run a race, or to play a sport, or compete in an event. Whatever the case may be, the training most likely wasn't easy. It was strenuous and difficult, possibly even painful. You had to push yourself further than you thought you could go for the sake of preparing your body and your mind for the upcoming challenge. As believers, we have training to do as well. We have to be prepared spiritually, mentally, and emotionally for all that we will face as we follow Christ. The Christian life is no cake walk. We will face difficulties and obstacles along the way, which is why we can't skip out on training, learning, and becoming disciples if we want to walk out our faith well. There are several truths that apply to us as followers of Jesus when it comes to the tough times we will face in our lives, and I want us to look at a few of those today.

#### **KEY POINTS**

#### 1. You must get ready to walk in the face of persecution.

Don't think for a moment that everyone will applaud you for your values, your heart, and your love for God, even when you do right things. If you live your life trying to please the crowd, you will find yourself being manipulated by the crowd. Do not be surprised, child of God, when you walk with Christ, you will face persecution. Remember what Jesus said: "*I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble.* But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

### 2. Your world will be deceived.

The enemy is going to use whatever he can in this world to try to deceive you and steer you down the wrong path. That is why it's so important that, as a believer, you know God's Word and you read God's Word. If you are diligent in doing so, you will be able to discern what is right and what is wrong. You will be able to identify the deceivers and those individuals who are being deceived, and you will be able to withstand deception yourself.

# **Bootcamp Basics For Believers - Part 2**

2 Timothy 3:12

# 3. You must continue to put deep roots down into His Word.

The manual for Christianity is not tradition. It is not denomination. It is not cultural correctness, but rather it is what God's Word teaches. For many of us, we find it comforting to align ourselves with a denomination because we feel like that offers stability. Are we likely to rest in tradition because that gives us a sense of stability? Let me be very clear with you: sometimes, denominations go awry. Sometimes, tradition becomes a law in itself. It can bind people more than the Word of God itself. You and I need to be people of the Book, following God's Word in everything, first and foremost.

# **Bootcamp Basics For Believers - Part 2**

2 Timothy 3:12

- 1. What is an obstacle you've faced in your faith walk recently?
- 2. Do you go to God's Word first for direction, or do you find yourself going to other areas of your faith to find stability and help?
- 3. When was a time you used God's word to identify deception?

## **Bootcamp Basics For Believers - Part 3**

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

#### **INTRODUCTION**

There are a lot of people who have already given their life to Christ. They are suited up. Many Christians have been trained up, but there is a problem. Many believers today need to get up. I want you to feel a little uncomfortable if you are not getting up. I want to talk to you who have been benchwarmers. You know Christ and you have been following Him for some time. You know the plays, but you are sitting on the bench; and you are not completely engaged. I don't know what is happening in your life right now, but I know that God doesn't have any benchwarmers! He doesn't want us to be sitting on the bench on the sidelines, talking to each other. He wants us to be ready to go. He wants us to either be on the field, or He wants us to be ready to get onto the field the moment he sends us into the game.

#### **KEY POINTS**

# **1.** If your worldview is not biblically based, you need to get up.

Many Christians dichotomize their spiritual life from their secular life. They do their job. They live in the world with their friends, and with a secular culture. Separately, there is another part of them where they do church, but the two worlds never meet. When they are with church people, they speak the vernacular of church. They have learned it; they know the biblical phrases, and they know how to navigate the church. However, on Monday, the Bible never enters into their thinking. It never really enters into their world of living.

If your definition of the world is more secular than biblically based, you need to get up. You are not using the Word of God to define your world. If you are not using the Word of God to shape your worldview, to see history from a biblical perspective, and to see the present culture morally with a biblical framework; you need to get up.

# 2. If you're decision making is not biblically rooted, you need to get up.

Many people just make their decisions based upon what they feel. If they feel it's right, they do it. Or, if their friends feel like it's okay, they do it. If you are making your decisions that aren't rooted in the truth of God's Word, you need to get up.

# **Bootcamp Basics For Believers - Part 3**

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

Many Christians justify their lifestyle by looking at their friends and what they are doing, even if their lifestyle is anti-biblical. Don't be one of those people. Instead, hold every decision you make up to Scripture, and seek to make wise, God-honoring decisions every chance you get.

# 3. If you are more in touch with your feelings than the leadership of the Holy Spirit, you need to get up.

As believers, many of us mean well, but we are more concerned about God giving us what we want rather than giving God what He wants. The first question that you and I need to be asking ourselves in any decision is, "God, what do you want me to do?" We need to stay long enough, asking that question in the presence of God, through prayer and the study of the Word of God. When we do so, we will know in our knower what He wants us to do, what He wants us to say and not say, and how He wants us to live and not live.

# 4. If you only follow the Lord when it's convenient, you need to get up.

How often do you engage in worship? How often do you study the Word of God? How often are you a spiritual person in action? If you only follow the Lord when it's convenient, you need to get up. If you are only following Him when things get tough, you need to get up. You need to get engaged and realize that God has more for you than you could ever imagine. Being a Christian is so much more than just using God as a life-preserver.

# 5. If you have one foot in the church and one foot in the world, you need to get up.

If you take a look into the Book of Revelation, you will find out what God thinks about being lukewarm. That is the description of someone who has one foot in the world and one foot in the church. God wants you to be fully rooted in a relationship with Christ. He desires that we live a life that honors Him and only Him. He doesn't want you to be lukewarm and partially committed. He wants you to be all in.

NOTES

# **Bootcamp Basics For Believers - Part 3**

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

- 1. Is your worldview based on what you gather from the world, or is it based on the contents of Scripture? Or maybe is it based on a combination of the two?
- 2. Do you find yourself only following the Lord when it's convenient or when you need help? If so, why do you think that is?
- 3. Would you say you pay more attention to your feelings or to the prompting and leading of the Holy Spirit?



# **Bootcamp Basics For Believers - Part 4**

1 John 5:13

#### **INTRODUCTION**

John wrote his three epistles so that you and I could know without a shadow of a doubt that we know Jesus, that we understand the gospel, and that we have a personal relationship with our Savior. If you read through first John, the author gives us seven questions to answer. The questions are there to challenge us but also to give us confidence that we really do belong to Christ as His followers.

#### **KEY POINTS**

#### 1. Do you walk in the light?

It is very important that we answer the question, "Are we walking in the light?" If you are comfortable walking in darkness and walking in sin, you will never have any confidence that you are a child of God. The outside of your life is not agreeing with what has happened on the inside in your life, if you have truly given your life to Christ. Here is the inverse of that: If you have really met Christ, the inside will also look like the outside. The outside will look like the inside. When the outside and the inside are not looking the same, there is no confidence.

#### 2. Do you obey His Word?

You will want to obey God's Word because you have fallen in love with Jesus. You want to align with Him because you know Him, and you will obey His Word because you actually have a relationship with Him. He wants us to align with all of His Word, not part of His Word. We tear pages out of the Bible, if we don't like this. We want to redefine what is right and what is wrong based upon what the culture says. But what we need to be doing is standing on the Word of God and aligning with the Word of God. We need to ask ourselves, are we seeking to please the world? Or are we seeking to obey the Word of Jesus Christ?

## 3. Do you love fellow Christians?

Have you ever been hurt deeply by someone who calls themself a believer? They said something or did something that hurt your feelings, and it was painful. Sheep bites get infected very quickly, and they can do a number on your life and your spiritual life. Do you know why? Because you expect Christians to act like Christians. But remember, you are not the Holy Spirit. God will deal with the people who hurt you; you don't need to worry about them. Here is the crux of the matter: Do you love fellow Christians, even when they don't act lovingly towards you?

# **Bootcamp Basics For Believers - Part 4**

1 John 5:13

## 4. Do you love the world?

Many folks find their fulfillment in how much money they have made, the position they had, or their fame. If your fulfillment is about what you have, what you have received, and how you appear to other people; you are sucked into the world system. A Christian (someone who knows Christ) is not connected to the world system. We may have to live in this world, but our values are not about how much we have, and how we appear to other people. It's not who we are by the world's standard, but rather whose we are that makes all the difference.

# 5. Do you hurt for the hurting?

If you see people in pain and you want to practically help them out of that pain, whether it costs you money, time or words of encouragement; that says something about your nature. Jesus met people's needs. He did not heal everyone, but those He came in contact with, He did heal. Word got out and He met their needs, and people rushed toward him. We should strive to have the same priority, to help those who need help and hurt with those who are hurting, if we want to impact the world for Christ.

### 6. Do you sense His Spirit?

When you become a follower of Jesus, the Holy Spirit comes to live inside of you. And from that moment on, you have access to the Holy Spirit always and forever. As you walk through life, the Spirit will guide you, lead you, direct you, comfort you, and intercede for you when you need it. He is your constant companion through every mountaintop moment and every valleyfilled season. If you are a Christian, you should sense the Spirit working, leading, and speaking in your life.

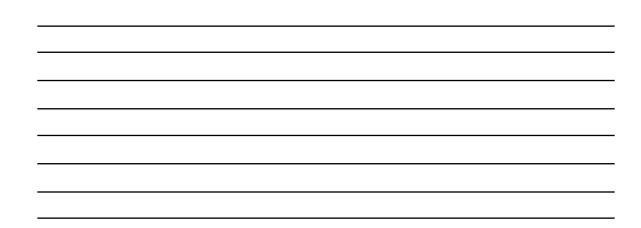
# 7. Do you happily continue to sin?

If you are a child of God, you will never be happy living in a life of sin. If you are a child of God, you will either try to get out of that sin or die trying to get out of it. You will break that sinful habit and not be happy until that stronghold is pulled down. You will live the rest of your life, trying to see God's power overcome your weakness.

# **Bootcamp Basics For Believers - Part 4**

1 John 5:13

- 1. Does the outside of your life match the inside of your life? Or is there a difference between the two?
- 2. When was a time you chose to love a fellow believer, even when they had done something to hurt you?
- 3. Has there been a time recently when you sense the Holy Spirit working in your life? If so, what happened?



## **Bootcamp Basics For Believers - Part 5**

Hebrews 10:24-25

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The word "Ekklesia" is the Koine 'Greek word for church. It is a compound word, "ek" (the preposition, which means "out of") and "kaleo" (to call). The word "ekklesia" literally means "called out of ones." In other words, we, as God's children, have been called out of the world to live for Christ. This is interesting: 90% of the time that the word "ekklesia" is used in the New Testament, it refers to the local church. Only 10% of the time, it refers to the body of Christ worldwide, the spiritual body of Christ. We are going to take a look at this word more closely in today's message as we understand the importance of fellowship and community in the local church, and we'll answer the question "Why do we need brotherhood in the church?"

#### **KEY POINTS**

#### 1. We need the brotherhood to hold us accountable.

God intended for us to be in relationship with one another. He did not want us to walk through life alone. Because when you isolate yourself, you are closing yourself off from the encouragement and accountability that fellow believers can bring to your life. All of us need accountability. We need people in our lives who are holding us accountable. And we need to allow them to speak into our lives about the decisions we are making, the directions we are heading, and what we are doing.

#### 2. We need the brotherhood to encourage us.

I don't know about you, but I need encouragement. We all need it, and we all long for it. And some of us, we really need to hear those words right now because this has been a difficult season and a difficult year. We need the encouragement from people who love Jesus to say, "Keep on keeping on. Take the next step. Don't worry about the end game. Just do the next right thing and keep moving."

#### 3. We need the brotherhood to serve together.

God wants us to be involved in ministry. He wants us to serve. He doesn't want you to just sit and learn things. He wants you to learn Scripture to do things. It is important for us to act out that love. It is very important that you find a ministry where you can connect with people and be involved in personally.

# **Bootcamp Basics For Believers - Part 5**

Hebrews 10:24-25

You can do that through small groups and through other ministry opportunities, but the responsibility is on you to do good deeds and express the love of Christ. That is why you need the body of Christ, because if you are not connected to the body of Christ, and you are not part of a church, there is no one to spur you on.

# 4. We need the brotherhood to meet together.

Christianity is not meant to be an alone, isolated experience; you and I need each other. We need each other, and meeting together is important. God wants the early church to serve as the example, but we also need to be the example in this age. Thank the Lord for the software programs that we have today so we can connect with each other online, see each other online, and listen to Bible teaching online. However, there is no substitute for being physically present. We desperately need to continue meeting in person if we can because that is how God has created us.

# 5. We need the brotherhood so we don't give up.

Scripture tells us in the last part of our key passage in verse 25 "... but encouraging one another and all the more as you see the day approaching." Many of us are right on the edge of giving up. Some of us are going through a difficult time. Maybe it is relationally, financially, physically, or emotionally. We need each other and we need to encourage each other to not give up. You need other people to tell you, "Don't give up." And you also need to be involved in other people's lives to say, "Don't give up." Even when you think you are about done, you need to be speaking life into other people's lives.

NOTES

# **Bootcamp Basics For Believers - Part 5**

Hebrews 10:24-25

- 1. Do you have people in your life holding you accountable in your walk with Christ? If not, who is someone you could reach out to start seeking out accountability?
- 2. Where are you serving in your community or local church right now? If you're not serving, where is somewhere you can get plugged in to start serving?
- 3. When was a time someone from the body of Christ encouraged you when you really needed it? When was the last time you offered that same kind of encouragement to someone else?



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