

2 Cor. 13:8-13 Striving for Spiritual Maturity

Part 1 from last week. First step is self-examination (am I even in the faith?)

V.9 Paul's prayer for Corinth: Fully Mature (CSB). Katartisis. NKJV Complete, the idea of wholeness.

V. 10-11 **Final advice: 4 goals:**

1. Become **mature**; katartizo same root as V.9 Katartisis;
2. Become **encouraged** despite correction. Heb. 12:11 *yields a harvest of peace and righteousness*
3. Be of **same mind**. The mind of Christ! Have the same thinking patterns Jesus would have.
4. Be an active **peacemaker**.

V.13 Last thing he wants to see in their life: 1. Unmerited favor of Jesus. 2. The unconditional love of God. 3. the close relationship with the Holy Spirit who guides and directs us.

Part 2 As a believer, how is my spiritual net? Am I letting the blessings slip through the holes?

2 Peter 1:3-8 He's given us everything we need for life; precious promises to experience the "God life" (Fullness of joy). **Formula for Spiritual Maturity:**

1. **V.5 Purposeful Partnership:** NT language is full of exhortation to engage. Phil 3:14; Heb. 6:1; 2 Peter 1:5,10,15 *make every effort* (to be intentional about our growth)
2. **Active Addition:** A progression - each step supports the others.
 - a. **Faith, Goodness, Knowledge** - Heb 11:6 *Without faith it is _____ to please God*. Faith is the best thing to demonstrate that we are no longer controlling our lives. We allow the Holy Spirit to work resulting in basic character changes (**Goodness**). 2 big sources for adding **knowledge**:
 - i. **The Word:** v.3 *through our knowledge of him*. Heb. 5:14; 2 Timothy 3:16-17
 - ii. **Godly people:** Gal. 6:1 *restore (mend) a fallen brother*.
 - b. **Self-Control and Endurance:** The Word informs our conviction and affections. Conviction informs our will to act. We begin to love to look at God's counsel for our good as we enjoy the "God life" (divine nature) and "*taste and see that the Lord is good*". What our hearts love is what we will do and persevere in. We will naturally choose the **disciplines of spiritual growth that bring us closer to God** like daily Bible study, prayer, worship, gathering together (net repair training).
 - c. **Godliness, Brotherly Affection, Love.** The highest character qualities that reflect Jesus, that only happen through learning to walk under the instruction of the Holy Spirit who begins to produce fruit.

Grow Group Questions

1. Theologian **N.T. Wright** said about this season we are in: "*Lent is a time for discipline, for confession, for honesty, not because God is mean or fault-finding or finger-pointing but because He wants us to know the joy of being cleaned out, ready for all the good things He now has in store.*" How does this phrase relate to today's message of examining our nets?
2. What does Peter mean when he says that our knowledge of God's precious promises results in the "God life"? (participating in the divine nature)
3. What would happen if I tried to produce the 2 Peter 1:5-9 steps on my own without relying on the Holy Spirit or in reverse order? Why?
4. What are the disciplines leading to spiritual maturity that are holes in your "net"? How can those be mended?
5. Discuss 2 Peter 1:8-9. Peter bluntly says this is a guarantee. Do you agree? Why or why not?

Bonus: to learn about spiritual growth, check out this website:

www.gotquestions.org/questions_Christian.html or www.feathersoundchurch.com/resources