

## **HOPEFUL**

*First Peter: Standing firm in the hope and encouragement of the grace of God*

### **Lesson Title: Maturity Checkpoints!**

#### Introduction

When we worship on Sunday morning, we are assaulting the gates of Hell. This is the vision of the church as an offensive force, invading and overthrowing Satan's dominion. Jesus is using the elements of our worship to advance His Kingdom.

So, as we pick up the writings of Peter, we see God's vision of what He is making us together – things that seem small and trivial to us. God is making them to be mighty.

#### **Growing Up!**

Peter identifies six attitudes and marks of maturity that we should embody in our life together as a local church.

Growing up is the stated objective for all the family of God. In Hebrews 5:12-6:2, the writer addresses a lack of maturity. He gives two pieces of advice: First, leave behind elementary teachings and second, press on to maturity.

#### **Striving for Unity of Mind!**

- A. We should be immovably likeminded people.
- B. Unity of mind is ultimately an issue of authority.
  - 1. It means that we should submit our thoughts and emotions to one central standard on major points of doctrine.
  - 2. Peter is calling us to submit our minds to an abiding, unchanging, authoritative standard for determining what is and what is not true.
  - 3. Paul's advice to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:14-17 is an example.
  - 4. That standard is the breathed-out Scripture.

#### **Sympathy!**

- A. So much of what passes for sympathy is just pretending.

- B. Roman's 12:15 gives us a powerful description of what sympathy should look like in the church.
- C. The Word of God (standard) produces sympathy by tearing down the dividing walls of tribal competition and sub-groups, making us one.

**Overflowing with brotherly love – we are family!**

- A. Peter has called for this kind of love three times.
- B. "A Sheltering Tree" by Coleridge.
- C. No longer should our church be a religious organization to meet "*my spiritual need*".

**Tenderhearted!**

- A. Peter is not just calling us to mere actions or understanding of doctrinal truth and call that Christianity.
- B. It is used most often of Jesus.
- C. God intends to make a people who don't just serve one another, but who **WANT TO** serve one another.

**Deep Humility of Mind!**

- A. We have said that we could have unity of mind, if we had a central standard (Scripture) for what is and what is not truth. This requires humility.
- B. In this day of spotlighting celebrities of the faith this quality is a rare commodity but is greatly valued by Christ. Matthew 5:1-4

**Blessing Those Who Curse Us!**

- A. Forgiveness. (v.9)
- B. A controlled tongue. (v.10)
- C. Purity and Peace. (vv.11-12)

Conclusion: Three principles that help us fulfill these marks of maturity.

- A. Check myself out before judging my brother.

B. See the hand of God at work in my brother.

C. Do it for the sake of blessing.