

Study 8 – The Christian Life 2: growing up 2

If we are going to be healthy, balanced and growing Christians we not only need to feed correctly but to follow the “Maker’s Instructions”.

Cleaning

Since the Bible is like a mirror (James 1v23) we shall soon see there are things wrong in our lives (sins) which need to be cleansed away (Isaiah 52v11). This is done as we confess our sin (1 John 1v9) and claim His forgiveness (John 15v3; Ephesians 1v7). We will discover that only as we are cleansed can we enter fully into His presence (Psalm 24v4)

Speaking

Isn't it a wonderful day when the baby says his first words? They are simple, perhaps confused, but to mother and father they are marvellous. How our Heavenly Father longs for us, his children, to speak to him — even if it is simple — but from the heart (Romans 8v15*). This 'speaking' is called 'prayer' (see supplement No 4). God speaks to us through the Bible, we speak to Him in prayer BUT do allow Him to speak to you direct as you wait on Him.

*Note — 'Abba' - 'Dada' or 'Daddy' — the simplest word there is!

Clothing

As we begin to know Him so we should desire to make Him known (Romans 15v17-19); Philippians 3v10; 1 John 1v1-3). We can do this in many ways (as we shall see later) but chiefly by the people we are (cf. 1 Peter 2v1-2; 1 Timothy 4v12). Our new lifestyle should be seen in our clothing. After all, Jesus took our 'sinful clothing and gave us a 'robe of righteousness'

(2 Corinthians 5v21; Philippians 3v9). There should come a time when we take off our nappies and bibs and wear clothes in keeping with our new lifestyle. Many of the clothes we wore as non-Christians are unsuitable now we are Christians (cf. Colossians 3v5-14). For Christ's plan before the foundation of the world for us is that we “become full grown in the Lord — yes, to the point of being filled full with Christ” (Ephesians 4v13, Living Bible).

Faith

The Christian life is begun and lived by faith (Romans 5v2; 2 Corinthians 5v7; Galatians 3v26; Ephesians 2v8; Hebrews 10v38). We enter into all the blessings of God through faith (e.g. Matthew 21v21-22; Hebrews 6v12; 1 John 5v4; 1 Peter 1v5). Indeed without faith it is impossible to please

God (Romans 14v23; Hebrews 11v6). This faith is a gift from God (Romans 12v3) which comes as we hear His Word (Romans 10v17; Hebrews 4v2). For the Christian “believing is seeing” (John 20v29; Hebrews 11v1).

Exercise

If we are to keep healthy then we must exercise. This is just as true in the spiritual as in the physical. If we continue to feed on the Word of God but do not exercise we become spiritually obese; we become lethargic and apathetic. Spiritual exercise is putting into practice what we have been taught. In Hebrews 5v12 the writer tells the readers that they are immature (‘still infants’) because they have not ‘trained themselves’ like those in Hebrews 5v14. We are to be those through whom the ‘living water flows’ (John 7v38) not a spiritual Dead Sea with plenty of water (the Word) flowing in but none flowing out to the thirsty souls around us. As Jesus, the Good Shepherd said (John 10v9) we should ‘come in’ (for fellowship and feeding) and ‘go out to find pasture’ and to share the Good News of Jesus with others.

QUESTIONS

1. How are we daily cleansed? (1 John 1v9)
2. What is prayer?
3. What ‘clothes’ must we take off as Christians? (Colossians 3v8-10)
4. What ‘clothes’ should we put on? (Colossians 3v12-14)
5. Why is faith so important in the Christian life?
6. How do we keep spiritually healthy?
7. a) Do you pray regularly?

b) Do you find your prayer effective?

FURTHER STUDY

Read through some of these prayers in the Bible:

Nehemiah 1v 5-11

Psalm 51

2 Chronicles 6v14-21

Daniel 9v4-19

Matthew 6v9-13

John 17

Ephesians 1v15-23

Ephesians 3v14-21

Are there similarities in these prayers?

What do we learn about God from these prayers?

How can we learn from these prayers?