**“IN A BAD SLUMP BUT GOING THROUGH THE MOTIONS”**

**INTRODUCTION**

1. A disturbing trend seen too often in many churches is the apparent

 apathy of many Christians

 a. They may be attending services, but it appears that they are only

 **"going through the motions"**

 b. Their singing, their praying, their Bible Study, their zeal,

 seems listless

 c. **"The mass of [Christians] lead lives of quiet desperation."**

 -- CERTAINLY GOD DESIRES MORE FOR HIS CHILDREN!

[**Ro 15:13**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ro%2015.13)

2. I suspect the problem is one similar to an athlete or a sport team

 which is "in a slump"

 a. Such a person or team "goes through the motions", but they are

 not performing up to their true potential!!

 b. The solution in sports: Work on "the fundamentals"

3. The same is true with Christians; when we find ourselves "in a

 slump"...

1. We need to stress the fundamentals !!!
2. WE NEED TO IDENTIFY WHAT GOT US THERE IN THE FIRST PLACE!!!

[**Re 2:4-5**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Re%202.4-5)

 b. We need to get **"Back To The Basics!"**

[In this lesson I would like to stress some of the "fundamentals" or

"basics" that we need to get back to whenever our lives are in a

spiritual slump. I.e., my first suggestion would be to...]

**I. ENERGIZE YOUR "FAITH"**

 **A. DEFINING "FAITH"...**

 1. A Scriptural definition of faith is found in

[**He 11:1**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/He%2011.1)

 2. The NIV is helpful: **"Now faith is being sure of what we hope**

 **for and certain of what we do not see."**

 3. VINE'S describes faith as **"a firm conviction"**

 4. I like to think of faith as **"confident trust"**

 **B. IMPORTANCE OF "FAITH"...**

 1. Faith in God is essential to pleasing Him –

[**He 11:6**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/He%2011.6)

 2. Faith in Jesus is essential to finding forgiveness and eternal

 life –

[**Jn 8:24**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Jn%208.24)**;** [**20:30-31**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Jn%2020.30-31)

 3. Without faith, the only alternative is doubt accompanied with

 fear - cf.

[**Mt 14:30-31**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Mt%2014.30-31)

 **C. ENERGIZING YOUR "FAITH"...**

 1. The Word of God is designed to produce faith - cf.

 [**Ro 10:17**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ro%2010.17)**;**

[**Jn 20:30-31**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Jn%2020.30-31)

 2. Through diligent reading of the Bible, we can "energize" our

 faith!

[So when you find yourself in a spiritual slump, pick up your Bible and

allow it to rebuild that "confident trust" you once had! It will also

help you to...]

**II. FORTIFY YOUR "HOPE"**

 **A. DEFINING "HOPE"...**

 1. VINE'S says that it involves **"the happy anticipation of good"**

 2. It is NOT wishful thinking, or an insecure "I hope so"

 3. But as VINE'S describes it further, it is **"a confident**

 **expectation"**

 4. A common definition of hope is **"desire plus expectation"**

 **B. IMPORTANCE OF "HOPE"...**

 1. Hope is necessary to persevere –

[**Ro 8:25**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ro%208.25)**;**

[**1Th 1:3**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1Th%201.3)

 2. Hope is necessary for our motivation to become pure –

**1Jn 3:2-3**

 3. Hope is necessary to increase opportunities to evangelize

 -

[**1Pe 3:15**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1Pe%203.15)

 4. Without hope, we not only lose our souls, we won't be any good

 for saving others!

 **C. FORTIFYING YOUR "HOPE"...**

 1. The Word of God was written to produce hope –

[**Ro 15:4**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ro%2015.4)

 a. Through its revelation of God's dealings with man in the

 past, we know God keeps His promises

 b. This encourages us to expect Him to deliver on His promises

 for the future

 2. Peter encourages us to **"rest your hope fully upon the grace**

 **that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus**

 **Christ" –**

[**1Pe 1:13**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1Pe%201.13)

 a. Where do read of the "grace" that is to come when Christ is

 revealed?

 b. In the Scriptures, of course!

 c. Nothing "fortifies" our hope better than those wonderful

 passages that reveal the eternal destiny of the saints!

[When an athlete gets discouraged, he or she is often told to **"keep**

**your eye on the prize!"** So the Christian must do, and it is with the

aid of God's Word that we can keep our focus where it ought to be.

Getting **"Back To The Basics"** will also include an effort to...]

**III. ACTIVATE YOUR "LOVE"**

 **A. DEFINING "LOVE"...**

 1. Paul gives the best definition of love –

[**1Co 13:4-8a**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1Co%2013.4-8a)4**Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,5Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;6Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;7Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.8Charity never faileth:**

When a Christian is in a spiritual slump like an athlete, love begins to disappear, kindness becomes unkind, they begin to envy everything, they get all puffed up, their behavior is different, it’s all about them, the littlest thing provokes them to anger, their thoughts lean towards things that are evil, sin no longer seems to be a problem to them, truth becomes a hard thing to accept, they become unbearable themselves, believing things is a thing of the past, all manner of hope goes to a low ebb, which brings them to place where they can’t endure things because their patience is gone, and finally Love totally fails them!!!

At this point it’s time to examine oneself!!!!

 2. A simple definition that is easy to remember: **"active**

 **goodwill"**

 **B. IMPORTANCE OF "LOVE"...**

 1. Expressing love gives us "assurance" of our salvation - cf.

[**1Jn 3:14**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1Jn%203.14)**,**[**18-19**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1Jn%203.18-19)

 2. Expressing love assures us that God will answer our prayers -

[**1Jn 3:22-23**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1Jn%203.22-23)

 3. Expressing love reassures us that we abide in God, and He in

 us –

[**1Jn 4:7-8**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1Jn%204.7-8)**,**[**12**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1Jn%204.12)**,**[**16**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1Jn%204.16)

 **C. ACTIVATING YOUR "LOVE"...**

 1. Like the Thessalonians, we can be taught by God how to love

 - cf.

[**1Th 4:9**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1Th%204.9)

1. Jesus taught us how to love by His sacrificial life –

[**1Jn 3:16**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1Jn%203.16)

 b. God taught us how to love by giving His Son as a

 propitiation for sins –

[**1Jn 4:9-11**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1Jn%204.9-11)

 2. Through careful meditation upon what the Bible reveals about

 God's love for us, we can "activate" our love for others!

[As we continue to list what is involved in getting **"Back To The**

**Basics"**, I also encourage you to...]

**IV. ENHANCE YOUR "JOY"**

 **A. DEFINING "JOY"...**

 1. The Greek word is CHARA, and is closely related to the word

 CHARIS

 a. CHARIS (grace) is "undeserved favor" which in turn gives

 joy, pleasure, delight

 b. CHARA (joy), then, is the response we have to undeserved

 favor

 2. I like to think of joy as the **"delightful response"** to the

 grace we receive from God

 **B. IMPORTANCE OF "JOY"...**

 1. Joy is an essential element of what constitutes the Kingdom of

 God –

[**Ro 14:17**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ro%2014.17)

 2. Joy lightens the burden of trials in this life –

[**1Pe 1:6-9**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1Pe%201.6-9)**;**

[**He 10:32-34**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/He%2010.32-34)

 3. It is often the loss of this virtue that is most evident in

 the lives of many Christians!

 **C. ENHANCING YOUR "JOY"...**

 1. Both Jesus and His apostles gave us words whereby our joy

 might be full –

[**Jn 15:11**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Jn%2015.11)**;**

[**1Jn 1:4**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1Jn%201.4)

 a. Once again we see the value of daily Bible study

 b. Just as the Bible can...

 1) Energize your faith

 2) Fortify your hope

 3) Activate your love

 ...so it can "enhance" your joy!

 2. Jesus also stressed the importance of PRAYER in regards to joy

 -

[**Jn 16:24**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Jn%2016.24)

 a. Answered prayer certainly excites the Christian, and

 increases joy!

 b. So to the practice of daily Bible study, a key to getting

 **"Back To The Basics!"** is the habit of regular prayer

[There is one more "basic" I would like to point out before we conclude

this study. You should also...]

**V. ENJOY YOUR "PEACE"**

 **A. DEFINING "PEACE"...**

 1. VINE'S describes peace as **"harmonious relations"**

 2. It is used to describe such harmony between...

 a. Men

 b. Nations

 c. God and man

 d. One's own self

 3. A lack of peace often contributes to the "spiritual doldrums"

 that afflict many Christians

 **B. IMPORTANCE OF "PEACE"...**

 1. Another crucial element constituting the Kingdom of God –

[**ROM 14:17-19**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ro%2014.17-19)

 2. Peace with brethren contributes to receiving peace from peace

 from God –

[**2Co 13:11**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/2Co%2013.11)

 3. And having peace with God has a positive effect in our peace

 with our enemies –

[**Pr 16:7**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Pr%2016.7)

 **C. ENJOYING YOUR "PEACE"...**

 1. Peace with God begins with justification found only in Christ

 -

[**Ro 5:1**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ro%205.1)

 2. It continues in response to fervent prayer - cf.

[**Php 4:6-7**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Php%204.6-7)

 a. Just as prayer can "enhance" our joy

 b. So can prayer help us to "enjoy" our peace that surpasses

 all understanding!

**CONCLUSION**

1. **Faith, hope, love, joy, peace:** simple words, yet so essential to

 the "abundant life" Jesus has to offer those who come to Him

2. Why are they often in short supply in the lives of many Christians?

 a. Because they neglect two fundamental tools God provides for them

 b. These tools? **The Word of God** and **prayer**!

3. Brethren, whenever you find yourself in a spiritual "slump", let

 these two avenues of communication with God be the key to:

 a. **Energize your faith!**

 b. **Fortify your hope!**

 c. **Activate your love!**

 d. **Enhance your joy!**

 e. **Enjoy your peace!**

4. Restoring the basic elements of the abundant life found only in

 Christ is not a mystery:

 a. Receive the implanted Word of God! - [**Jm 1:21**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Jm%201.21)

 b. Continue earnestly in prayer! - [**Col 4:2**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Col%204.2)

It's just that simple!