



VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

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Studies in Jude

Study 19: Elements of Spiritual Growth – Making A Difference By Compassion

Text: Jude 1:20-23

“But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh”.

To survive in a changing world like ours that is constantly beset by wiles of the devil require lifelong learning and continuous growth. Peter challenged the Christians of his generation to **“grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ”** (2 Peter 3:18). This supports his earlier challenge, which points out that Spiritual overcomers pay good attention to growth **“According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: 4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. 5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; 6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; 7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. 8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. 10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: 11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ”** (2 Peter 1:3-11).

It is in the nature of every living thing to grow. In the natural growth takes place through feeding, breathing and activities; the same is equally true of the Spiritual. Growth should be the goal of every Christian. Such goals will either change you or you will be forced to drop them. This is another way of saying that until your goals changes you, you cannot achieve them. For example, if you set a goal to grow spiritually, this will take some personal changes in order to achieve it. Are you ready for the triumph through personal change? Every living fish is capable of, and often, swims upstream against the currents, it is only dead fishes that are perpetually carried downstream by every current. We can all learn from the famous statement of Bill Gates in 2003 that “In times of change, the learners shall inherit the earth, while the learned are beautifully equipped for a world that no longer exists”.

In this study, Jude outlined in the text seven elements or rudiments for Spiritual Growth, the first four deals with the cultivation of spiritual character and the remaining

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three with our service (corresponding works) towards others around us. In summary, these seven elements or rudiments of Spiritual growth, which we shall cover in more details in future studies are:

1. Building up yourselves on your most holy faith
2. Praying in the Holy Ghost
3. Keep yourselves in the love of God
4. Looking (i.e. waiting with active anticipation) for the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life
5. Of some have compassion, making a difference
6. And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire
7. Hating even the garment spotted by the flesh (while pulling them out of the fire).

It is noteworthy that:

1. the first four contain the verbs build, pray, keep and wait (look for), which represents the four walls of impregnable fortress for the believer that enables him to withstand satanic attacks and rise above adverse circumstances of life.
2. these four precedes the three for service – a salient reminder that our spiritual lives serves as the foundation for effective, fruitful and acceptable service.
3. the last three indicates that Christians must use their best endeavours to get as many saved as possible from all categories (classes or groups) of people they come in contact with; but they should be wise enough to make distinction between the groups and apply different but appropriate strategies to each category for purpose of effectiveness (not discrimination).

Of Some have compassion, making a difference

This step points out that Christians are called to make a difference in others lives through demonstration of compassion. However, the phrase “of some” underscores a salient truth that compassion will only make a difference on some but not all. This implies that a blanket approach of indiscriminate compassion on all will not work, and in fact could tantamount to a waste of time, energy and resources. Jesus used miracles as a means of showing compassion, but He did not perform miracles for everyone that wanted to see them. “And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet” (Luke 11:29). The key challenge therefore for every Christian is to identify “the some” that compassion will make a difference in the salvation of their souls, and then sacrificially demonstrate it by appropriate acts of love and generosity supported by prayerful teaching; as the scripture did not identify those that must be shown compassion but leaves it to the discernment of each Christian. This is similar to the principles that parents adopt in raising their children by not treating all of them the same, but according to their age, needs, uniqueness and understanding. The Holy Spirit will help us identify how best to approach different kinds of people with the gospel message.

So, the showing of compassion is to be one of the evangelism tools aimed at salvation of souls (Matthew 9:35,36; 20:34). This implies that purpose led evangelism is not just a mechanical “one approach fits all” process of sharing the gospel. Just as Jesus’ demonstration of compassion on Peter and others in the catching of fishes (Luke 5 and John 21) turned these weak, doubting and wavering fishermen into mighty ‘fishers of men’, so also can ours recover lost souls and turn the weak and wavering ones into mighty pillars in God’s kingdom.