

Emphasizing “the Basics”

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Any time men stray very far from “the basics,” they fall far below their potential. A football team can have splendid athletes but neglecting crisp blocking and sure tackling neutralizes its superior athletic ability. A move away from “the basics” in education a couple of generations ago has produced a school system whose high school (and some college) graduates are so deficient in reading and comprehension skills that they are unable to fill out a job application. Many in the church have moved away from individual and congregational spiritual “basics” in favor of various gimmicks and fads, trying to force church “growth” by human standards.

However, when we forsake “the basics” (usually rather elementary things) for the showy and sensational, we always pay a high price eventually. The kind of growth the Lord wants comes from implementing some rather ordinary principles that are in reach of every Christian. If we personally want to grow spiritually and if we want the church to experience true growth, I suggest we pay close attention to the following “basics”:

1. **Read your Bible daily.** It is good to be zealous, but zeal without knowledge is a very dangerous thing (Rom. 10:2–3). We can never learn too much of God’s Word (Psa. 119:11).
2. **Pray always.** Make prayer a natural, consistent part of life, rather than a special “religious exercise” (1 The. 5:17–18). We often faint because we do not pray (Luke 18:1).
3. **Live a pure life daily.** We must keep ourselves pure from worldly stains (1 Tim. 4:12; 5:22; Jam. 1:27). Few things impede the Gospel more than the corrupt life of a Christian.
4. **Think and live evangelistically.** The fields are still white (John 4:35). Lost souls surround us who might be turned from the path of ruin by our words or deeds.
5. **Watch for opportunities** to spread the Gospel. Nothing is more “basic.”
6. **Invite others to worship** and Bible class periods. These things are so elementary that we may forget them. On behalf of the Christ, let us say, “Come” (Rev. 22:17).
7. **Look for ways to serve others** daily. Jesus gauges our greatness by our service (Luke 22:26). Many disciples have forgotten that we are here to serve, rather than to be served.
8. **Practice self-examination and self-discipline.** As we are to do this concerning the Lord’s supper (1 Cor. 11:28), so we are to do it in all things (2 Cor. 13:5). If Paul, the spiritual giant of the first century, had to practice self-discipline (1 Cor. 9:27), then we surely need to do so.

The church whose members faithfully practice these “basics” will certainly grow spiritually and will likely also grow numerically.

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