

Keys to Successful Living

Part 5-dated 28/6/15

Reading: Hebrews 6:1

The Four(4) keys we have learned all help us to attain a good year and a good life, but we must not stop there. In fact, we are not given that option. Here are the 4 keys:

1. Let us fear
2. Let us be diligent
3. Let us hold fast our confession
4. Let us draw near to the throne of grace

Now, we look at the fifth key, a point found in Hebrews 6:1 which is about pressing on to maturity. It reads “Therefore, leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity”.

Please note right from the beginning—it is tremendously important to see this truth- we have to do this. We are not given any other choice/option. Many believers have the impression that in the Christian life you can arrive. That you can settle down and say ”Now I an there”. BUT THAT IS NEVER TRUE. To remain static in the spiritual life is the wrong choice. God expects us to move forward.

THE WAY.

To understand the truth of the progressive nature of our relationship with Jesus Christ, Let’s look at the single, penetrating verse from proverbs 4:18 “ The path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, that shines brighter and brighter until the full day”.

The phrase *the path of the righteous* is absolutely general. It is not speaking about some particular believer or some group of believers. Actually, it is speaking about every righteous person. Please note that **Righteousness is a path**. A path is something that we move along. A path is never designed for us to stand in it, much less to sit down in it. Because righteousness is a path, it implies motion, progress and development.

Next, this that this passage says that the path is like the **light of the dawn**. Dawn could be compared to the time when we first come to know the Lord Jesus in His glorious fullness as Saviour and Lord. It is like a sunrise after the darkness. Coming to know Jesus is like a dawn that comes into our hearts. BUT the dawn is not the end of God’s purposes; it is the beginning. The verse says that the path is like the light of dawn that shines brighter and brighter until the full day. As we are walking in the path of righteousness, the light should always be getting brighter on our day. Each step—each day—the light should be brighter than it was before.

This verse in Proverb 4 concludes with this phrase: “Until the full day”. That is our destination—the height of our noonday. God is not content that we would stop at less than the full brightness of the noonday sun. The dawn is our beginning point. The path is the way of progress. The light gets brighter and brighter. NO stopping place on the path is permitted until we reach the full day.

ADVANCING TOWARD MATURITY.

Do you remember the biggest mistake that the Hebrews made? Like their forefathers they had become lazy and failed to listen to God's voice. That is why this particular Let us is so appropriate. The Hebrews were trusting their special privileges and resting in them; they had become lazy. They were just talking their status for granted Lets see what the writer says to them

{Read/type text from Hebrews 5: 11-14 NIV}

The writer is saying here—and he is saying it pretty bluntly—“you are just spiritual infants. But you have no right to be infants at this stage in your Christian Progress/journey/life. You have had so many opportunities and so many years—you should have advanced to maturity by now”.

IN the same passage, the writer also explains the ONLY WAY to advance to maturity. He says “Solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. According to that example, advancing to maturity along the path of righteousness, in which the light grows brighter day by day, comes in actual practice by constant use. It comes by training ourselves. It is not something we can take for granted or something that just happens automatically. It requires our application. That is why the 2nd key is “Let us be diligent”. By constant use, we must train ourselves to distinguish good from the evil if we are going to move forward in God.

It is painful to see large number of Christians who seems to be unable to distinguish between what is truly spiritual, truly scriptural and that which is just a fleshly presentation. They do not see that something which is simply fake, man-made, unnatural and fabricated has no real lasting effect.

How do we reach the maturity we desire in life? Who can mentor us along the way?

Psalm 32:8 tells us that “The Lord says, I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you”. I

Psalm 92:12 informs us “But the godly will flourish like palm trees and grow strong like the cedars of Lebanon”.

Psalm 111:10 says “Reverence for the LORD is the foundation of true wisdom. The rewards of wisdom come to all who obey him”

Jeremiah 17:7-8 tells us that those who trust the LORD and have their hope & confidence in Him—they are like trees planted along the riverbank, with roots that reach deep into the water(Word of God). They always remain green and fruitful.

In **Philippians 1:6** Apostle Paul tells us that “God who began the good work within you, will continue His work until it is finally finished”.

James also tells us in his letter(**James 1:5**) that “If you need wisdom—if you want to know what God wants you to do—ask Him, and He will gladly tell you”

Apostle Paul in **Ephesians 3:17** tells us that “Christ will be more and more at home in our hearts as we trust in Him. He prays that “May our roots go down in to the soil of God's marvelous love”.

Again in **Colossians 2:7** Paul instructs us that “Let your roots grow down into Him (Jesus) and draw up nourishment from Him, so you will grow in faith”.

Apostle Peter in his letter **2-Peter 3:18** says to us “But grow in the special favor and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Like wise, Jude in his letter **Jude 1:20** says “But you, dear friends must continue to build your lives on the foundation of your holy faith”.

One thing we need to understand & remember clearly: Spiritual growth is like physical growth—we start small and move ahead one day at a time. To reach maturity, we must discipline ourselves like athletes. A very good picture of IMMATURE CHRISTIANS is painted by Apostle Paul while speaking to the church of Corinthians, in his first letter to them(1-Cor 3:1-3), he says “I couldn’t talk to you as I would to mature Christians...I had to feed you with milk and not with solid food...”.Then, he describes the reasons why.....Most of these reasons sadly still apply to present Christians all over the world. This emphasizes the need of self-control. Apostle Paul in the passage 1-Corinthians 9:24-27, tells us that “All athletes practice strict self-control”. Athletes excel as they exercise and push the boundaries of their physical capabilities. Should we not give as much emphasis to spiritual maturity?

The purpose in striving for maturity is to use it so that others might also mature. Paul instructed the same thing to his understudy Timothy in his 2nd letter to him(2-Tim 2:1-2).

Before I close, let’s look at things which may keep Christians from maturing—what must we avoid. There are roadblocks to maturity and we have to look for them. Isaiah 59:1-2 gives us one reason.” But there is a problem—your sins have cut you off from God. Because of your sin, He has turned away and will not listen anymore”. Read Urdu too. Apostle Paul in his 2nd letter to Timothy, encourages him in these words(1-Tim 2:4): “And as Christian soldier, do not let yourself become tied up in the affairs of this world, for then you cannot satisfy the one who has enlisted you in His army”. Read Urdu too.

We need to be aware of the **roadblocks to maturity** in our life and overcome them as soon as possible. There are many blessings awaiting our victorious life in Christ. As the 5th key says, Let us press on to maturity for the successful living and be blessed. May the good Lord help us to do that.....Amen.