

Hold Fast - April 19th - 7 Traits of Highly Effective Christians - Troy Knight

Key Scriptures:

2 Peter 1:1-8
Ephesians 2:8-10
Proverbs 25:28
Galatians 5:22-23

TALK IT OVER

Start reading

2 Peter 1:1-8

1 This letter is from Simon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ. I am writing to you who share the same precious faith we have. This faith was given to you because of the justice and fairness of Jesus Christ, our God and Savior. 2 May God give you more and more grace and peace as you grow in your knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord. 3 By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence. 4 And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires. 5 In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God's promises. Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge, 6 and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness, 7 and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love for everyone. 8 The more you grow like this, the more productive and useful you will be in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 2:8-10 NLT

God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

Galatians 5:22-23 NLT

But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!

Start talking. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- What has been your biggest challenge during this COVID19 shelter in place order? Is there anything our group can do to help you?

Start thinking. Ask a question to get your group thinking.

- Troy mentioned that one of the most important things we can do when things feel out of control or the future is unclear is to trust in God's character and God's word. What has God been teaching you about Himself lately?
- Read 2 Peter 1:1-4. Verse 3 says that we have everything we need for living a Godly life. How did we obtain this everything we need? Do you ever feel like something is lacking in your life? What?
- Read 2 Peter 1:5-8. Read verse 8 in several translations. What's the big idea behind these verses? What's the end result of growing in these 7 areas of Christian maturity?

Start sharing. Choose a question to create openness.

- Of the 3 traits discussed in the sermon in which trait do you find it easiest to grow as well as to practice? Which do you find the most challenging?
- What's your plan for growing in moral excellence? Knowledge? Self control?
- In what area of your life are you out of control, not maintaining balance? Why are you hesitant to give this hurt, habit, or hang-up to God (doubt, fear, pride, etc.)?
- Troy said that the characteristics shared in 2 Peter 1:5-8 are cumulative (i.e., They build on one another.) and individual (Growth in each happens at different times and rates.) He also noted in his introduction that this letter was written to Christians, people who had a relationship with God. That means that each of these characteristics are the result of that relationship. If you do not have that relationship or are unsure of it, please contact your small group leader with your concerns or questions.

Start doing. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- Commit to getting some of the resources that Troy suggested to gain knowledge from God's word and God's world that will help you to live the Christian life. These are listed on the 2nd page of this doc.

Start praying. Be bold and pray with power.

- Father, thank you that we have everything we need in Your Word to live a Godly life. Please help us to seek You and Your word in order to grow in our faith in You. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Start digging. For further study.

- Read the article on the 2nd page and discuss it.

Question: "What does it mean for a Christian to grow in faith?"

Answer: We are commanded in Scripture to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18). This growth is spiritual growth, growing in faith.

At the moment we receive Christ as our Savior, we are born again spiritually into God's family. But just as a newborn baby requires nourishing milk for growth and good development, so also a baby Christian requires spiritual food for growth. "Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good" (1 Peter 2:2-3). Milk is used in the New Testament as a symbol of what is basic to the Christian life.

But as a baby grows, its diet changes to also include solid foods. With this in mind, read how the writer of Hebrews admonished the Christians: "In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil" (Hebrews 5:12-14). Paul saw the same problem with the Corinthian believers; they had not grown in their faith, and he could only give them "milk" because they were not ready for solid food (1 Corinthians 3:1-3).

The analogy between a human baby and a spiritual baby breaks down when we realize how each baby matures. A human baby is fed by his parents and growth is natural. But a baby Christian will only grow as much as he purposefully reads and obeys and applies the Word to his life. Growth is up to him. There are Christians who have been saved many years, but spiritually they are still babies. They cannot understand the deeper truths of the Word of God.

What should a Christian's diet consist of? The Word of God! The truths taught in the Bible are rich food for Christians. Peter wrote that God has given us everything we need for life through our (growing) knowledge of Him. Read carefully 2 Peter 1:3-11 where Peter lists character qualities that need to be added to our beginning point of faith in order for maturity to take place and to have a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

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Resources Troy mentioned in his sermon:

Study Bibles

Life application Study Bible,
John MacArthur Study Bible

Christian biography

The Hiding Place by Corrie Ten Boom
Born Again by Chuck Swindoll
Shadow of the Almighty by Elisabeth Elliot
The God Diagnosis by Dr. Greg Viehman

Christian Living

The Life You've Always Wanted by John Ortberg
Where is God When It Hurts by Philip Yancey
Purpose Driven Life by Rick Warren

Christian Theology

Systematic Theology by Wayne Grudem
The Gospel According to Jesus by John MacArthur
The Story of Christianity by Justo Gonzalez

Christian Ministry

Deep and Wide by Andy Stanley
Sticky Church by Larry Osborne