

EMBERS FROM MY FIRE

May 2006 - By Pastor Ken Damon

WHAT'S NEXT?

Everything worthwhile in life has a “what’s next?” We instinctively recognize that life is a developmental process. Essentially everyone has to learn to sit, crawl, stand, walk, and run. There are rarely any shortcuts. We also have many other tangible goals and accomplishments in the maturing process that include gaining skills from potty training to obtaining a driver license.

Most of these passages of gaining greater freedom and responsibilities are acknowledged and celebrated. People brag about and comment on passages in physical maturing, education, social interaction, athletics, marriage, career, homemaking, and parenting.

The spiritual life should be no exception. As a person matures as a Christian there are many passages that should be recognized. Some of the passages that have been commonly recognized in the Baptist tradition include baby dedications, starting Sunday School, getting a first Bible, youth group, baptism, and church membership.

But what comes after all of that? How does the process of spiritual maturity into young adulthood continue? How will new challenges and greater responsibilities be introduced?

In the past couple of months our congregation has gone through an initial overview of a “purpose driven” approach to church health and growth called C.L.A.S.S. Christian Life and Service Seminars. Participation in the four sessions of the Membership 101 class was very elucidating.

In these sessions we looked at the core of spiritual life development which includes four major areas in church **membership**: 1) salvation, 2) statements of belief and behavior, 3) strategy for communicating the message, and 4) the structure needed to accomplish the process of becoming a healthy and growing church membership.

As this overview of C.L.A.S.S. continued we looked at the four habits of spiritual **maturity** which comprised 1) Bible study, 2) prayer, 3) tithing, and 4) fellowship.

During the month of May we are having an overview of the components needed to begin to do effective **ministry** in the church. This includes a look at each individual Christian’s unique S.H.A.P.E. (yes, another teaching acronym!)

Thus far the input I have received from our congregation during this period of overview and immersion in the philosophy of a purpose driven church has been very helpful. I really appreciate the input and the many great insights.

Some expressed frustration that there was not more time for questions and answers and others expressed a sense of being overwhelmed by the amount of information. That is really good to hear!

It *is* too much information to be fully absorbed! If you retain just 5% of what was taught then you did better than should be expected!

Our first goal was to expose our church family to the whole philosophy of a purpose driven church. We also wanted to struggle with clarifying the driving purpose of our own church. Both of these goals are emerging as we have been *rolling* through the material.

We are not talking about a program but a whole approach to the Christian life and church. This is a long term process. It is going to take time to process but as we come back to the material again and again from every angle, it will really become our own unique purpose as God has called us together at Shroyer Road Baptist Church.

So if you have felt “out of it,” or left behind or confused or frustrated, “fear thou not.” Ultimately people are changed through a process of continual exposure to God’s timeless purposes & principles. What’s next? Clarify. Deeper. Broader. Process.

Pastor Ken