

10-13-19 BUILDING STRONG BONES Series #1 of 6

The Importance of Good Bones—Heredity & Life-style Help

I've been thinking and praying --- WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO GROW IN CHRISTIAN MATURITY? WHAT ARE THE MARKS OF A MATURING CHRISTIAN? and WHAT CAN WE DO AS A CHURCH TO HELP ONE ANOTHER TO KNOW & EXPERIENCE GOD MORE FULLY? (John 10:10)

As I have considered this notion of growing in Christian maturity --- I can't but help to parallel the thinking to that of a child growing up --- daily routines, learning life from family, going to school, relationships with friends and then one day, becoming a more mature adult. **Perhaps, the process is similar?**

I believe that there are 4 key areas of life skills and experiences that we need to BUILD & DEVELOP STRENGTH & PROFICIENCY.

1. THINGS WE DO EVERYDAY
2. THINGS WE NEED TO KNOW
3. THINGS WE DO BEST IN CONGREGATION or LARGER GROUPS
4. THINGS WE DO BEST WITH 1,2,3, or 4 CLOSE FRIENDS

WHAT ARE THESE THINGS THAT WE NEED TO DO to grow spiritually – to grow in our faith, and to grow in the Christian experience & life-style?

1. EVERYDAY ... we need to:
 - PRAY --- connect with God in thought, conversation and sharing
 - BIBLE – read & respond to the written & living Word of God
 - BREATHE SPIRITUALLY – to breathe out & release or confess the bad and then to breathe in the life-giving presence of the Holy Spirit.
 - DEVELOP ESSENTIAL LIFE-SKILLS & PRACTICES INCLUDING:
 - + A capacity & spirit of GENEROSITY, GIVING, & KINDNESS
 - + A capacity & spirit of THANKFULNESS & APPRECIATION
2. As children attend classes to learn essential knowledge & skills, we as Christians need to learn essential doctrines and beliefs such as:

+ Salvation by Grace	+ The TRINITY
+ A Personal & Caring God	+ Jesus the Christ
+ The Holy Spirit	+ Fruit of the Spirit/Gifts of the Spirit
+ Our identity in Christ	+ Stewardship of the 3 T's +1
+ Biblical authority	+ How to Pray
+ How to read/study the Bible	
+ Responsible living & care	
+ How to Know God's Direction & God's Peace	

3. As children become part of a family, a school, and a community --- we as Christians, also must become part of a church family, a church & an extending community of faith that does things together such as:

+ Praise & Worship God	+ Proclaiming the Word of God
+ Celebrate the Sacraments	+ Serve and help one another
+ Serve & help the communities & world that we live in	
4. As children often have a "close friend" or two ... we as Christians need 1,2,3, or 4 others to share and to pray and to encourage us in an especially deep and significant way ...

**FOR THE NEXT 6 weeks we'll be focusing upon
THINGS WE NEED TO DO EVERYDAY TO GROW SPIRITUALLY
WE WANT TO DEVELOP STRONG BONES!**

I'll be using familiar stories from the Bible to help us see and apply these essential life-skills to our own lives. The common theme or metaphor will be the notion of **DEVELOPING STRONG BONES**.

Of course, I grew up in the milk business and remember vividly the promotion "DRINK MILK & DEVELOP STRONG BONES."

The critical importance of "GOOD BONES" has become an expression that conveys ultimate viability **no matter of outward appearances** --- we see the term used in regards to houses (HGTV); relationships (Maren Morris' popular song 'The Bones'); car restorations, and virtually anything requiring a STURDY, STEADFAST STRUCTURE OR UNGIRDING THAT IS CAPABLE OF SUPPORTING EVERYTHING ELSE.

POINT – IF THE BONES ARE GOOD, WE CAN DEAL WITH EVERYTHING ELSE!

That's my prayer for this series ... that each of us BUILD UP AND DEVELOP GOOD STURDY, STRONG BONES THAT WILL ENABLE US TO SURVIVE THE STORMS OF LIFE AND HELP US IN TERMS OF EVERYTHING WE DO AS CHRISTIANS...at home, in life, at work, and in our communities.

GOOD HEREDITY & GOOD FAMILY, while not essential, really helps to DEVELOP GOOD BONES.

Dear God, may we be faithful to the 'good bones' that we have inherited. May we be faithful so that those who come after us may be BLESSED as we've been and continue to be blessed. God, please help us to develop strong bones in one another and in those who come to SHUMC. In Jesus' Name. Amen