

# TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS



A publication of **U of D**, the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

**Talk** together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11  
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

## Questions for Reflection or Discussion

- Why is “balance” **so hard** to **find**—and to **maintain**?

Describe the time when your life was most “out of balance”.

- Read 1 Peter 2:1. “Malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander” is quite a list! This is written to Christians! How common do you think those traits are among true, born-again Christians? Why do you think that?

Peter says to “put them aside”—how do you think that is done? Is it just that easy?

Read Colossians 3:1-11. What resources does God give us; what actions does he require?

What is your role **individually** in this? What role do you need the **corporate** body of Christ to play?

- Read 1 Peter 2:5 & 9-10. Which do you find comes more naturally to you: worship or witness?

Pastor Doug said, *“Properly balanced, worship drives us out to witness, which brings more people to worship. Worship drives us to witness, and witness leads to worship.”*

How did this dynamic play out in your own salvation?

- Which of the three tendencies toward imbalance is **most evident** in your life:

(1) individualism vs. corporate life?

(2) worship vs. witness?

(3) separation from ungodly culture vs. “salt and light” cultural engagement?

- Since “Biblical truth often lies **not** at one extreme or the other, **nor** in the confused mixture of both extremes, **but** at both extremes”, what changes do you need to make in each of the three imbalances?

What **individual** steps must you take? How can TCC **corporately** help you?

# Sermon Summary

Balanced biblical Christianity is extremely rare; it's easier for us to grasp part of a subject than it is the whole. Lopsided Christianity is a very serious thing because God has fully revealed himself, and this revelation of God is perfectly balanced. 1 Peter 2:1-17 is an invitation to a balanced Biblical Christianity.

**I. We must balance the individual and corporate aspects of the Christian life.** Verses 1-4 call believers “newborn babies” and “living stones”. These are two very different metaphors, both of which illustrate what it means to be a Christian. A newborn baby is a little individual. But the living stone metaphor represents the corporateness of the Christian life. As living stones we are mortared into the larger building—the church. Jesus himself said “You must be born again” (John 3:3-8), and Peter agrees (1 Peter 1:23). Once we have experienced this new birth we emerge from it not with the character and understanding of a mature Christian, but as a spiritual baby—weak, defenseless and needing above all else to grow. And that is why in verse 2, Peter speaks of our need to grow in our salvation.

Salvation is a broad concept that embraces the totality of God's purpose for his people. It includes forgiveness of sin and the acceptance with God that we receive when we first come to faith in Christ (“justification”), but it is also that process by which we are being transformed into the image of Christ (“sanctification”). Furthermore, salvation also embraces what theologians refer to as our final glorification, when we become fully like him in heaven. In the opening verses Peter lists five things (malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander) that we must lay aside if we are going to become more like Christ.

Peter uses the newborn baby metaphor to remind us of the necessity of personal spiritual growth. Too often people come to faith in Christ and they think that is all that there is. No, that is just the beginning of the journey! But transformation won't happen automatically—we have to pursue it by becoming students of God's Word (1 Peter 2:2). Spiritual maturity comes to those individuals who study and apply Biblical truth in everyday life. The stones in God's worldwide church are composed of individual born again Christians. Stone by stone this structure is growing; one day it will be completed, and Jesus himself will come to take us to himself. Every Christian is an integral part of the church. The New Testament knows nothing of that grotesque anomaly, an unchurched Christian! The sad truth is that there are many “lone ranger Christians” who have not yet learned the glory of living out their faith in the context of the local Christian community. Then there are the Christians who make the opposite mistake. They are disciplined in their church attendance, and are faithful members of a bible study or a community group—but they neglect the discipline of their own private devotions—their individual time with God in His Word and in prayer. If those corporate props are removed, they collapse.

**II. We must balance worship and witness in the Christian life.** (v. 5-9) It comes as a shock to some Christians to learn that they are priests, and that the whole church is a holy priesthood. Unlike in the Old Testament period, Christians enjoy access to God through Jesus Christ, and all Christians today offer the spiritual sacrifices of worship to God. Every born again Christian enjoys full and unhindered access to God; the church is a worshiping community. But we are chosen in order to proclaim him; the church also is a witnessing community (v. 9). Properly balanced, worship drives us out to witness (for worship is a recognition of the infinite worth of Almighty God), which brings more people to worship. Worship drives us to witness, and witness leads to worship.

**III. We must balance our call to separation and our call to involvement.** (v. 11-17) Peter calls Christians “aliens” and “exiles”. The alien has no rights, and the exile has no home. Our full citizenship is now in heaven. And so in a very real sense we are pilgrims traveling home to God. There is a very clear contrast in that verse between the flesh and the soul. We are to abstain from anything that hinders the progress of the soul to Christlikeness. But we must not use this truth as an excuse to opt out of our earthly responsibilities. Rather than rolling up our sleeves and trying to right injustices, we withdraw into our little Christian subculture and comfort ourselves with the knowledge that one day God will right every wrong. But Jesus calls us the salt of the earth and the light of the world. At some point, the balanced Christian puts a reasonable cap on his lifestyle, and uses what is left over to invest in God's kingdom work—to spread the gospel and to help the poor, the widow, and the orphan.

## Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

**"Five Question Bible Study"** (see page below) is a simple way to study any topic.  
We can use it to "grow in respect to salvation" as we  
"long for the pure milk of the word, like new-born babies" (1 Peter 2:2)...

**Monday**—Read Psalm 19:7.

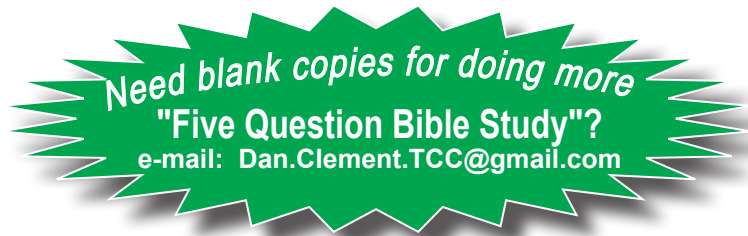
**Tuesday**—Read Psalm 19:8.

**Wednesday**—Read Psalm 19:9.

**Thursday**—Read Psalm 19:10.

**Friday**—Read Psalm 19:11-12.

**Saturday**—Read Psalm 19:13-14.



### Five Question Bible Study

Bible Text: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) it is found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind—and how would **this text** answer it?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?



What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text? [and what was their response?]