

D. The procedure

1. Observe: The past is our witness to the work and care of God.
2. Take each step in accord with the Word of God and the guidance of the Spirit.
3. Press for the "prize"...not for yourself....but for the Lord

E. Conclusion: Live forgiven and look expecting to see the blessing of God in a new day welcoming a new season.

III. A New Season: Encouraged by the Present

A. Introducing our thinking:

This is the time we have to live. There are problems in many areas but with every breath we are given fresh opportunities in our time of life. The fact that we are alive (I am serious about this) is encouraging. We are able to do something if we take life as a gift and use it judiciously. There are two aspects that must be studied more carefully:

1. Living our Identities (Ephesians 4)
2. Growing in grace (2 Peter 3:18)

I will discuss them in this order or as we say in Latin...

B. The Matter of Identity..it makes a giant difference when it is used correctly...no doubt I will illustrate this till all are bored!

1. Now are we the sons of God 1 John 3:2, etc.
2. We are the body of Christ: Ephesians 4:4 (1 Corinthians 12)
3. We are the Lord's people: Psalm 95:7
4. We are the Lord's heirs: Romans 8:17
5. We are the "gifted" people 1 Corinthians 12
6. We are the "stones" of the temple : Ephesians 2

The challenge is to remember our identities and be thankful for them to the point where we want to see them lived out day by day. We are challenged to remember this and to desire to live it out. It is not so simple in practice but it is absolutely clear in possession.

C. Growing in Grace is more difficult to express and to demonstrate... but the challenge is factual and visible in the lives of the Apostles and saints in every age. It is not an optional matter but a taught principle. I humbly offer a few suggestions..