

# Building The House



## Of Your Life

By Bill Fairchild, Jr.

# Uses for This Lesson Material

This lesson material has been designed for multiple uses. You will find below several of those uses. It is our intent through this material to lead individuals to a deeper appreciation for our God who made us ... appreciation for His revealed Word that serves to guide and comfort us ... and to help prepare our souls for eternity! May the Lord bless you as you study from His Word!

## Individual Study:

You can go through this series of lessons on your own at a pace that you are comfortable with. It would be suggested that you study one lesson per week to give you time to really consider the content of each lesson.

## Group Study:

You can use this series of lessons in a group setting such as a young people's devotion where each one who attends the class agrees to keep up with the study from class to class.

## Bible Class Curriculum:

This series of lessons is suitable for a 13-week or quarterly study and it contains sufficient material to be implemented both Sunday morning and Wednesday night if needed.

## One-On-One Study:

This series of lessons is suitable for you and a friend to study together from week to week. And both of you will experience personal growth in your faith and service to the Lord.

... Bill

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# Building The House Of Your Life ...

## Introduction!



Jesus was the Master Teacher, the Master Storyteller! One of His most frequently used methods of teaching was the use of parables. A parable defined means “to cast alongside.” It is the relating of a story in which some familiar situation is ‘cast alongside’ the unfamiliar for the purpose of illustration. One definition you might hear is that a parable is “an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.”

The parables Jesus told are the greatest stories ever told. These parables were profound comparisons: the prodigal son, the farmer who sowed seed in different types of soil, the lost sheep/coin, the good Samaritan, the ten maidens, etc. Most of us probably have at least one of these parables that we would consider to be our favorite.

Which of the parables that Jesus taught is your favorite parable? \_\_\_\_\_

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Jesus relied on the use of these parables to underscore some particular truth He wanted people to understand ... but more importantly, He wanted them to apply His teachings to their own lives! Jesus wanted to capture the attention and imagination of His listeners, but more importantly, He wanted to capture their hearts!

When Jesus reached the climax of His Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), He relied on a parable to clinch His final words. The writer Matthew records the reaction of the audience to His teachings in this way, “*And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.*” (Matthew 7:28,29)

The two main characters in this closing parable are the builders. You see, they are building the same thing, but in different locations. And what the audience then ... and we as listeners today must understand is ... Jesus was not talking about building houses! Jesus was talking about building lives ... yours and mine! Jesus is talking about establishing values and priorities in each of our lives that will last! Jesus is teaching that we can either build our lives on the rock or the sand ... that we can choose to build the house of our lives on His teachings and His ways, or we can choose to build the house of our lives on somebody else’s teachings and ways!

The life situation of these two builders is the same. You see, each builder goes through a storm. Neither builder is able to escape or ignore the storm! Such storms are inevitable, for all of us! Why ... because our lives will be lived with challenges and opportunities, with successes and failures, with joy and with sorrow!

Jesus isn't telling us how to find a safe, comfortable setting, some ideal atmosphere where life is great with virtually no problems or difficulties. On the contrary, His teaching of this parable is intended to force each of us to face reality. Storms are inevitable ... pain and discomfort happen ...to all people, good or evil, young or old!

The two builders of the parable are actually two different kinds of people. But each builder built his house in a totally different manner! One chooses to build on rock; the other chooses to build on sand! Notice the illustration at the top of this lesson and on the cover sheet. It's really quite a contrast isn't it?

- The first builder ...  
He does more than hear what Christ has to say! He hears and acts on the truth!
- The second builder ...  
He hears the very same things ... but he stops there!  
He deliberately does not act upon what he hears!

The outcome ...

***"It did not fall"*** describes the wise builders' success (v.25).

***".... great was its fall"*** describes the foolish builders' failure (v.27).

Do you suppose others were affected?

You see, the wise builder had so constructed the house of his life that no amount of testing, no extent of difficulty would be sufficient to bring him down! Why? **Because his life was built upon the rock ... the teachings of Jesus Christ!** He turned to the Lord in faith and obedience ... he acted upon the truth Jesus teaches ... he built his life upon the principles of Jesus' instructions. As a result, he had a solid and secure foundation ... unlike his counterpart, whose life is foolishly built on the sand! Note the following passages of Scripture, which by the way, would be excellent passages for you to commit to memory (2 Timothy 3:16, 17; 2 Peter 1:3).

Do you remember the words to the song: My Hope Is Built/The Solid Rock?

Here are the words to the first verse and chorus:

**"My hope is built on nothing less Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame, But wholly lean on Jesus' name.  
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand; All other ground is sinking sand,  
All other ground is sinking sand. Amen"**

What each of us must come to grips with is this truth: If we are only hearing and reading the truth of God's Word and not acting upon it ... we are not going to be prepared for life's storms or for eternity (See what James has to say in James 1:21-25)!

The foolish builder heard everything the wise builder heard (Matthew 7:24, 26). The only difference ... was His refusal to do something about it!

How often do we read/hear something from God's Word, only to dismiss or ignore it?  
Be honest with yourself ...

Jesus often punctuated His remarks with the reminder, *"He who has ears to hear, let him hear"* (Matthew 11:15)! To listen with no plan to act ... to read with no interest in responding ... is to miss the whole point of Jesus' teachings! Read the words recorded in James 1:19ff and think about them for a few minutes. What are your thoughts about this passage of Scripture?

We must not miss the point Jesus is making: ... Those who build, both the wise (those who hear and do) and the foolish (those who are hearers only) are really building character, the only thing they can take with them when they die!

Sadly ... many are putting very shoddy material into their buildings! So, let's ask ourselves the following questions:

What kind of builder am I? Am I trying to be a skilled and wise builder, using only the best of materials to build my life?

Or, am I just trying to get by and use the cheapest grade of materials in my life?

We may choose from a number of philosophies in life, but Jesus drastically narrows the choice as to the final outcome of the choice we make. In our relation to God, we must choose whether or not we will build our character, our lives, upon the teachings of Christ (see 1 Corinthians 3:11)!

Building the house of our life upon His teachings, we will construct a house (our life) that will last! Listen to the words of the wise man Solomon recorded in Proverbs 9:1, *"Wisdom has built her house, She has hewn out her seven pillars."* The idea of *"seven pillars"* mentioned by Solomon suggests completeness, just like having all of the pieces to a puzzle to make it complete.

Let's study together several *"pillars"* upon which to rest our houses (our lives) ... that they may stand in the times that lie before each of us and help us to spend eternity in heaven!

Do you remember the words of the song that was often sung in Bible class when you were little? I'm sure you do ... because they have a way of staying with us ... even when we get older! Just in case you don't remember all of the words ... you will find them on the next page. It would be a really good idea if you would choose to keep these words in your heart where you can hear them and say them often. You'll be glad you did!!

## The Wise Man Built His House

The wise man built his house upon the rock  
The wise man built his house upon the rock  
The wise man built his house upon the rock  
And the rain came tumbling down

Oh, the rain came down  
And the floods came up  
The rain came down  
And the floods came up  
The rain came down  
And the floods came up  
And the wise man's house stood firm.

The foolish man built his house upon the sand  
The foolish man built his house upon the sand  
The foolish man built his house upon the sand  
And the rain came tumbling down

Oh, the rain came down  
And the floods came up  
The rain came down  
And the floods came up  
The rain came down  
And the floods came up  
And the foolish man's house went "splat!" [clap hands once]

So, build your house on the Lord Jesus Christ  
Build your house on the Lord Jesus Christ  
Build your house on the Lord Jesus Christ  
And the blessings will come down

Oh, the blessings come down  
As your prayers go up  
The blessings come down  
As your prayers go up  
The blessings come down  
As your prayers go up  
So build your house on the Lord Jesus Christ.



truth  
for today's youth

# Building The House Of Your Life ... Starts With The Heart!



**Text:**

*“My son, give attention to my words; Incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your eyes; Keep them in the midst of your heart; For they are life to those who find them, And health to all their flesh. Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.” (Proverbs 4:20-23, NKJV)*

**Introduction:**

The parable of the two builders is not a feel-good story taken from some Architectural Magazine or some How-To-Build-A-House Manual! As a matter of fact ... the parable is not a guide to building a physical structure at all ... it is a guide from the Lord on how our lives should be built on the right foundation ... Jesus and His will for us!

We have the privilege and the opportunity to decide how we are going to live ... but with this privilege comes responsibility! We must choose by whose standard ... whose will ... we are going to base our lives on!

You see ... Jesus tells us in Matthew 6:24 that we just can't have it both ways ... live like the world and live like God wants us to live! It's either God's ways or our ways! And since we really don't know what is best for us (Jeremiah 10:23) ... then we would be wise to choose God's ways! What does this verse really mean?

How often do we think we really know what's best for us?

What makes us even think that we know anyway?

Do you agree or disagree with the Lord's statement through the prophet Jeremiah?

Illustration: A young person was invited by a friend to study with an evangelist. At the end of the study the evangelist asked if he would like to study again or was he ready to obey the gospel. His answer: “No way ... because if I obeyed Jesus ... it would really mess up my life!” What are your thoughts about this young person's answer? Who do you think he was really trying to “serve?”

Jesus has already said in Matthew 7:21-23 it wasn't going to be enough to please God just by simply saying the right thing! The fact is ... even in all the saying and the doing of those who were listening to Him on that day ... they were failing to do the one thing He has always wanted ... obedience to His will (verse 21)!

Have you ever wanted to know what God really wants from us?

What He really wants from you?

Just exactly what is the nature of the relationship the Lord seeks from each one of us?

What is it God expects of each one of us?

Let's take a closer look into God's Word ... looking for the answers to these questions ... so that we can Build The House Of Our Own Life ... in the way and manner that it should be built! When we look at this study with open hearts ... we will see the necessity of building our lives on the foundation of the Lord and His will! You see ... as we shall discover ... **It All Starts With The Heart!**

## Let's Get Started ...

Taking a time machine back to the Old Testament times we can discover so many valuable lessons of people who made the decision to either serve God and be blessed or made the decision to ignore God, disobey Him and be punished!

In fact, the apostle Paul writes by inspiration, on two different occasions, about the value and relevance of these examples that are a part of the inspired Old Testament in Romans 15:4 and 1 Corinthians 10:11-12. ...

Do you read and study much from the Old Testament?

Have you ever read all the way through the thirty-nine books of the O.T.?

You should you know!

The time in history we want to focus on for just a little while was when the nation of Israel had divided into the Northern and Southern Kingdoms. Time was passing and the first two kings of the Southern Kingdom, Rehoboam (2 Chronicles 12) and his son, Abijah ... had not been a favorable experience for the people! The fact is ... they were wicked kings! What do you suppose distinguishes a good king from a wicked king?

Now Asa becomes the third king of the southern kingdom and for a while he turned his heart toward God (2 Chronicles 14:8-11) and God granted him victory over a million man/300 chariot army (2 Chronicles 14:12-15)!

That's a pretty impressive victory in any age ... don't you think?

On the scene comes a prophet of God named Azariah and he reminds King Asa to keep his eyes on the Lord ... *to stay with the Lord and seek Him* (2 Chronicles 15:2)!

What do you suppose it means *'to keep your eyes on the Lord?'* or *'to be with the Lord and to seek Him?'*

The prophet also warns King Asa of the certainties of obeying or disobeying God! He gave the king hope and reassurance (2 Chronicles 15:7).

Do we need to be reminded of the certainties of obeying or disobeying God? How often do we need to be reminded?

Isn't it also true that we all need hope and reassurance as we go through this life just as King Asa was given in 2 Chronicles 15:7? Please read Hebrews 6:10 and Galatians 6:9-10 ...

Isn't it true that one of the major reasons we should choose to build the foundation of our lives on Jesus Christ is because He offers His disciples hope and reassurance? Read the words of Jesus recorded in Matthew 6:24-34 ...

You see ... for a while King Asa's heart was on fire for the Lord and for the Lord's ways! He made good choices ... He did just as the Lord had told Him to do! But things can change ... and change they did!

Why? Why did things change for King Asa? And, how did they change?

The answer lies in this truth: He stopped looking to the Lord ... for guidance, instruction, comfort and peace! King Asa started looking to other sources ... and that's exactly what so many people are doing today! Please read Proverbs 14:12; Proverbs 16:25 ...

Can you think of some reasons why people would stop looking to the Lord?  
How about in your own life ... do you ever take your eyes off of the Lord?

Solomon writes in Proverbs 4:23 for us to "*guard our hearts with all diligence ...*" We will be taking a much closer look at what the Scriptures mean when we read the command to "*guard or protect or watch our hearts with all diligence*" in the next lesson.

So ... what is the "*heart*" that Solomon is talking about here and in so many passages of Scripture? He is not talking about the fist-sized muscle located in our chest that beats at the rate of more than 100,000 times a day!

The word "*heart*" occurs in nearly 1,000 references in the Scriptures! The Book of Proverbs alone uses the word "heart" more than 65 times in 28 of the 31 total chapters! The "*heart*" of the Bible represents our entire inner being! Read the words of the Lord to the prophet Samuel recorded in 1 Samuel 16:7 ...

You see, God knows ... He really does ... what is in our heart (see 2 Chronicles 16:9)!

The Bible "*heart*" includes the will, motives, feelings, affections, desires, aims, principles, thoughts and intellect ... of each and every one of us!

The Bible speaks of the heart as the center of our thinking and reasoning (See Proverbs 3:3; 6:21; 7:3). The Bible also speaks of the heart to include our emotions (See Proverbs 15:15, 30). We also find that the Bible speaks of the heart as the will of a person (Proverbs 11:20; 14:14).

So the heart of a person is truly the composition of our entire inner being (Proverbs 3:5)!

And Jesus says it is the center ... the source ... of all our conduct!

You see ... it is with the heart ...

That a person loves/rejects God and His will and His plan for men (John 12:48)!

That a person shows mercy ... or plans evil (Matthew 12:33-37; 15:15-20)!

That we can either plant, nurture and cultivate good intentions and desires to be people like Jesus (1 Corinthians 11:1) ... or we can harden our hearts like Pharaoh did (Exodus 7:13, 14, 22) ... bringing God's wrath and judgment upon us!

Take a little time to discuss each of the above ways our heart comes into play ...

Is your heart full of good things ... good intentions ... and sincere desire to please God ... above everything and above everyone ... including yourself?

Please take some serious thought time and reflect on this!

## Let's Sum It Up ...

Every relationship requires some degree of both giving and receiving! Our relationship with God is no different! When we begin to consider all that God has done for us (John 3:16) ... and is doing even now (Romans 8:31-39) ... considering His grace, love, power, and holiness (Romans 11:33) ... there are at least three (3) responses God requires of us! Consider them with me ...

Number One: God wants our obedience! God ... as the Author of all life (Acts 17:24-31) ... gives us (each of us ... all men everywhere) precepts and principles that lead to blessing and ultimately to our eternal well being (1 John 5:1-5)!

Number Two: God desires our praise! Not that He needs our praise ... but when we offer praise and worship to His high and holy Name ... we are acknowledging a need that is beyond ourselves and acknowledging Him as our Creator (Romans 1:25)! We can all take a very valuable lesson from David in 1 Chronicles 29:10-13. Also note Hebrews 13:15!

Number Three: God desires right living from us! This right living encompasses a sensitivity ... an awareness of Him ... and of one another! Note 1 Peter 1:13-2:11!

Also note Micah 6:8! What was the spiritual problem being talked about in this passage? Do you know what spiritual blindness is? Spiritual blindness had caused these folks to offer everything except the thing God wanted the most!

He wanted a spiritual commitment of the heart ... from which right behavior would ensue! You see ... that's all God has ever wanted from mankind!  
Does God have the spiritual commitment of your heart? If not ... why not?

All three of these responses that we have just discussed are actually to be the result of something much deeper: our hearts! God wants our hearts more than anything else ... for without the heart ... the other responses are meaningless (John 4:23-24)!

Listen to the words of Moses recorded in Deuteronomy 6:4-6 ...  
Note the conversation of Matthew 22:37-39!

So ... why? Why does God want our heart's deepest ... most faithful love?  
Because our God who made us ... "*who understands our frame*" (*Psalms 103*) ... knows that if you capture a person's heart ... the rest of his or her life will follow!

Very simply ... it all starts in the heart ... with the heart! Note Matt. 12:34, 35. You see ... words and actions ... both right and wrong ... kind and cruel ... strong and weak ... courageous and cowardly! All of them start with the heart!!! Let's make no mistake at this point in our study ... God wants our whole hearts and ultimately our whole lives, Proverbs 3:5-6! Why? So we can spend eternity with Him! Are we listening ...

Has the Lord captured your heart? If not ... why not?

# Building The House Of Your Life ... Requires Guarding The Heart!



**Text:**

*“My son, give attention to my words; Incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your eyes; Keep them in the midst of your heart; For they are life to those who find them, And health to all their flesh. Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.” (Proverbs 4:20-23, NKJV)*

**Introduction:**

Heart Attack! Whether it's the words you hear regarding a loved one or a friend ... or even spoken to you by your own doctor ... the words are scary to hear!

You wonder if they will be ok. You wonder if you are going to be ok.

You wonder if they are going to die. You wonder if you are going to die!

It's hard for you to imagine that it could happen to you or to some other young person ... but this kind of event can and does happen to young people!

You see ... when we're young we almost feel invincible! We think to ourselves, 'Not me! That can't happen to me!' And even when we get older in years ... folks can be guilty of not giving much 'thought-time' to the physical organ in our chest that dutifully beats more than a 100,000 times per day.

But when our physical heart hurts ... we just know that we can be in some real trouble! And if our heart should fail ... then we die!

The purpose of this second study in this series on the heart is not intended to bring fear! But rather it is intended to help us think about the realities of life!

And that is exactly what Jesus wanted the audience that was sitting and standing on the hillside listening to Him preach the wonderful Sermon on the Mount to do ... to think about the realities of this life and the next life as well!

Building The House Of Our Lives on Jesus Christ and His will is the most important decision that a person can ever make! Jesus knew that if men and women, young and old would rid their hearts of the things of this world ... of the desires of this world ... and give their hearts and lives to Him through obedience ... that their lives would have the foundation that could sustain them through whatever life presented (Matthew 7:24-27).

So, let's take a closer look at our opening passage recorded in Proverbs 4:20-23 and see just how important it is to “guard our hearts!”

## Let's Get Started ...

Having some sort of physical heart disease is certainly a matter of great importance ... but having a spiritual heart problem is of greater importance.

Do you know why? You see it is because of the eternal destiny of each and every one of us who will be judged by the Lord and ushered off to spend eternity (forever) in either Heaven or Hell! Real places prepared for real people! Read and discuss Romans 14:12 and 2 Corinthians 5:10, 11; Matthew 7:23 and Hebrews 9:27 ...

Within each and every one of us, from the youngest to the oldest ... the Creator has placed another "heart" that we're often neglectful of! It is this other "heart" that we want to continue our focus on. You see ... just as our physical heart is susceptible to disease and deterioration ... so is our spiritual heart!

Can you think of some ways the spiritual heart of a person can be diseased?

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Each person must ask the question of how healthy their spiritual heart is. Consider the following questions:

Are the cares of this world interfering with our prayers to God?

Is the faith we have easily discouraged or even defeated by the evil one and his army?

Is our conscience becoming hardened to the evil one?

Are the lines between what is good and evil, right and wrong, becoming blurred and difficult to distinguish?

Looking into the Book of Proverbs we find the various kinds of hearts men can have:

A scheming heart (Proverbs 6:18a)

A cunning, sensual heart (Proverbs 7:9,10)

A wise heart (Proverbs 10:8)

A deceptive heart (Proverbs 12:20)

A hurting heart (Proverbs 14:13)

A tranquil heart (Proverbs 14:30)

A righteous heart (Proverbs 15:28)

A glad heart (Proverbs 15:30)

A haughty heart (Proverbs 18:12)

A heart of rage (Proverbs 19:3)

A pure heart (Proverbs 22:11)

An envious heart (Proverbs 23:17)

Jesus knew that this life can be really hard on the spiritual heart of all people whether they are young or old or somewhere in-between! Why? Because the evil one wants to capture you and destroy your relationship with God!

This world is absolutely overflowing with influences that really can slow our hearts down or speed them up leading to our own spiritual death. Read the warning of 1 John 2:15-17 and discuss its relevance to the Lord's people today.

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This is why Jesus encourages us to build the foundation of our lives on Him and on Him only ...because the foundations of this world will not support in this life or in the judgment!

Well, this might be a really good time to take a close look at your own heart and life to see if you are building your life on the foundation of Jesus Christ and His will. You know, the Bible instructs each of us to “*Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves.*” (2 Corinthians 13:5).

These truths are why the wise man spoke so clearly by inspiration of the need to “*watch, guard or protect*” our heart in Proverbs 4:23!

So, how’s it looking?

Do you see your heart described in one of the examples we just read from Proverbs?

Be honest with yourself!

As we mentioned in the previous lesson, the spiritual heart represents our entire inner being. And it is this spiritual heart that God sees!

Read God’s conversation with the prophet Samuel recorded in 1 Samuel 16:7 ...

God revealed to the prophet that He was not looking at the physical attributes of a man to become the king of Israel ... **He was looking at the young man’s heart!**

And it is no different today in God’s dealings with each one of us! Acceptance of service, worship, sacrifice and living are not based on physical prowess or looks!

God wants our hearts! He wants your heart and mine!

Read the following words recorded in Romans 10:9, 10, “...*that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your **heart** that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the **heart** one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*”

What are the lessons that can be drawn from this passage? \_\_\_\_\_

Isn’t it really clear from this passage that the involvement of our hearts can mean the difference between being saved and not saved?

## **Let’s Sum It Up ...**

God wants our whole heart ... to reveal Himself to us through His word (Ps.19)!

He wants to reveal to us all that He is ... and that includes ... His presence ... His power ... His plans ... His purposes ... and His promises (2Tim. 3:16,17)!

God isn’t playing games with us ... He’s not trying to keep us guessing about His will!

He wants to be found ... but He will be found only by those who honestly seek Him (Isaiah 55:6, 7)! Have you found Him yet? Are you even looking for Him?

God wants our whole heart ... so we can have the courage to be His people (2 Chronicles 15:7)!

Life can be really hard on our hearts! The world in which we live is chalked full of influences that really can and do ... hinder us from having a healthy spiritual heart!

(See John’s warning found in 1 John 2:15-17).

King Asa took courage ... removing idols from the land! He took courage ... and restored worship to God by His people!

When God has our whole hearts ... our hearts beat in rhythm with His!

We want what He wants (Romans 8:14-17)!

We learn to see things from His perspective!

Then, we fear Him more than we fear people (Matthew 10:28-39; 1 Peter 2)!

So, who do you fear the most ... your friends, your enemies, your family ... or do you fear the Lord the most!

Remember "*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge*" (Proverbs 1:7)!

Why is "*the fear of the Lord*" described as "*the beginning of wisdom (knowledge)*?"

When we choose to follow the Lord ... to submit to His will ... to obey His commands ... to live a holy life ... He gives us rest (see 2 Chron. 15:14,15)!

It's the "*peace that passes understanding*" of Philippians 4:6,7!

How would you describe this "peace that passes understanding" in your own words?

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It's the peace of being at peace with God that the apostle Paul is writing about!!! It is the absence of restlessness!

Don't you really want to possess this kind of peace ... the peace that comes from pleasing and serving God?

Turn to 2 Chronicles 16:9 as we bring this study of the spiritual heart to a close ...

The heart that is "*completely His*" ... means we are in harmony with the Lord ... our relationship with Him is unimpaired! It means one whose heart is totally loyal to Him

You see ... our will is in step with His will!

The New Testament calls this "*reconciliation*" (2 Corinthians 5:10, 11, 18-21)!

The Creator of the universe ... the Most High God ... stands ready to help His people (Isaiah 40:11)! What tremendous truth to consider ...

Folks ... our God deserves our hearts ... our hands ... our very lives! He doesn't deserve our leftovers ... but He does deserve the very best we can give ... because He gave His best for each of us (Colossians 3:17)!

You see ... it all starts with the heart! Does the Lord have your heart ... your life? You make the call ... for you know where your heart's loyalty really is found!

*"How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. With my **whole heart** I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden **in my heart**, that I might not sin against You, O Lord!*

*(Psalm 119:9-11)*



## Building The House Of Your Life ... Requires Purpose!

### Text:

***“Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.” (Matthew 25:1-4)***

### Introduction:

Please read the entire text of this parable in Matthew 25:1-13.

Why do **you** think Jesus labeled five of these young ladies wise?

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How does this parable relate to our faith in Jesus Christ?

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What do **you** think verse 13 in this passage means for those of us who are really trying to serve Christ?

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How much influence does the Lord's Second Coming have on your thoughts and life?

A life without purpose, direction, is like building the house of your life on sand. Eventually rain and wind ... troubles and difficulties ... will come to everyone's life. Matthew 7:24-27

The reason we know this is going to happen to each one of us is because Jesus Himself said that it would be so! Can **you** think of some of the storms of life that we could face during our lifetime?

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Many people, young and old, are living their lives without having a real purpose or reason to live! You may already know what you want to do with your life when you finish your education. You may already have an idea of who you are going to marry, or at least what kind of person you want to marry, and even where you want to live. But you may not! There are many people living in this world who are just like a ship that is adrift on the water with no sail, no motor ... and no anchor.

How do **you** think it would feel to actually be out on a lake or the ocean in this position?

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The fact is, many have failed to see this truth that all of life is “...*vanity and grasping for the wind*” Ecclesiastes 1:14. Simply living for this world only will prove to be very disappointing.

Real living is found in living for the Lord! Real living is found in serving the Lord as the wise man, Solomon writes about in Ecclesiastes 12:13, “*Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man’s all.*”

What does this passage mean to you? \_\_\_\_\_

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There is no higher or more noble purpose we can have for living our lives than serving, glorifying, and desiring to be with the Lord forever! (See Philippians 1:21).

Do you believe this statement to be true? \_\_\_\_\_ If not, what higher or more noble purpose could there be?

### **Let’s Get Started ...**

Jesus concludes the parable of the Ten Maidens with the words of warning found in Matthew 25:13, “*Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.*”

Why would Jesus conclude this parable with this warning? \_\_\_\_\_  
Do people ever get comfortable with where they are, whether it has to do with their growth as a person or with their talent or ability? Are you ever guilty of this?

Sometimes people just get satisfied with where they are and if they are not careful they will become indifferent, lazy and complacent! What happens is that they fail to take the time to make the most out of their lives! Sometimes a really talented musician never develops into a great musician because they are satisfied with where they are!

The same thing happens with people, young and old, in their spiritual lives!

Jesus teaches us in this parable that in order to get the most out of our lives ... that in order to accomplish the most we can while we are living in this world ... **we must be prepared and be as wise and hopeful as we can be!**

Very simply, we must have a purpose for living ... and that purpose for living must be, serving and pleasing God! Remember the words of Solomon in Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14.

Do you want to live the rest of your life serving and pleasing God?  
Would you like to know how to live this way?

Let’s dig a little deeper.

### **What’s Special About This Parable For You?**

Consider first of all: **Jesus tells us to be prepared for Him (Matthew 25:4)!**

The wise maidens were prepared for the bridegroom to come by stocking up on the necessary fuel supplies to last through the night!

Looking at your own life, where would you find your reserves when you needed them? Consider the following areas from the perspective of a fuel gauge and place a mark on the fuel gauge to indicate where you find yourself today.

	Fuel Gauge	
	Empty	Full
Studying God's Word	E _____	F
Caring for your health	E _____	F
Morally pure	E _____	F
Positive friendships	E _____	F
Good family relationships	E _____	F
Prayer life	E _____	F

Which of the above areas need some quick and immediate attention?

When should you begin making some changes in these areas to make them stronger?  
How about starting right now? \_\_\_\_\_

Consider next: **Jesus is telling us in this parable to live our lives with wisdom!**

The five "wise" maidens were not only prepared for the bridegroom's coming, they showed wisdom by recognizing the need to make those preparations in advance!

Listen to the words of the wise man, Solomon recorded in Proverbs 1:7, "*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction.*"

Why is this passage of Scripture considered to be one of the key verses of the Bible?

Why would someone not want to receive wisdom and instruction?

How much do you want to receive this wisdom and instruction in your own life?

Be honest ...

Let's consider some of the benefits of wisdom that Solomon points out to us by inspiration in Proverbs 2 and 3.

- 1 Proverbs 2:1-15 ... \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Proverbs 2:16-19 ... \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 Proverbs 2:20-22 ... \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 Proverbs 3:1-2 ... \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 Proverbs 3:3-4 ... \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 Proverbs 3:5-10 ... \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 Proverbs 3:11-12 ... \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 Proverbs 3:13-20 ... \_\_\_\_\_
- 9 Proverbs 3:21-27 ... \_\_\_\_\_
- 10 Proverbs 3:28-35 ... \_\_\_\_\_

Please consider this: The five wise maidens received the benefits of their wisdom by being able to go in to the wedding (v.20)!

What about the five foolish maidens? \_\_\_\_\_

What can you do to become a wise person? \_\_\_\_\_

When you do this, will you become a better builder of your house (life)? \_\_\_\_\_

Consider also: **Jesus is telling us to live our lives in a hopeful way!**

The five “wise” maidens were anticipating the bridegroom’s coming! They were hopeful of his arrival. You and I should be living our lives in a hopeful way as well. Read and discuss the words of the apostle Peter recorded in 1 Peter 1:3, 4 ...

A wise builder who has built his/her life on a solid foundation is filled with hope!

Read and discuss the words of the psalmist recorded in Psalms 71:5 ...

What did the psalmist say that he had received from the Lord since his youth in this passage? \_\_\_\_\_

Can it be the same for us today? \_\_\_\_\_ If not, why not?

What will this hope do for us every day? \_\_\_\_\_

We need to REMEMBER the words of the song **My Hope Is Built** every day of our lives!

### **Lessons For Life ...**

1. The parable of the Ten Maidens is shared by the Lord to underscore the importance of being ready for Christ’s return all of the time!
2. Delays in His coming, at least as far as we are concerned, are not intended to give us any sense of false hope or confidence!
3. Being prepared ... living life influenced by wisdom ... and living a life filled with hope will influence each of us in good ways to live productive, God-honoring lives!

### **Let’s Sum It Up ...**

As you look to your future ... what words come to your mind?  
(Hope, Worry, Fear, Frustration, etc.?)

Please think about the following areas in your life and honestly rate where they fall on the scale between fear (F) ... worry (W) ... and hope (H):

___ Grades	___ Acceptance	___ Money
___ Love Life	___ Parent Pressure	___ Job/Career
___ College	___ Marriage	___ Drugs
___ Friendships	___ Peer Pressure	___ Alcohol

You have the ability to decide for yourself that you are going to either build a good house of life or a cheap house of life!

You will be a wise builder if you will listen to Jesus and do as He says to do ... build with purpose! Live to please God!

***“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20)***

# Building The House Of Your Life ... Requires Faith!



**Text:**

***“Then they brought little children to Him, that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked those who brought them. But when Jesus saw it, He was greatly displeased and said to them, ‘Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God, Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.’ And He took them up in His arms, laid His hands on them, and blessed them.” (Mark 10:13-16).***

**Introduction:**

What an interesting scene is found in this passage of Scripture! Wouldn't you agree? Why do you suppose Jesus' own disciples didn't want the children to come? What point was Jesus making to His disciples when He rebuked them in this conversation?

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How would you have felt if you had been one of the children?  
How would you have felt if you had been the parents?  
Or one of the disciples?

When you picture Jesus blessing these little children (verse 16), what comes to your mind? \_\_\_\_\_

Some of the special qualities of a child would include the following:

- |                         |                         |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Being Trusting _____    | Openness _____          |
| A Sense of Wonder _____ | Sincerity _____         |
| Being Forgiving _____   | Humility _____          |
| Total Dependence _____  | Lack of Prejudice _____ |

Take a few minutes and place a number from 1 to 10 (1 = needs a lot of improvement; 10 = I've got this trait down pat!) in the blank beside each of the above qualities.

In what areas is your childlike faith strong? \_\_\_\_\_

In what areas is your childlike faith weak? \_\_\_\_\_

How do you demonstrate each of these traits in your relationship to Christ?

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If we are going to be good builders of our lives (Matthew 7:24-27), then we must add to the materials that go into our house the necessary pillar of faith! Let's take a closer look into the value of adding this significant quality into the building of our lives.

## Let's Get Started ...

You really can't live a good life (in God's eyes) without having faith in God! Give up your faith ... quit helping it to grow through study, prayer and service ... and it is like someone trying to climb a ladder without the use of their hands!

What is Bible faith anyway? Does the Bible actually tell us what faith is? And is it really possible for people today to have the same kind of faith we read about in the Bible?

One definition of faith that you will hear tossed around a lot in conversation, etc. is "believing in spite of evidence." And to be perfectly honest, this definition is just not true!

To believe in spite of evidence is actually superstition, not faith!

Faith is only as good as its object!

What kind of faith did the people in Hebrews 11 have? It was faith that acted!

The faith of those mentioned in Hebrews 11 wasn't just mental assent (or intellectual faith) or emotional concern (faith in faith) ... **their faith involved obedience to God's Word!**

Please note the verbs used in Hebrews 11 with reference to the different characters:

Abel **offered** a sacrifice (11:4); Noah **prepared** an ark (11:7); Abraham **went** out (11:8); Abraham **offered** up Isaac (11:17); Moses **left** Egypt (11:27)!

Truly, the word faith is a powerful word and one that doesn't just find usage in the spiritual realm!

Our entire lives are run by faith! Faith plays a part in where we go, how we get there, what we eat, etc. Give some examples of how faith runs our daily lives:

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A biblical definition of faith is found in Hebrews 11:1-3. Please take a few minutes to read this passage of Scripture and then write it in your own words to show that you understand what this passage means. \_\_\_\_\_

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Now, in the space below, list the areas of your life, as a person who is trying to please and serve God, that are guided by faith. For example: worship, daily living, school, work, etc. Discuss how Bible faith has an effect in these areas ...

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## What's Special About The Place of Faith?

Please read Chapter Eleven of the book of Hebrews. Now, write in the space below which person(s) of faith you best relate to and why ... \_\_\_\_\_

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Who in your own life is an example of childlike faith? \_\_\_\_\_  
In what areas of life is this person's faith an example for you to imitate? \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to be more like this person in each of these ways?  
How should you go about getting this accomplished?

Is it ok to look at someone else's example and follow them? (Give this some thought before you answer.) What should be the guidelines for following someone else's example? (See 1 Corinthians 11:1) \_\_\_\_\_

According to the Bible, not some book or dictionary written by men, true faith is obeying God ... in spite of feelings, circumstances or consequences!

All of the men and women whose names are listed in Hebrews 11 had to deal with their emotions (did you ever walk through a sea?), with their circumstances (ever find yourself fighting against an entire army?), and with the consequences for their choices (ever say 'No' to a powerful ruler?) Discuss these thoughts ...

These men and women of Hebrews 11 didn't deny their feelings ... they couldn't change their circumstances ... and they couldn't predict the consequences for their choices!

But they trusted God!! And He saw them through!

And that is exactly what Jesus is calling for each one of us to do in the building of our own lives! The Lord wants each of us to give Him our heart and to serve Him with all of our being ... because He is God (See Matthew 22:37-39)!

Abraham left an earthly city because he saw, by faith, a heavenly city (Hebrews 11:10). Do we see that heavenly city?

Moses was able to forsake Egypt with all of its pleasure and splendor because he saw, by faith, a greater inheritance for himself and his people (Hebrews 11:24-27).  
Do you see this principle as well?

Faith is the convicting power that what God has declared in His Word to be true ... is true! Faith is the assuring trust that what God has promised ... He is able to perform!

It is this kind of faith that Jesus wants each of us to have ... and we alone have the responsibility to do what needs to be done in order to obtain it! No one else can do it for us (Matthew 7:21-23)!

**The life of faith is costly!** The life of unbelief is more costly! Read Hebrews 11:35-40 again and you will see ...

List some of the areas in which a life of faith could be costly in your generation:

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Can you see how the knowledge that Jesus longs to hold you in His arms and bless you could give you strength and courage to face these things. His love is irreplaceable!!! He wants to bring you home to His Father, to live forever with Him!

**The life of faith requires diligence!** The words penned by the apostle Paul written in 1 Corinthians 15:58 give us the guidelines for living a faithful life. Discuss their meaning and relevance to our lives today: \_\_\_\_\_

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**The life of faith does not happen by accident, but rather by intent and will and action!** Paul tells us in Romans 10:17 that *“faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.”*

The writer of Hebrews admonished early Christians in Hebrews 5:12-14 to get busy and use what they had learned! The fact is, if you don't use your faith, you will lose it!

### **Let's Sum It Up ...**

The God of Abraham, Gideon, Elijah, David and Daniel still lives!

Please take a close look at the words of Hebrews 11:32 again. It reads, *“And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of ...”* The many successes ... the unbelievable accomplishments ... the unimaginable sufferings ... of those who were God's people of the past ... is a testament to their courage and commitment to follow God's instructions and will ... no matter what! You see, they placed their trust ... their very lives ... in the God of heaven and earth; believing that He would **do** what He said!

**You** have the ability to decide for yourself that you are going to have this kind of faith or not! **You** have the opportunity to decide whether you are going to build a good house of life on the foundation of Jesus Christ or to build the house of your life on sandy soil ... a cheap house of life that will not be able to withstand the storms of life or the storm of the final judgment!

If you could step out in faith and do something Christ-like with your own life, what would that something be? \_\_\_\_\_

What would it take to help make this happen? \_\_\_\_\_

Here is a really good short checklist for living a life of faith:

Is what I want to do something that will bring glory to God?

Is what I want to do something that is biblical?

Can you think of any other guidelines to add to this list? What are they?

Back to our original passage of Scripture ... is your faith truly a childlike faith?

A person will truly be a wise builder if he/she decides to listen to Jesus and then do as He says and build his/her life with faith!

***“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20)***



# Building The House Of Your Life ... Requires Right Thinking!

## Text:

*“For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.” (Proverbs 23:7)*

*“Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit. Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart<sup>[a]</sup> brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.” (Matthew 12:33-35)*

## Introduction:

Building a physical house can be such a wonderful experience! But it can also be trying, exhausting and frustrating! Counting the cost ... allowing for setbacks ... looking ahead are all factors that are involved in the process.

In the same way ... building the house of your life can be a wonderful experience! But it can also be trying, exhausting and frustrating, especially without the Lord! Counting the cost ... allowing for setbacks ... looking ahead (Philippians 3:12-15) are also factors that are involved in the process.

Who controls your thoughts? \_\_\_\_\_  
Are you the one who finally decides what you're going to think about each day? \_\_\_\_\_  
Does anyone else have influence on your thinking? \_\_\_\_\_  
How much influence do they have on your thoughts? \_\_\_\_\_

Do we really know consciously what we're thinking about? \_\_\_\_\_  
Are wrong and improper thoughts considered to be “sin” in the Scriptures? \_\_\_\_\_  
Or is there such a thing as “wrong” thoughts? \_\_\_\_\_  
Is there room in your life for controlling the thoughts running through your mind? \_\_\_\_\_

**We are what we think!** That's what the wise man, Solomon, is saying in Proverbs 23:7 ... and that is exactly what Jesus was saying in Matthew 12:33-35!

Let's take a very close look at the importance of our thoughts and how they directly affect our actions and our very lives!

## Let's Get Started ...

The Amazon River, located on the continent of South America, is considered to be the second largest river after the Nile River. The Amazon River accounts for approximately one fifth of the world's water. One of many interesting facts concerning the river is size

and number of tributaries and their different colors. The Madeira River is called a white river, because its waters carry fine clay particles along its course. The black color of the Rio Negro comes from decaying organic materials that are picked up in the forests through which the Rio Negro passes. There are other rivers that flow over white sands and will often appear as emerald green or turquoise blue in color.

**Here's where we need to give some serious thought:** just as these rivers are colored by the substances picked up as they flow along ... so the streams of our thoughts are colored by the material through which they are exposed! You see ... some of these rivers are very sluggish and wind through low places ... their waters are dirty and full of debris! Are you starting to get the picture we're trying to paint?

Other rivers flow down from the higher places and their current is very strong and as a result they are able to help generate electricity for the country.

Where do the streams of your thoughts flow? What fills and colors your thoughts?

The world in which we live is filled with the influence of the prince of this world, Satan! We are exposed to wicked and evil material in every direction we turn! It might be from the movies we watch ... the video games we play ... the music we listen to ... the programs we watch on TV ... the commercials and advertisements we see ... it might be from the books and magazines we read! (1 John 2:15-17).

In our text of [Matthew 12:33-35](#) ... what does Jesus mean by the words He spoke? And what is the "*treasure*" Jesus is talking about? And why do you suppose Jesus was making this point anyway?

The answers can be found in the truth that Jesus was teaching ... He was warning that our words give evidence of either the good or the evil in our hearts! If the heart is a treasury of good ... that good will overflow through the words spoken and the deeds done! The opposite is just as true!!

Please turn to [Proverbs 3:7](#) where we read, "*Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and depart from evil.*"

How would a person be guilty of being "*wise in their own eyes?*"  
Who determines what is evil and what is good ... right or wrong?  
And how does a person go about "*departing from evil?*" See [James 4:7](#) ...  
Also read [1 Thessalonians 5:22](#) ...

From the passage found in [Proverbs 23:7](#) we are to understand that we must be so very careful about what we put into our minds! Like the physician says, "we are what we eat" ... we are what we think! We must learn to filter our thoughts to be in conformity with what Jesus would have us to be thinking about!

Our adversary, the Devil (1 Peter 5:8, 9), is always looking for a way to deceive us and claim dominance in our heart! It might be through the avenue of an evil thought ... it might be forming the wrong judgment about another person in your mind! Don't ever underestimate the Devil! Never!!

Which is exactly why Solomon cautions us in Proverbs 4:23 to “Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.”

We cannot build upon the teachings of Christ if we are not thinking on His teachings! Additionally, if we are not thinking on right things ... we will not do right things! You see ... your heart ... my heart ... do reflect what’s in them!

Suppose you take two glasses and a pitcher of water and place them on the table. Put a handful of dirt into one of the glasses and then ask someone else to choose which glass they would like to have the water poured into! The fact is we would not put our drinking water into an unclean glass ... because we do not want to drink water that is dirty.

### **Why then should we put our minds in contact with impure ideas or thoughts?**

Read the following passages in light of these truths we’re studying: Genesis 6:5; Matthew 5:28; Matthew 15:18; 2 Corinthians 10:5 ...

If we are going to be wise builders of our lives ... if we’re going to have real character ... the materials we use to build must include the material of right thinking!

Our God is a wonderful, loving and caring God! He has “*fearfully and wonderfully made*” each of us (Psalm 139:14)!

What do you think about the most? \_\_\_\_\_  
Have you given any thought to the fact that your life is reflecting what’s in your heart?  
For example ... in the things you say and the things you do.

You are a thinking, feeling, acting individual! You may be one of those people who thinks a great deal ... or you may be one of those people who really doesn’t want to be giving much thought to much of anything ... but you do think!

Our God has given us the ability to choose the thoughts and the feelings we want to have. And that is such a wonderful privilege ... but it is also an awesome responsibility!

You see ... you can choose what you want to do in your life and with your life! But you will answer for the wrong choices even as you will be rewarded for the good choices (2 Corinthians 5:10)! The law of sowing and reaping stated in Galatians 6:7-9 is just as true for our lives as it is for planting seeds in the field or the garden!

So ... just what kind of a person do you want to grow up to be?  
Why do you want to be that kind of person?  
When should you start preparing?

Other people may make suggestions and share their ideas with you ... but ultimately it is going to be up to you to make the choice! As a matter of fact ... it is really going to be up to you to acquire and maintain your own faith! See Hebrews 11:1-6 ...

You can choose to make your standards as high or as low as you please ... but don’t forget that God knows everything ... He sees everything ... and He will hold us accountable for our choices (Psalm 139)!

Do we really know what's best for us in life? (See Jeremiah 10:23).

Have you ever tried to do what you thought was the best thing, only to discover you were wrong? **We all have!!** Does God ever make mistakes? Does He ever make the wrong call? Does He ever misjudge us? Not according to Psalm 139!

God does know what is best for us ... **all of the time!** And part of that knowledge includes the truth that He has things that He wants us to be thinking about ... just as He has things He doesn't want us to be thinking about.

Turn to Philippians 4:8-9 and read the words of this passage slowly and carefully. What are the things the apostle Paul says we should be thinking about? Please list and discuss the terms he uses:

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This kind of thinking ... well ... it requires a great deal of discipline ... but you can do it with the Lord's help ... if you really want to! See Philippians 4:13 ...

Can we entertain impure thoughts without becoming impure? We can try but that would mean **first** of all, that we were being hypocrites! **Secondly**, Jesus says in Matthew 6:24 that no one can serve two masters!

So, how much impact do you think the world with all of its media outlets is affecting the child of God? How much impact are books, magazines, television shows, movies, the internet having on your heart and your life? Be honest, ok? Ok!!!

### **Let's Sum It Up ...**

We must learn to guard our thoughts! We must learn to keep them in check! If your thinking isn't where it is supposed to be ... you can change it!

Who will even know, you ask ... actually God, and everyone you come in contact with!

Our thoughts do influence our actions! In our efforts to become more like the Savior, it is so important that we work at keeping our minds clean and pure! We must learn to avoid those things that will encourage unclean thoughts! We must learn to choose wisely! We must learn to **ALWAYS** put the Lord first! We must learn to pray often for wisdom, strength and the courage to be counted among God's people! You'll be glad you did when by God's grace you are able to hear the Lord say to you, *"Well done, my good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of Heaven!"*

*Sow a thought, reap an act,  
Sow an act, reap a habit,  
Sow a habit, reap a character,  
Sow a character, reap an eternal destiny!*

**Right Thinking Precedes Right Actions!**

# Building The House Of Your Life ... Requires Purity! Part One



**Text:**

***“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” (Matthew 5:8)***

**Introduction:**

Jesus tells the audience of Matthew 5 that if they will desire to be *“pure in heart”* that *“they would see God!”*

What does Jesus mean by this Beatitude?

What does it mean to be *“pure in heart”*?

What does it mean *“they shall see God”*?

The words of this Beatitude really touch a nerve that is deep within the heart of most people! Don't you want to see God someday ... in Heaven? Jesus promises what all sincere people should desire ... they can see God! But it is conditional!

The wise man, Solomon, tells us in Ecclesiastes 3:11 *“He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts ...”*

What do you suppose the phrase, *“He has put eternity in their hearts”* means?

Can animals speak the thought of eternity ... of life after death? Can the rocks or the trees or any other created thing?

Only man can do that! After all, we have been made in *“the image of God”* (Genesis 1:27)!

Our wonderful and amazing God ... *“Creator of heaven and earth”* ... has made us in such a way that if we choose to believe in Him (Hebrews 11:6) and obey Him (Hebrews 5:8, 9) then Heaven can be our eternal home!

What a beautiful thought to hold on to!

But we must understand that having been made in His image ... His desires for us... His objectives for us ... are high! Our Lord doesn't want anyone to be lost (2 Peter 3:9) ... but He does require obedience ... even as He did of His Son, Jesus Christ!

The fact is that even though God doesn't want anyone to be lost ... not everyone is willing to make Him Lord of their life! Please read Matthew 7:21-23 and Luke 6:46.

Now, back to our opening text found in Matthew 5:8. Most of us understand what it means to be merciful ... to mourn over our sins ... to be a peacemaker. And the fact is, most of us understand the place of persecution even if we have never really experienced it ourselves (Matthew 5:10, 11)!

But when it comes to the principle of purity ... the instruction to be "*pure in heart*" ... we might find things just a little more difficult to grasp and then apply!

Does Jesus mean we must live sinless lives?  
Does Jesus mean we must be perfect?  
Is it possible to live in this world without sinning?  
The answer is 'No' to each of these questions!

Because if this were so, then if just one person other than Jesus Christ could live a perfect life ... He wouldn't have needed to come to earth and make the ultimate sacrifice on the Cross of Calvary!

But He did come ... He did have to die ... He did have to shed His blood ... because we have all sinned (Romans 3:23) and do not have the ability to save ourselves!

So, the next logical question we need to be asking is this:  
Is it possible to live a clean life in a very corrupt world?  
The answer is Yes!

The Bible says that it is possible!

See Philippians 2:15; John 17:14-15; 1 John 2:15-17; 1 Peter 1:13-16.

Building The House of Your Life requires the material of purity ... of mind, body and soul!

These truths challenge each one of us ... regardless of age ... to become a people who find the courage in their faith and in their God ... to do everything that God has instructed us to do in order to be a pure and holy people!

## **Let's Get Started ...**

We know that when the Bible speaks of a person's heart ... it is not speaking of the physical heart ... but the center of a person's life, the seat or place of a person's emotions, intellect and will!

Proverbs 4:23 is a very good example of what we're talking about.

*"Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life."* (NASV)

*"Be careful what you think, because your thoughts run your life."* (New Century Version)

*"Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life."* (NKJV)

The Bible heart is the master control center of your life and of mine! **The Bible heart is the real you!** The real you who makes the choices and decisions of life!

So ... we need to be clear in our understanding that to be "*pure in heart*" ... is to be pure in the very center and core of your life! You see ... if our heart is not pure we are inviting all kinds of problems into our lives ... speaking physically and certainly spiritually!

In fact ... so significant is this truth that the Bible tells us we will one day give an account of our lives ... in every way (2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 12:14)!

We must learn how to guard our hearts ... because it is entirely possible for us to be deceived by our adversary the devil (Matthew 15:19; 1 Peter 5:8, 9; Jeremiah 17:9)!

Words spoken by Jesus, and both the apostle Peter and the prophet Jeremiah speaking by inspiration ... are all telling us in very plain language that evil things thought, said and done ... they all come from within and they defile a person!

To be pure in body is good! To be pure in mind is better! To be "*pure in heart*"... that includes all the rest!

For as Solomon writes in Proverbs 4:23 "*Keep vigilant watch over your heart; that's where life starts*" (The Message).

Very simply ... being "*pure in heart*" means we are pure, clean ... from the inside out!

The word "pure" comes from a Greek word *katharos* ... from which we get our English word 'catheter.' A catheter is an instrument used by medical personnel for removing impurities from the body.

Pure means being free from contamination! When you see a commercial encouraging the buying of pure gold ... they are talking about 100% pure gold or they must tell the consumer that it is mixed with something else!

The Bible even speaks in terms of minerals in a number of places. Consider the following: Psalms 12:6; Job 23:10; 1 Peter 1:6, 7; Malachi 3:3.

Pure means being separate as in the removal of dirt from one's body as one bathes; as in the removal of dirt from clothes with soap! (See Isaiah 1:18)

Being "*pure in heart*" means we have loyalty to only one! It is Jesus who warns His audience in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) that no man can serve two masters (Matthew 6:24)!

Like the 100% pure gold you might buy ... if your heart is 100% pure loyal to God ... there is just no place in your heart where impurity can be stored. There is no door in your heart that will open to let evil thinking, speaking, acting or living come in!

Can you think of an instance where you refused to let some evil come into your heart because you knew God would not approve?

When a person is "*pure in heart*" ... they are a person of sincerity ... they are completely transparent! It is the principle of 'what you see is what you get!'

This person is a person without guile!

Do you know what the word "*guile*" means?

Guile means 'treacherous, cunning, crafty' ... it is reflective of skillful deceit, deception!

Please read the words found in John 1:46-48 ...

Jesus says that Nathaniel was a person *"in whom no guile could be found."*

What a compliment! Jesus knew everything about Nathaniel before He even met him! You see ... Jesus knew what was in his heart! Think about that ...

Doesn't God know everything about us? The psalmist writes in Psalm 139 that He does!! He knows our thoughts, our words, and sees everything we do!

Think about this Bible truth for just a minute ... how could the Lord be fair and just at the Judgment if He didn't know all things about us?

Please read Jeremiah 17:9-10:

*"The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it? I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings."*

This is an awesome passage of Scripture and you need to highlight it or underline it so that when you turn the pages ... it will stand out!

## **Let's Sum It Up ...**

All of us need to be guarding or protecting our heart to insure genuine purity! The addition of deceit to a person's heart makes it impure! We must decide ... that we will not be like the world around us! Period!!

Have you ever been down inside a coal mine? It is an eerie and most uncomfortable feeling with its low ceilings and its blackness! Even just a few steps inside a mine and you will pick up the residue of black dust! Not a pretty picture!

As you and I are walking in the dark, low-ceilinged coal mine of the world ... we need to remember to:

1. Pay very close attention to what you look at (Colossians 3:1-2; 1 Peter 1:13)!
2. Give serious thought to the fact that sin always promises pleasure, but fails to talk about the consequences (1 Peter 1:14)!
3. Begin every day of your life by remembering and stirring up in your heart ... in your mind ... greater respect and reverence for the God we serve (1 Peter 1:17; 2 Corinthians 7:1)!

Is your life an open book ... or are you hiding some things from your family and friends? If you have not been living, thinking, and acting as you should ... you need to talk with the Lord about it (2 Peter 3:9; Acts 8:22) ... because He is more than willing to forgive you if you are already a child God ... and He is more than willing to forgive all men if they will accept and obey His will!

***"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." (Matthew 5:8)***

# Building The House Of Your Life ... Requires Purity! Part Two



## Text:

***“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” (Matthew 5:8)***

***“But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.’”***

***(1 Samuel 16:7)***

## Introduction:

Heaven is a wonderful place filled with beauty and grace (Revelation 21, 22)! John’s inspired postcard of Heaven from the lonely and isolated Isle of Patmos gives us a foretaste of what awaits “...those who serve the Lord with all of their heart, soul, and mind” (Matthew 22:37-38).

Jesus is quoting a passage found in Deuteronomy 6:5 and also Deuteronomy 10:12; 30:6. Jesus is saying that our love for Him is to be so complete ... that it covers every aspect of our lives!

In Heaven ... among other wonderful truths we learn from God’s Word ... there will be no sin ... no hypocrisy ... no deception ... no temptation ... no evil whatsoever! Revelation 21:27 reads, “*But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.*”

In this world in which we live ... our Creator fashioned the entire universe to function according to His standard of order, holiness and purity! Hebrews 1:1-4; Colossians 1:17

Our God has never sinned in any way ... He is so pure and He is so holy that the Bible says in Psalms 5:4-6 ...

His Heaven is pure and holy and is absolutely and completely free of all sin and evil!

Let’s take an even closer look at God’s requirements to live pure lives (Matthew 5:8).

Whatever we allow to enter into our hearts is who we really are! It’s where our real feelings reside! We determine what we’re going to think about! You see ...

It is how we **really** feel about God!

It is how we **really** feel about our family!

It is how we **really** feel about our friends!

It is how we **really** feel about those circumstances and events that have happened in our lives!

It is how we **really** feel about our enemies!

In fact ... it is the real choice we would make if there were no boundaries or restraints ... and no consequences!

This is all about what really goes on inside our hearts! Our great God said to Samuel as He was searching for a man to replace Saul as King of Israel in 1 Samuel 16:7 ...

So ... as we continue our study of Purity ... let's all be thinking clearly and open-mindedly about this principle of being "*pure in heart*" as we Build The House of Our Life!

## **Let's Get Started ...**

What comes to mind when you hear the words "*pure*" and "*purity*"?

What are some ways besides sexual abstinence that people can stay pure?  
Please define the word 'abstinence': \_\_\_\_\_

Here is the Dictionary definition: *"the act or practice of refraining from indulging in various appetites, as from foods ... from alcoholic beverages ... from promiscuous sexual conduct."* It is the willful avoidance of pleasure thought to be harmful. Synonyms would include 'self-denial; sobriety'.

The story is told of a father who was complaining about the amount of time his family seemed to be spending watching TV. He felt like his kids were watching way too many shows/movies instead of doing their homework and taking care of their chores. He felt his wife was spending way too much time watching the talk shows and HGTV, rather than cleaning the house, etc. Guess what his solution was? "As soon as football season is over, I'm going to pull the plug!"

We all know what that is ... **it is hypocrisy!**

Hypocrisy defined is: "an act of playing a part on stage, a feigning to be what one is not; the false assumption of an appearance of virtue or religion." Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary

You see ... a hypocrite is someone who fakes virtue or qualities he/she does not have!  
It is playacting ... pretending! They're not the real deal!!

The Broadway production of The Phantom of the Opera written by Andrew Lloyd Webber tells the story of a disfigured musical genius who haunts the catacombs beneath the Paris Opera House, waging a reign of terror over its occupants.

Just like the Phantom who hides his disfigured face behind a mask to hide his real ugliness ... we all wear masks of different kinds to hide what's really in our hearts! Can you name a few 'masks' that might be common to various age groups?

Most of us know the origin of the word "hypocrite" is found originally in the Greek to define an actor/actress wearing different masks for different roles on stage.

We see in the news almost daily ... politicians, teachers, administrators, physicians, financial leaders and shakers ... examples of hypocrisy; and when we hear of their actions ... we are generally disgusted and appalled!

**To be called a “hypocrite” is not a compliment!**

Jesus spoke His most pointed and scathing words to the Pharisees and Sadducees and their hypocrisy. See Matthew 6, 23 as good examples of His words.

These religious leaders were viewed as being righteous, both by themselves and by the people, based on their external acts! But the Lord knew otherwise! He could look into men’s hearts and see what was really there, seeing their real motives for doing what they did and teaching what they taught! (See Mathew 23:27, 28)

In the same way, our Lord is able to look into our own hearts and see what is really there! That can be a very comforting thought if you are trying to live right! But it can be a very discomfoting thought if you are not living as you should ... no matter how good of an actor or actress you may be! Your thoughts ... are not hidden from God!

When the Lord taught the Sermon on the Mount, He gave the listeners then and to us today, the principles that make up a genuine and authentic life! The entire Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5, 6, 7; Luke 6:20-26) can actually be read in a matter of fifteen minutes or so!

Note: May you be encouraged to read this section of Scripture regularly ... you will begin to see some progressive growth and development in your spiritual life (2 Timothy 2:15) when you do!

Throughout the Old and New Testaments ... the clarion call remains the same ... God’s people are to be different and holy ... even as their God!

Note Leviticus 11:44, 45 and 1 Peter 1:13-15 ...

Holiness has always been intended by God to define those people who are His people! So ... what happens when His people are not acting in a holy way?

Maybe we should be asking right here in our study:

What does being “different” mean in the Bible?

Is it being weird?

Is it dressing in some strange fashion?

Is it walking around chanting some phrase?

What does being “different” mean to you?

As their history is recorded in the Bible ... when the Lord’s people obeyed His commandments ... they were rewarded! But when they disobeyed His commandments ... they were punished!

Read Deuteronomy 30:19-20 and discuss the meaning of this passage ...

Read Joshua 21:43-45 and discuss the meaning of this passage ...

Now, read Joshua 23:3, 6-13 and discuss the meaning of this passage ...

Finally, please read Titus 2:3-5, 11-14 and discuss the meaning of this passage with particular emphasis on the phrase “... *and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works*”.

Paul is saying that the Lord’s people have been called by the gospel to live in such a way as to be considered distinctly His ... uniquely His!

So, what does your understanding of this passage mean to you personally?

Jesus tells us in Matthew 7:21-23 that it is just not enough to say “*Lord, Lord!*” You see ... that’s what hypocrites do!

But when our faith acts and demonstrates our allegiance ... our loyalty ... our hearts ... our obedience ... He knows! Read the words of Luke 6:46 ...

Jesus was saying that giving ‘lip service’ just won’t make a person right with God! Haven’t we all been guilty of giving ‘lip service’ to our parents ... or to our boss ... or to a teacher?

Haven’t we all been guilty of giving ‘lip service’ to the Lord?

Purity of thought will lead to purity of life! If we are pretending to be something we are not ... others will probably figure it out before too long ... but more importantly God already will know!

### **Let’s Sum It Up ...**

Purity ... it is something that God requires of every man and woman ... of every young and older person ... every pre-teen, every teenager, every college-age person ... every young professional ... every young married person ... every young parent ... every grandparent ... and everyone in-between!

The Bible instructs us ... each one of us ... to “*not be conformed to this world.*” (Romans 12:1, 2)! We live in this world ... but we do not have to be like this world!

God has every right to tell us in His Word how we are to live because He is the Creator of this world and all that is in it!

No one ... we repeat ... No one is perfect! We all make mistakes (Romans 3:23; 1 John 1:5 – 2:1)! But our gracious and loving Lord is so willing to forgive us (2 Peter 3:9)! We have the responsibility and the obligation to “*acknowledge our sins*” (1 John 1:9) ... to repent of those sins (Acts 2:38; 8:22) ... and to forsake those sins (Proverbs 28:13)!

**“*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*” (Matthew 5:8)**

# Building The House Of Your Life ... Requires Courage! Part One



Text: Luke 14:25-35

## Introduction:

“We are bound for Canaan land, tenting by the way. Who shall lead us on the road? Choose your King today. When the dark Red Sea of doubt billowed in our way, then He parted every wave, so He will today. Just before us Jordan rolls, just across the way. We can safely trust the Lord; He shall lead today. Dare to stand like Joshua; Dare to say the word. As for me and for my house, we will serve the Lord.”

Song ***Dare To Stand Like Joshua***

What a great song! It is so encouraging ... it is so rousing ... it is so challenging! “Dare to stand like Joshua” is really an appeal to the heart of every person who sings the words ... to stand up for the Lord and His ways!

Examples of individuals and even nations standing up for the Lord are plentiful in the Bible! Consider these few of many examples to be found:

Abraham leaving his homeland at God’s command!

Abraham’s willingness to offer his own son, Isaac, as a sacrifice!

Moses confronting Pharaoh on behalf of God’s people!

Job facing loss of virtually everything except his wife and his own life!

Elijah facing the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel!

There are so many examples we could consider ... but what we really need to do is to think about the place of courage in our own lives! Why? Because it is vitally important that we realize the necessity of using the right building materials in the building of our own lives!

A book entitled *Fox’s Book of Martyrs* is a very informative and inspirational account of the suffering early Christians experienced.

Some were killed with the sword ... others were burned at the stake ... while others were fed to wild beasts in the arena!

The fact is ... being a Christian required great courage! Courage that was open and observable.

What are your thoughts about these early Christians and their courage?

The goal of every Christian should be that of becoming more and more like Jesus Christ! There is no shortcut to having Christ-like character!

Jesus Christ is the perfect example of one who possessed courage and who demonstrated it every day of His short life here on earth!

## Let's Get Started ...

Most of the popular images of courage have to do with men fighting on a battlefield somewhere! It's the soldiers coming ashore ... it's the Blue and the Grey battling within our own country ... it's the soldiers fighting in the Middle East!

Very simply, the images of courage relate to warfare, bloodshed, and the sounds of war.

But the other faces of courage would include a family dealing with terminal illness of a family member as well!

The face of courage can be seen with a single mother or father trying to raise their family ... or a parent trying to hold a family together after the death of the other parent!

The face of courage can be seen with the young person who is trying to remain pure when so many around them are making another choice!

Do you know what courage is?

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Let us begin with a secular dictionary meaning. Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition, defines courage as "Mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear or difficulty." Some synonyms are: mettle, spirit, resolution, tenacity.

"Courage is not simply one of the virtues, but the form of every virtue at the testing point." ~C.S. Lewis

"Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen." ~Winston Churchill

**Courage defined: It is a quality of mind or spirit that enables us to meet danger, opposition, or the challenges of life with fearlessness, calmness, and firmness.**

The fact is ... someone who has courage may still feel very much afraid ... but though he/she is afraid ... with the Lord's help and strength they can act with confidence!

Is there a story in history that reminds you of someone having courage?

Name it \_\_\_\_\_

Do you know what a coward is?

Define the word: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever known or read of a person being a coward? \_\_\_\_\_  
How do you feel about someone being a coward? \_\_\_\_\_  
Have you every acted in a cowardly way? \_\_\_\_\_  
How did that make you feel? \_\_\_\_\_  
Was it as if there was no problem? Or did you feel guilty? \_\_\_\_\_

Does being courageous mean there is no fear? \_\_\_\_\_ Discuss ...  
What is fear anyway? \_\_\_\_\_  
Are you ever afraid? If so, what are you afraid of? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever wanted to do something that was right or stand up against something that was wrong ... but you were afraid to do so?  
What were you afraid of? \_\_\_\_\_ Discuss your fears ...

In our text of Luke 14:25-35 ... who was Jesus speaking to? Note verse 25 ...  
The words expressed by Jesus in verse 26 must have been shocking when He said, *"If anyone comes to me and does not **hate** his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life, he cannot be My disciple."*

What in the world is Jesus talking about in this passage? Are we to really hate our family and friends?

Jesus was actually declaring the high cost of discipleship!

The "hatred" that Jesus was calling for is actually a lesser love! You see ... Jesus was declaring that His disciples would need to cultivate such a deep devotion and commitment to Him that serving Him would always take precedence ... over everything and everyone! That's a difficult command to follow!

Read Matthew 10:37-39 for a little more insight as to the meaning of these terms.

Jesus really offers to potential disciples the first step that needs to be taken by a wise builder in Luke 14:28-30 ...

Jesus was setting the cost of discipleship very high ... and the cost alone would cause many to choose not to follow Him!

Jesus further emphasizes the need of properly evaluating the cost of following Him in Luke 14:31. Just think about it! Wouldn't it be crazy for a king to enter into a war with an enemy without counting the cost of doing so?

Just as an exercise to make this applicable in your life ... try and put the words of Luke 14:33 into your own words. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

If we are going to be good builders of our lives (Matthew 7:24-27), we must of necessity include the material of courage!

Jesus did not ask others to be what He wasn't Himself!

He perfectly modeled this wonderful character trait! Even though He is described in the Scriptures as *"a Man of sorrows"* in Isaiah 53:3 because of the many burdens and sufferings He endured ... He was exposed to the same types of potentially volatile situations as we are today ... and He was victorious!

Jesus speaks of "meekness" (Matthew 5:5) and describes Himself as *"being meek and lowly in heart"* (Matthew 11:28-30).

But if we were to paint a picture of Jesus Christ as a hero ... we would need to include the following situations that also occurred in His life:

When Jesus saw the moneychangers in the Temple recorded in John 2:15-16, He *"made a whip of cords and He drove them all out of Temple ... poured out the money of the hypocritical changers and overturned their tables ... driving out their sheep and cattle ... saying 'Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!"*

What great boldness and courage He showed on that day! He acted with righteous indignation! What a Savior!!

Consider the example of Christ shown on numerous occasions as He confronted the Scribes and Pharisees face-to-face in front of the people and hurled statements which even at a distance of some two thousand years still smoke like thunderbolts. Consider the words He spoke in Matthew 23 ... What courage He demonstrated!

And then we simply must consider the courage of Jesus displayed when He went to the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36-ff; Luke 22:40-46). It should be very apparent to us that we will never acquire the same level of courage that Jesus displayed on this terrible night and the following day!

You see ... all of these situations are not only picturesque and thrilling ... they are events that changed the course of history and the lives of millions!

Do they change your attitude toward life, others and God?  
Have they already made a difference in your life?

### **Let's Sum It Up ...**

Courage ... it's just one of the wonderful attributes of Jesus Christ that enabled Him to be the perfect example that He is for all mankind to emulate!

**Courage is the hard right against the easy wrong!**

# Building The House Of Your Life ... Requires Courage! Part Two



**Text:**

***“And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above, and on earth beneath.” (Joshua 2:11)***

## **INTRODUCTION:**

Sometimes the best way to illustrate a concept or principle is through use of a negative. The word **courage** came into the English language from a word strongly connected to the heart.

The Bible strengthens this connection by using courage and the heart together in several passages. In our passage, we find that the loss of courage occurred when the people’s hearts melted (lost strength). In other passages, we find that courage is connected to the strengthening of the heart

Listen to the words of the Psalmist recorded in Psalm 27:14 *“Wait on the Lord; Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say on the Lord.”*

Also read the following words of Psalm 31:24 *“Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart, All you who hope in the Lord.”*

You see ... the Bible offers to us great words of comfort and encouragement for all times in our lives ... including those times when we really need to show courage!

It was the apostle Peter who encouraged the early Christians with the following words to realize that they were not alone ... just as we need to be encouraged. Read them slowly ... read them carefully ... underline them ... memorize them!

*“Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” (2 Peter 1:2-4)*

Please think about the following:

- How do you feel when you are afraid? The Bible describes this as *“our hearts melting”*. It's a sinking feeling. Have you ever felt this sinking feeling in your own heart when confronted by some challenge or moment when courage was needed? What happens is we want to run from what is making us afraid? When we have courage, our hearts feel strong inside as if we could do anything.
- Knowing that courage means the strengthening of the heart, do you think courage is always a good thing? Are there times when a strong heart might rebel against God?
- Would you consider yourself to be a courageous person? What type of things do you think would help you in this matter?

As we studied in our last lesson ... we briefly noticed how Jesus of Nazareth exemplified bravery at its best ... courage at its highest ... and great heroism at the end of His earthly life!

So, in light of these truths ... there are some lessons we need to draw from when it comes to God's Word ... that if applied ... will enable each of us to **Build The House Of Our Life** in a way that the Lord will call us *“wise builders”*.

### **Let's Get Started ...**

There is a very interesting statement the Lord had one of His prophets write down in Ezekiel 22:30. *“So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one.”* That is truly a disturbing thought!

God is still looking for men and women ... young and old ... who will stand with the Lord against the forces of evil that are so prevalent in this world! Are you one of those people? Do you want to be one of those people? We're talking about people like Joshua and Elijah ... like the apostle Paul! Our God is still looking for people who are willing to make a difference!

Joshua was one of those people! He was selected by the Lord to be the new leader of Israel to lead His people into the Land of Canaan after Moses died (Joshua 1)!

As God spoke to Joshua ... as He encouraged him to be the leader the Lord knew he could be ... read the words recorded in Joshua 1:1-10 ...

Notice how often God says to Joshua, *“Be strong and of good courage”* ... (verses 6, 7, 9) ... and then notice how God qualifies all of this with Joshua's need to be true to the Lord and to His will! It is no different today!!!

Elijah was one of those people! His name means “My God is Jehovah” or “The Lord is my God.” He was called upon to be courageous in a stand against the evil king and queen, Ahab and Jezebel.

They may have taken control of the land of God’s people ... they may have made Baal the god they worshiped and wanted the people to worship ... but Elijah with the Lord’s help would defeat them and their evil prophets in the famous contest on Mount Carmel recorded in 1 Kings 18. You really need to read this Bible account of great courage!

Sometimes we find ourselves in situations where the majority of our friends have decided to do something that is wrong! We know that it is wrong! We’ve learned from the Bible ... we’ve probably learned from our parents ... and perhaps from others we know.

We need to **speak up and stand up** for that which is right in spite of the opposition!  
**This is having courage!**

Can you think of some situations that would fit the above description?  
Have you ever been in one of these situations?  
How did you handle it?  
Do you wish you could have done it differently?  
How about the next time it comes up?

Sometimes we can find ourselves in situations where there might be only one other person and he/she wants us to do things we shouldn’t do, or go some place we shouldn’t be going!

We need to **speak up and stand up** for that which is right in spite of the opposition!  
**This is having courage!**

If you haven’t found yourself in one of these situations, **one of these days you will!**

How can you prepare yourself to deal with one of these situations wisely?

Read the words of Proverbs 3:6 and Proverbs 11:14 ...

How do these passages relate to the need for good advice in our lives?

So, who can you go to for good sound advice and counsel?

The answer should be obvious! Seek the advice and counsel of God! Read the words of Psalm 19:7-14. This is another one of those passages that you need to underline or highlight so that it will always stand out as an important passage to look to often!

You can also go to someone who is older who truly loves the Lord and wants to do what is right!

Following the crowd will usually get you into trouble the Bible warns in 1 Corinthians 15:33. When it comes to following Jesus or the crowd ... who do you usually follow?

Complete the following sentences:

My biggest frustration with peer pressure is \_\_\_\_\_  
My biggest frustration in my attempt to follow Jesus is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

### **Let's Sum It Up ...**

The secret of Elijah's courage ...along with other Bible characters that God speaks of with favor ...is no mystery. It is available to every child of God.

**He was a man of great faith!** He entrusted the ordering of his life unto the Lord.

**He was a man of prayer** who found in communion with God in the desert ... a strength that never failed him in the courts of wickedness! Nothing would turn him from the steadfastness of his purpose and his devotion to duty!

A person ... young or old ... just cannot build their life upon the teachings of Jesus without manifesting courage!

There will be many times in each of our lives when courage must be present and shown! Read the words of Scripture in 1 Corinthians 16:13; Philippians 1:27-28; 2 Timothy 1:7; and Proverbs 28:1.

Courage that counts doesn't rely upon a right time or a convenient time ... it stands when others run! Jesus says it this way in Matthew 12:30 "*He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.*"

Your time will come ... will you be one of God's people of courage?

You make the call!

In a book called *Children's Prayers*, one of the children expresses the challenges and risks that a life of faith in God can bring and wrote God a note that simply and pointedly said,

"Dear God ... count me in! Your friend, Herbie."

Can the Lord count you in ... in among His people?

**Courage is the hard right against the easy wrong!**



# Building The House Of Your Life ... Requires Making Right Choices!

## Text:

*"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon"* (Matthew 6:24 NKJV). Also note NCV

*"He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad".* (Matthew 12:30 NKJV)

## Introduction:

Choices! We make choices every day in our lives from the time we wake up until the time we lay our head down on the pillow at the end of the day! Some of these choices have little effect on our lives ... while other choices can have a tremendous effect on us ... both now and in the future! What are some of the choices we will make that can/will have great significance?

Jesus is saying in these two passages of Scripture that it is just not possible to be on the Lord's side and on the world's side ... at the same time! Yet ... how many of us try? How many of us keep on trying? It's like trying to put a square block in a round hole ... it just won't work! So ... why do we keep making the same mistake time after time?

Is it because we don't believe Him? Or is it because we just might not care enough about the Lord and His will to completely serve Him?

Could it be because we love some part of the world too much to let go of it?

What are your thoughts about why so many of us just can't seem to learn these lessons? \_\_\_\_\_

Jesus is telling us in Matthew 12:30 that there is just no middle ground! Period!!!

Having been privileged through the years to speak with hundreds of young people ... when they become comfortable in talking about their lives and the choices they've already made ... it becomes very clear by the tone of their voice and the body language they show ... that there have been some regrets! Please read the following statements and see if you can identify with any of them in your own heart and life:

"I've made some serious mistakes in my life!" "I really blew it!" "I can't believe I have said and done some of the things that I have said and done!" "Somewhere along the way I lost my zeal for the Lord!" "I didn't want to be around the Lord's people while I was making some really bad choices!" "I made the mistake of choosing the wrong kind of people to run around with!"

Can you think of some other statements that are similar in nature? Name them:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

So, as we think about these statements ... what happened to cause these people to express such sad and disappointing things about their own lives? The answer is found in the same way when it comes to our own lives! Read Romans 3:23 and you will see what we're talking about. You see ... somewhere along the way ... for whatever the reason(s) ... **a wrong decision ... a wrong choice ... was made!** Can you identify with what we're talking about? Sure you can! What are your thoughts about all of this?

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As we continue in our understanding of what the Lord says about **Building The House Of Your Life** ... we simply must come to appreciate the significance of **Making Good Choices** ... of **Making Right Choices!**

The apostle Paul admonished the church at Ephesus in Ephesians 5:17 "*Therefore do not be unwise, **but understand what the will of the Lord is.***" Knowing and understanding what the Lord's will is through His Word will provide us with the needed spiritual wisdom to live right ... to be good ... and to make the kinds of choices that will please God and influence others to choose to please Him as well! So ... do we really want to know what God's will is for each of us? \_\_\_\_\_ Why do we want to know these things? Is it just to say that we know them or is it to really come to know and understand them in order to obey Him? Hmmm ...

### **Let's Get Started ...**

When Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) He was challenging those would-be disciples ... both then and now ... to realize that He was calling for people to make right choices to serve and be pleasing to the Heavenly Father! Consider briefly these alternatives or choices that Jesus says we must make:

There are actually only two kinds of treasures (Matthew 6:19-21) ... two kinds of vision (Matthew 6:22-23) ... and two kinds of masters (Matthew 6:24)!

Jesus explains that behind the choice between the two treasures (where we lay them up) and the two visions (where we fix our eyes) ... there lies the more basic choice between the two masters (whom we are going to serve)!

What are the two choices when it comes to our choosing of a master to serve?

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What does the word "*mammon*" mean? Defined: "earthly, material possessions." Is Jesus saying that it is wrong for us to have 'things' or it's wrong to own 'things' or even to want 'things'? Discuss ... No ... Jesus is saying ... you can have things ... you can own things ... you can even desire things ... just don't let the "*things of this world*" own you!!!

Explain in your own words what these things mean to you and how they can serve as a guide in your decision-making in the future: \_\_\_\_\_

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Jesus is saying that every one of us is going to serve somebody! What will your choice be? When it comes to choosing between the two treasures (Matthew 6:19-21) ...we each have a choice to either make the safe investment, or the investment in the treasures of this life that will decay and be unable to satisfy!

*"Treasures on earth"* ... what would these be? Can you think of a few examples?

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Read the Lord's parable of the rich fool in Luke 12:15-21 ...

*"Treasures in Heaven"* ... what would these be? Can you think of a few examples?

How about the development of a Christ-like attitude and character? (Give an example.)

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How about the increase of our faith ... our hope ... and our love? (Give an example.)

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How about our growing in the knowledge of Christ and of sharing the good news of the Gospel with others? (Give an example.)

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How about sharing the *"cup of cold water"* (Matthew 25:31-46) (Give an example)

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You see ... **the choice is ours to make!** What's most important to you? Be honest ... Jesus is saying to us that our hearts will always follow our treasure! So, where's your treasure?

Jesus is also telling us in Matthew 6:22-23 that there are two visions (light and darkness) that we must choose from ... and only two! And what He is really saying is when we choose the right master to serve (the Lord) ... we'll have the right vision ... to see and discern in a single-minded way. Think about this for a moment ... if a person's heart is single in its love towards God and the things of God ... then he/she will have clear views when it comes to the relative importance and value of things ... things temporal and things eternal!

You can mark this down as being true: if the heart looks with a double interest on both the earthly and heavenly treasure ... it will always lead to a double-mindedness.

Read the words of James 1:6-8 ... You can rest assured that there is no peace to be found when you are being torn between two loyalties! No peace!

Can you imagine going out of a date ... with two people at the same time ... one sitting on either side of you! Each one has specific likes and dislikes. Each has their own idea about where they want to go ... what they want to eat ... etc. Who will you try to please? So ... the choice we must make is the choice of single-minded vision or the unsettling place of double-vision? You must make the call!

There are two gates with two specific paths ... the narrow gate that leads to a narrow way ... and the wide or broad gate that leads to destruction (Matthew 7:13,14). We must choose!

There are two kinds of trees that each bear their own peculiar fruit! There are those who choose to teach and practice truth ... and they bear the good fruit of God's will in their

lives! Then, there are those who teach and practice falsehood ... and they bear the evil fruit of false teaching in their lives ... and their evil influence leads others away from the truth, producing bad fruit in their lives as well (Matthew 7:15-20)! Please read the words of Proverbs 14:12 very slowly and carefully! You see ... each of us must choose which kind of fruit we want to bear!

There are two kinds of professions made by men religiously ... namely "I did it my way and can't believe the Lord wouldn't be pleased with my deeds," (Matthew 7:22, 23) ... while others profess "I did the things I did ... I made the choices I made" by God's standards and by His way (Matthew 7:21)! **You see ... we must choose!**

And then, Jesus tells us there are two foundations to establish and build our lives on ... the rock of Jesus Christ and His Word or the shifting sands of men's thoughts, ideas and views (Matthew 7:24-27)! Again, we must choose!

What are your thoughts about the two gates and two ways they lead?

What are your thoughts about the two kinds of teachers and two kinds of fruit they produce?

What are your thoughts about the two kinds of professions made by religious people?

Just how important then, is it for each of us to be building the house of our lives on the right foundation? \_\_\_\_\_

## Let's Sum It Up ...

Yes ... we all make choices! Every day we make choices! It is a great privilege to be able to make choices ... but with the privilege comes responsibility! As a matter of fact ... this principle of privilege/responsibility is consistent throughout the Word of God! We can decide what we **will** or what we **will not** do! We can decide how we are going to act or how we are not going to act!!

The fact is ... some of those choices are not only going to affect us ... but they will also affect others (see Matthew 5:13-16)! So be very careful what you think about ... what you speak ... where you go ... and how you live! So ... how much impact have the choices you have already made had on your life?

There was a blind man who was seen walking down the sidewalk one evening with his flashlight shining brightly. Someone asked him why, being blind, was he carrying a flashlight? His answer is really something to think about! He said, "Because I don't want anyone to stumble because of me!"

Are you giving in to some temptation ... to some passion ... some habit or tendency in your life that will cause you to lose your own soul ... but just might cause someone to stumble over?

***"I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life that both you and your descendants may live"*** (Deuteronomy 30:19)



## Building The House Of Your Life ... Requires Obedience!

### Text:

*"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock:" (Matthew 7:24 NKJV)*

*"Everyone who hears my words and obeys them is like a wise man who built his house on rock." (Matthew 7:24 NCV)*

### Introduction:

Among all the words in the English language ... and any other language ... the word "obey" seems to be particularly difficult and even offensive for people young and old to carry out!

The fact is ... there really is a tendency within each of us as free moral agents having the ability to make choices and decisions ... to resist authority and disregard rules ... whether at home, at school, at work ... and even in society!

Do you like to be told what to do? \_\_\_\_\_  
Do you like to be corrected? \_\_\_\_\_

Whether it is a little child who doesn't want to lay down for a nap in the afternoon ... or an impatient driver behind the wheel of a car ... or someone in the face of Bible commandments ... they all have something in common!

The fact is ... this problem of resisting authority and disobeying commands is not something that is new to our time! Men have always resisted God and the demands of His holy truth on their sinful lives!

What did Adam and Eve do in the Garden of Eden when it came to obeying God's commandments? See Genesis 3 ... \_\_\_\_\_

What did Cain do to his brother after not obeying God's will regarding his sacrifice? (Genesis 4:1-15)? \_\_\_\_\_

You see ... the Bible is full from the earliest pages recorded in Genesis to the closing pages of the Book of Revelation! We ... meaning mankind ... meaning you and me ... are stubborn ... self-willed ... selfish ... and full of pride! And none of these terms are compliments ... are they? What are your thoughts about these truths?

As we find ourselves drawing near the end of our study on Building The House Of Your Life ... we come face to face with the need in each of our lives to obey God! We will

discover in this lesson that obedience is not optional! It was not optional in the life of Christ while He was here on earth ... and it is not optional for us (see Hebrews 5:8,9)!

## Let's Get Started ...

How would you define the terms "obey" and "obedience"?

Here's the dictionary definition: "the state or quality of being obedient; the act or practice of obeying; dutiful or submissive compliance: *Military service demands obedience from its members.*

In the Bible, obey and obedience means the principle of 'to hear; to heed' and includes the idea of listening intently ... but it also includes the principle of conforming to the command or instruction given!

It implies an inward attitude of respect and honor ... as well as the external acts of obedience. See Paul's use of this in Ephesians 6:1-3 ...

Have you ever gone hiking or mountain climbing? What happens if you get off of the right trail or get lost in the woods? Not good things that's for sure! That's where a compass proves to be a very important instrument to help you know the direction you're heading?

A compass is a relatively simple instrument that is actually based on a very simple, but profound concept. With its northward-facing needle ... it is a consistent and true indicator of physical direction.

According to the apostle Paul, our moral compass should always be pointing itself toward the things of Heaven.

Colossians 3:2 reads "*Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.*"

Also note Matthew 6:33; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17; 2 Peter 1:3; Psalm 119:105 ...

Our world in general ... even our nation ... has lost its moral compass!

Even some of God's people have drifted off into the darkness of compromise and sin!

But God's people (1 Peter 2:9-12) are to have the compass of God's Word firmly in their grasp ... treasure its words deeply in their hearts (Psalm 119:11) ... understanding their personal responsibility to be making right choices!

You see ... as God's people ... we are to always strive to be "... *the salt of the earth ... and the light of the world*" (Matthew 5:13-16)!

So ... what are your thoughts about these verses and the truths they teach?

To be more specific as we consider the place of obedience in our lives ... God is very specific about what each of us must do in order to please Him when it comes to our salvation.

Since God wants all men to be saved (1 Timothy 2:3, 4; Matthew 11:28-30) ...  
And since God by His grace has made it possible to be saved (Ephesians 2:8) ...  
And because the purchase price for our salvation is the blood of His Son  
(Romans 5:9, 10) ... There are things we must do (2 Thessalonians 1:8).  
There are steps we must take to become one of His obedient children.  
Namely, we must ...

Believe that Jesus is the Son of God (John 3:16);  
Repent of (turn away from) our sins that have separated us from God  
(Luke 13:3,5);  
Confess before men that Jesus is the Son of God  
(Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:10);  
And be baptized for the remission of our sins  
(Mark 16:16; Acts 16:30-33; Acts 2:37-47);  
And then, we must be willing to hold fast to the Word, endure and continue faithful  
to the end of our time.  
(Matthew 10:22; 1 Corinthians 15:2; Colossians 1:23) ...

That's a great deal to think about, isn't it?  
Have you thought about these commands with reference to your own life?

Are you a person who has done exactly what the Lord has commanded you to do?

Please think about this truth: the kind of obedience that God wants is the kind that is  
"from the heart" (Romans 6:17)! He only accepts that obedience that is genuine and  
sincere ... that is based on His will ... not man's ideas or man's opinions ... or man's  
traditions (Matthew 15:7-9)!

We're talking about the kind of obedience that rules out reluctant obedience, angry  
obedience, or any show of obedience where the heart remains defiant!!

How would you define reluctant obedience? \_\_\_\_\_  
Angry obedience? \_\_\_\_\_  
Or defiant obedience? \_\_\_\_\_

So... what are your thoughts about this obedience that God requires of us?

Are His commands too much to be asking of us? See 1 John 5:2,3 ...

Now, let's dig just a little deeper and see how obedience comes into play when it comes  
to the choices we make ... choices clearly set forth in God's Word!

Please read 2 Timothy 2:22 ...

What is it that Paul told the young evangelist Timothy to "flee from?" \_\_\_\_\_  
The word "flee" means to escape from, to break out of; to run as fast as you can from  
something! The apostle Paul used a word that is super-charged with action! It's the  
idea of urgency and importance! You see there is a strong perception of danger!!  
And there is no sense here of a casual escape or unhurried dash away from danger  
or peril! The example of Joseph and Potiphar's wife in Genesis 39 serves as an  
excellent example of this.

So, what exactly are “*youthful lusts (passions)*”? \_\_\_\_\_

“*Youthful passions*” certainly have a great deal to do with actively loving ourselves rather than loving God or others (Matthew 22:37-39)!

“*Youthful passions*” have a great deal to do with wanting our own comfort, our own pleasure, our own independence ... our own will ... and our own fame!

Are you thinking about these truths? We sure hope so because we all really need to be “*examining ourselves*” (2 Corinthians 13:5)! We need to be examining our own hearts to see that what is supposed to be there is really there!

“*Youthful passions*” also can lead to a sense of being entitled for whatever the reason ... entitlements over life, government, people and even God! Yes, that’s exactly what happens when we choose to disobey God!

“*Youthful passions*” can lead a person ... young or old and anywhere in-between ... to cast others aside and even God aside when not receiving what we want! Hmmm ...

We all need to be reminded of this truth:

Passions ... desires in our flesh can cause us to leave the “*narrow way*” (Matthew 7:13) and wind up on the “*broad way*” (Matthew 7:14) that will certainly lead to destruction!

Make no mistake about it ... asserting our own will ... pleasing our own selves to the disobedience of God ... will lead us to places we never dreamed we would end up!

Please read Galatians 5:19-21. You see ... impure thoughts, words and actions come from the flesh! Not a heart that is pure! Just read the words of Jesus recorded in Matthew 15:17-19 ...

Paul encouraged Timothy to make the right choices and turn in the direction of pursuing righteousness, faith, love and peace (2 Timothy 2:22)! And so should we! The person of God should be knowledgeable enough and wise enough to sense or see any threat to their soul ... and long for safety!!!

Now, please read Psalms 119:9-11.

What does this passage mean? Is this something all of us can do if we really want to?

The psalmist says in this passage that if a young person will take God’s Word into his/her heart and nurture His Word ... the Lord will provide the strength and guidance necessary to face certain temptations (James 1:13-15; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Philippians 4:13)! The fact is ... fleeing strong desires or passions cannot be done alone!

One last passage is found in 1 Corinthians 6:13, 18-20.

Our body is the *“temple of God”*. What does this mean? \_\_\_\_\_  
To whom does our body really belong? Is it to ourselves to do with as we please ... or to God who made us and will one day judge us? \_\_\_\_\_  
If this body of ours belongs to God, how then should we be treating it? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ There is just no missing the thought here ... is there!

You see, your body does belong to God and you are responsible to Him for its care and use! In no uncertain terms, God demands that you keep your body fit for His service and glory! So ... how would these truths apply in the following areas:

Dancing	Galatians 5:19-21 “lasciviousness”; Matthew 14:3-6; Titus 2:11-12; Exodus 23:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:22; 1 John 2:15-17
Immodesty	1 Timothy 2:9,10 “modest, shamefacedness, sobriety”; 1 Peter 3:5,6; Galatians 5:19-21; Romans 12:1,2; Exodus 23:2
Alcohol	1 Peter 4:3; Isaiah 5:22-24; Proverbs 20:1; 23:33-35; Galatians 5:21; 1 Corinthians 5:11; 6:10; Romans 6:16; Exodus 23:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:22; Matthew 5:13-16
Drugs	Ephesians 5:11; 1 Corinthians 6:19,20; Exodus 23:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:21,22; Romans 6:16
Bad Language	Ephesians 4:29; Colossians 3:8; Matthew 12:34-37; Exodus 23:2

Any question or doubt as to whether these things are right or wrong ... should be answered by these passages alone!

If we do something when we're really not sure about it ... we need to read and think about the words of the apostle Paul recorded in Romans 14:22, 23 ...

Would you agree? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you know what the word 'presumptuous' means? Defined it means: "Going beyond what is right or proper; excessively forward"

It takes a quiet but strong courage to say "No" to temptation!

God warns us in clear terms about being "presumptuous" or 'high-handed when it comes to serving Him! It is not about what we want ... it is all about what He wants! See Numbers 15:30-31; Psalm 19:13 ...

Can you think of some ways men can be "presumptuous" today when it comes to worshipping and serving God? Please name them: \_\_\_\_\_

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May we further caution you that throughout man's history ... living as though rebellion against God has no consequences ... in this life or the next ... is mankind's most common delusion! Just read the words of Galatians 6:7-9 and you will see why!

### Let's Sum It Up ...

Well ... we've certainly covered quite a bit of ground haven't we! There is much to think about ... and we must understand that Jesus is saying that "*the wise builder*" is the one who builds his/her life on the Lord and His will!

Are you this kind of builder? \_\_\_\_\_

The wise builder is the one who will filter every decision ... every choice ...through God's eyes! Being "*wise builders*" ... we will learn to think about all things from the viewpoint of how God views all things!

While we live on this earth ... we have the time and the opportunity to obey God! But there is coming a time when it will be too late! Take a few moments and read the words of 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Romans 14:12; 2 Corinthians 5:10 ...

What are your thoughts about these Bible truths?  
Are these verses unsettling to you?

Please don't wait until it is too late to call upon the name of the Lord ... for if you do ... the words of Revelation 6:16, 17 will come true! Believe me ... you don't want to be in that number!

Yes, God has every right to tell us in His Word how we are to live because He is the Creator of this world and all that is in it!

Remember ... He created us to live forever with Him in His glorious heaven ... the joy He wants to share with us forever is the reason we should be anxious to obey him now!

***"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and depart from evil."*** (Proverbs 3:5-7)

## Stepping Into The Parable Personally



### Text:

*"Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves." (2 Corinthians 13:5)*

### Introduction:

Have you ever tried to imagine what it must have been like on that day beside the Sea when Jesus stood before the people who were gathered on the hillside?

Can you imagine what it must have sounded like to hear this Man ... this Jesus Christ of Nazareth ... speak the words recorded in Matthew (chapters 5-7) and recorded by Luke (chapter 6)?

What an amazing scene to have been a part of!

How would you have reacted to the preaching of Jesus on that day?

Would you have been amazed or even astounded?

Would you have made the choice that very day to become a follower of Jesus Christ?

Or would you have needed to go back home and give some more thought to His words?

Matthew tells us in Matthew 7:28, 29, *"And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes."*

What does the word "astonished" mean? Why don't you look it up?

The dictionary defines the word this way: "as·ton·ished, as·ton·ish·ing, as·ton·ish·es. To fill with sudden wonder or amazement." [www.thefreedictionary.com](http://www.thefreedictionary.com)

It might surprise you to know that this is not the only time listeners to Jesus would be "astonished" as He preached during His short time here on earth! Take a look at the following references: Matthew 13:54; Mark 1:22; 6:2; Luke 4:32; John 7:46 ...

What was it about the teachings of Jesus that "astonished" the people? The answer is found in the way and manner that He spoke!

You see, *"He spoke as one with authority."* What does this statement mean?

It means He spoke as one who knew what He was talking about because He was God in the flesh (John 1:14)!

Jesus spoke words of truth ... not words of speculation ... not opinion ... and not words that were spoken to please someone else other than His Father (See John 17:6-8)).

Jesus spoke words of truth ... because He is Truth! Read the words of John 14:6 ...

It is because the words of Jesus are true that we must listen to them and obey them! This is exactly what Jesus was teaching in the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Builders (Matthew 7:24-27).

As we bring this series of Bible studies to a close ... it will be a really good thing for us to review some of the things that the Bible says will enable us to be the *"wise builder"* rather than the *"foolish builder"*.

So, let's Step Into The Parable Personally .. making sure that we are understanding and applying His teachings to our own lives!

You see, this is part of the process of *"examining ourselves whether we are in the faith.* (2 Corinthians 13:5)."

## Let's Get Started ...

There is no doubt about it ... each one of us has already started **Building The House Of Our Lives**. We have already started laying out the foundation we will build our lives on!

And there are some who really haven't figured out where they want to build ...maybe on the foundation of the Lord and His Word ... maybe on the shifting sands of worldly foundations and opinions!

So, before you undertake any more efforts to lay the foundation **you're** building **your** life upon ... let's take a timeout for a moment and allow a building inspector to examine how things are looking at our existing foundations and structures.

- Is the foundation of your life being built on the foundation of Jesus Christ? Please take the time to read the words of the apostle Paul recorded in 1 Corinthians 3:10-12 ...  
What do the words of this passage mean to you?
- 

- Is everything about the foundation of your life being built according to the building codes of God's Word? (See Matthew 7:24, 25).

Now, the Divine Building Inspector, Jesus Christ, stops and looks you in the eye as He looks at your foundation for life ... but He also takes a good long look into your heart (see 1Samuel 16:7) and then He asks you if you are going to act upon what He is pointing out to you that is wrong with your foundation and the structure you're building on top of your foundation... are you willing to listen to His instructions and make the necessary changes

How do you answer Him? What do you say?

Jesus often said *"He who has ears to hear, let him hear"* (Matthew 11:15; 13:9; 15:10; Revelation 2, 3). What does Jesus mean by these words? \_\_\_\_\_

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Jesus was challenging His hearers then and He is challenging us today to choose ... to either build our life in obedience to His will on the rock ... or to reject Him and His will and build on the shifting sands of this world! **And choose we must!**

Read the sobering words of Jesus recorded in the following passages of Scripture and you will see exactly how Jesus feels about choosing who to serve and where to build: Matthew 12:30 and John 12:48 ...

As we look back over this brief series of studies on this Parable of the Wise and Foolish Builders ... we want to remind ourselves of a few things and make sure we're doing the right thing! You do want to do the right thing, don't you?

The wise builder of his/her life will be the person who completely surrenders his/her heart ... in every way ... to God (Matthew 22:37-39)!

The wise builder will then guard his/her heart on a daily basis from the "*wiles of the devil*" or the schemes of the devil (See Ephesians 6:10-18)!

The wise builder will live his/her life with real purpose and meaning ... to please and glorify God (See 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20)!

The wise builder of his/her life will live their life by faith, demonstrating daily the place of faith in their lives ... even as those Old Testament characters who are listed in Hebrews 11!

The wise builder of his/her life will be very careful about what they allow their mind to think upon ... understanding they will become what they think about (See Proverbs 4:23; 23:7; Philippians 4:8, 9)!

The wise builder of his/her life will live life in a holy and a pure way ... because the God they serve is holy and pure (See 1 Peter 1:13-16; 2:9-11)!

The wise builder of his/her life will become a person of courage ... possessing the courage to stand up for what is right and to stand against that which is wrong (See Joshua 24:14, 15)!

Then, the wise builder of his/her life will make the right choices in life ... not living perfectly (Romans 3:23) ... but striving to be more like Jesus every day in every way (See 1 Corinthians 11:1; Hebrews 12:1, 2; 1 Peter 2:21-24)!

Yes, the wise builder of his/her life will be the young man or young woman ... the older man or older woman ... who **chooses** to obey the Lord no matter what (See Acts 4:18-21; 5:27-30)!

## Let's Sum It Up ...

If we are only hearing the truth of God ... but not acting on it with obedience ... we will not be ready for the storms of this life or the judgment to come!

What kind of a builder are you?

If we are hearing and obeying this truth of God ... building the foundation of our life upon Jesus Christ... then no storm can destroy us and we will be prepared for the final judgment of God (2 Corinthians 5:10)!

You see ... the Sermon on the Mount and all the other words of the Lord must be believed, accepted and obeyed! This is the way the wise builder will build his/her life to please God in this life and be prepared to spend eternity with Him in the next life!  
Are you this kind of builder? \_\_\_\_\_

It is a very difficult question to both ask and answer: if you were to die today, would you be ready for the judgment? Please think about this question seriously ...

Stepping into this parable on a personal level, where do you see yourself today ... this very hour?

Jesus says in the parable that the wise builder's house was able to withstand the storms of this life and his house did not fall (Matthew 7:24, 25)!

Jesus also says in the parable that the foolish builder's house was not able to withstand the storms of this life and that not only did his house fall, but "*great was the fall of it*" (Matthew 7:26, 37)!

Please ask yourself the following questions as a benchmark of your hearing and doing abilities:

Can you remember the sermon that was preached last Sunday if you were in attendance? What was the sermon about?

How did you apply the points made in the sermon to your own life or did you even try?

When you read your Bible earlier today or sometime yesterday ... you do remember what you read don't you?

And did you apply the truths you read from God's Word to your own life?

Now, ask yourself one more time after answering these questions: "How or what have I done with what I've heard from God and His Word?"

Which foundation are you establishing the house of your life on ... rock or sand?  
May you find the courage to live your life in the same way our Lord and Savior lived His life (See Hebrews 5:8, 9; John 5:43; 6:38)!

Restart the construction of your own life today on the only foundation worth building on (See 2 Corinthians 6:2) ... because this will be the only life worth living ... both now and for eternity!

***"And the Lord commanded us to observe (do) all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as it is this day. Then it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to observe (do) all these commandments before the Lord our God, as He has commanded us."***  
***Deuteronomy 24:24, 25***