Unless The Lord Builds The House (Part 2)

Building Your House On The Rock

By Kim Butts

"Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain" (Psalm 127:1a).

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock" (Matthew 7:24-25).

In last month's article, we determined that a home should be built by the wisdom that comes only from God: *"By wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established; through knowledge its rooms are filled with rare and beautiful treasures"* (Proverbs 24:3-4). Our own wisdom will not result in a well-built household, no matter how much knowledge and understanding we gain. It is important that we look to the hand of the Master Builder so that the spiritual household we desire will bring honor and glory to Christ Jesus.

Do you want your home to be built upon the strength and power of God so that every member is trained to love and serve the Lord for a lifetime and capable of training up the generations behind them to do the same? Then you must allow the Lord to build it upon a firm foundation – the Rock that is Christ Jesus. Otherwise, the foundation will crumble leaving a damaged dwelling. We don't want our families living in homes that are poorly constructed and potentially dangerous physically. Similarly, and even more importantly, we should put great effort into making certain that our spiritual homes are not damaged or do not fall into a state of disrepair.

Jesus Is the Foundation

When Jesus told the parable of the wise and foolish builders in Matthew 7, He wanted to emphasize the importance of carefully building on His firm foundation – the only one that can withstand all of the storms of life. Isaiah described Jesus, the Messiah: *"He will be the sure foundation for your times, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge; the fear of the Lord is the key to this treasure"* (Isaiah 33:6). In 1 Corinthians 3:10-11, Paul said, *"By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ."* Like Paul, we must also lay a firm foundation for our families to stand upon. The way our homes are built will have a significant impact upon the spiritual strength and life of our marriages, our children and our family relationships. The foundation will not only affect us and our children, but will determine the spiritual heritage of our grandchildren and beyond. If the foundation is strong, others will be able to build upon it. If the foundation is weak, whatever structure is built upon it will likely fall when the rains come and the

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winds blow.

Jesus Is the Cornerstone

No person was anywhere around when the Lord laid the foundation of the world, as God reminded Job: *"Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell Me, if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone – while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?"* (Job 38:4-7).

A cornerstone is the first stone set in the construction of a masonry foundation, and it is of vital importance. All other stones are set in reference to this stone, thus determining the position of the entire edifice. It is the most significant stone in the building because it determines its design as well as its orientation.

Jesus is not only the foundation, He is the *Cornerstone* of the foundation: *"Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the chief cornerstone. In Him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in Him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit"* (Ephesians 2:19-22). *"So this is what the Sovereign Lord says: 'See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who trusts will never be dismayed'"* (Isaiah 28:16).

If Jesus Christ is the cornerstone for your spiritual dwelling, the rest of the building can be built one step at a time using Him as the reference point! How amazing! That is exactly how we should build a home – step by step upon Jesus the Rock! As we live in awe and respect for the Living Lord, we will have the riches of His wisdom and knowledge at our disposal. Within a depraved culture we will have the surety of our salvation with which to guide, teach and demonstrate the love of Jesus Christ to our children. Only then will they have the spiritual guidance within which to develop a firm faith of their own.

Jesus Is the Capstone

Jesus is not only the foundation and the cornerstone – He is also the capstone! A capstone is the final stone put into a construction project! *"The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it"* (Psalm 118:22-24).

"He is 'the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone.' Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:11-12).

How awesome that the Lord our God is our builder from beginning to end – if we allow Him full reign! Jesus walks with us from the first stone to the last. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End as we seek His heart to build a strong household of faith.

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Living Stones

Jesus – the foundation, the cornerstone and the capstone. From the beginning of our spiritual dwelling to the end, He is the designer, the architect and the builder. He is the original Living Stone – the Rock of our salvation! He is the "life-giving spirit" to whom believers have given their lives. Our spiritual houses are formed and indwelt by the Spirit of God. Every stone in the house has been made alive by the Holy Spirit, sent by the exalted living Stone, Jesus Christ. Peter stated, *"As you come to Him, the living Stone – rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to Him – you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For in Scripture it says: 'See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in Him will never be put to shame'"* (1 Peter 2:4-6).

What Is the Character of a Household that Is Built upon Jesus the Rock?

Households built upon the Rock have some distinct characteristics that set them apart from houses built upon sand:

1. A household built upon the Rock never forgets this fact: "*They remembered that God was their Rock, that God Most High was their Redeemer"* (Psalm 78:35). Keep remembrance front and center in your home. Teach your children to understand the price that Jesus paid to redeem them. Be sure they know the goodness of the Lord throughout all generations. Tell them stories of answered prayer and teach them to seek His face continually.

2. A household built upon the Rock will praise Him:

"He is the Rock, His works are perfect, and all His ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is He" (Deuteronomy 32:4).

"There is no one holy like the Lord; there is no one besides You; there is no Rock like our God" (1 Samuel 2:2). w *"The Lord lives! Praise be to my Rock! Exalted be God, the Rock, my Savior!"* (2 Samuel 22:47).

"The Lord lives! Praise be to my Rock! Exalted be God my Savior" (Psalm 18:46).

"Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before Him with thanksgiving and extol Him with music and song" (Psalm 95:1-2).

Teach your children how to offer worship to the Lord because He is worthy to be praised! Live lifestyles of praise before your children and rejoice in the midst of trials. Have worship music playing in your home and sing praise songs together before the Lord! Read the Psalms out loud together. Talk about His goodness continually – when you get up and when you lie down and when you walk along the way (see Deuteronomy 11:19).

3. A foundation built upon Christ Jesus provides protection against and delivers us from the schemes of the enemy!

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"For their rock is not like our Rock, as even our enemies concede"(Deuteronomy 32:31).

"For who is God besides the Lord? And who is the Rock except our God? It is God who arms me with strength and makes my way perfect. He makes my feet like the feet of a deer; He enables me to stand on the heights. He trains my hands for battle; my arms can bend a bow of bronze. You give me Your shield of victory; You stoop down to make me great" (2 Samuel 22:32-36).

"The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call to the Lord, who is worthy of praise, and I am saved from my enemies" (Psalm 18:2-3).

"He alone is my rock and my salvation; He is my fortress, I will not be shaken. My salvation and my honor depend on God; He is my mighty rock, my refuge" (Psalm 62:6-7).

Teach your children to put on the armor of God daily (Ephesians 6:10-18), so that they are consistently aware they are in a battle. Help them to know that God has already defeated Satan through Jesus and that they should always walk in confidence knowing their Heavenly Father lives in them and is their protector and deliverer. Show them how to use the Word of God to effectively silence the enemy just as Jesus did. Help them to memorize the Word so that it is embedded deeply into their hearts and spirits.

4. A household with a foundation built upon Jesus recognizes His holiness: *"There is no one holy like the Lord; there is no one besides You; there is no Rock like our God"* (1 Samuel 2:2). *"Your statutes stand firm; holiness adorns Your house for endless days, O Lord"* (Psalm 93:5). *"Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God"* (2 Corinthians 7:1). Teach your children the importance of living holy lives by your example and through the Word. Peter stated, *"…what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming…make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with Him"* (2 Peter 3:11b, 14b). We are to make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy, because without holiness no one will see the Lord (Hebrews 12:14). Live lives that are holy examples before your family. Train up your children to understand how our Holy God expects His children to live.

5. A household with a foundation built upon Jesus calls upon His Name:

"To You I call, O Lord my Rock; do not turn a deaf ear to me. For if You remain silent, I will be like those who have gone down to the pit. Hear my cry for mercy as I call to You for help, as I lift up my hands toward Your Most Holy Place" (Psalm 28:1-2).

"Turn Your ear to me, come quickly to my rescue; be my rock of refuge, a strong fortress to save me. Since You are my rock and my fortress, for the sake of Your name lead and guide me" (Psalm 31:2-3).

"From the ends of the earth I call to You, I call as my heart grows faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I" (Psalm 61:2).

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As parents, we must fully understand that we cannot live our lives and train our children without consistent lives of intercession. As families, we must seek diligently to know the heart of God so that our prayers will line up with His plans and purposes. Seek God as individuals, as husband and wife, and as a family. Don't neglect the most important love relationship upon which our spiritual homes are built and maintained.

6. A household that is built upon the Rock, Jesus Christ, places its trust in the Lord: *"Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord, the Lord, is the Rock eternal"* (Isaiah 26:4). Jesus tells us: *"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in Me"* (John 14:1). How much more easily we could establish our marriages, our family relationships and our ministries if we would allow ourselves to place our trust in Christ for all things. By example, train your family to trust.

Yet It Did Not Fall!

Your spiritual household will be your most important legacy. Here are three final instructions from the Word of God to assist you in the process of building upon Jesus, the Rock:

Count the cost. Jesus said, *"Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it?"* (Luke 14:28).

Finish what you begin. Jesus continued: *"For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish'"* (Luke 14:29). Too many Christian homes look much like the world. Unbelievers are watching to see if your home will wash away when the floods come.

Turn away from wickedness. *"Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: 'The Lord knows those who are His,' and, 'Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness'"* (2 Timothy 2:19).

The adventure of building a household that will not fall is exciting, but it is not easy. Only with the help of the Lord Almighty will you be able to see this task through from start to finish.

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