

A Proper Foundation  
Luke 6:46-49  
Mathew 7:24-29

I have spent my professional life designing and constructing many buildings. Each of these buildings has foundations.

With a good foundation a structure can withstand hostile elements, strong forces, and the test of time. The same holds true for Christians.

As a civil engineer, I know that foundations come in many forms: rock, concrete spread footings, drilled caissons, steel pilings, piers, and turndown foundations to name a few.

The foundation of our faith is in Jesus Christ, but the securing of this foundation comes in many different forms as well:

Communion with God in the form of Bible study and prayer is an important foundation of faith.

Fellowship with other Christians through Sunday school, youth group, confirmation class and church services as well as participation in other church functions are also foundations of faith.

Building our faith while using our God given gifts to strengthen the faith of others These are all parts of our foundation of faith.

The bible is an especially important part of foundation building. It has rules to live by in the form of the Ten Commandments, teaching parables, advice on love, and some of the best financial counsel you could ever find. Detailed study of Christian financial principles is a life changing and freedom creating experience. I strongly recommend devoting time to see what the bible has to say about finances. This topic is second only to love in the number of references and lessons in the bible.

Faith in Jesus and knowing in our hearts that we are saved through faith is the primary foundation for dealing with life including its challenges. Faith creates comfort, strength, and a sense of direction or purpose. Faith must be nurtured. That is our obligation as Christians and parents to see that we help secure the foundation for our own children as well as those of our church family. This is a sacred obligation and wonderful opportunity.

We all know that it takes communion with God to strengthen our foundation. Daily devotionals with Bible Study and prayer are a large component of this, but also seeking the wise counsel of fellow Christians when we are in need or unsure of our direction is another way God can be there for us especially in our times of need or change.

This leads to fellowship with other Christians. If a person is lucky they grow up in a Christian home with parents that believe and want you to embrace the opportunity of salvation through faith in Christ. Not all of us are that fortunate. I was blessed with two fine Christian parents who were devoted to our family and worked hard at helping me to build a proper foundation. What the bible says about teaching your children spiritual things and they will come back to it is true. I know this first hand. I watched my parents

work as Sunday school teachers, elders, and sponsors of confirmation class members to help build foundations for others. They worked at making the people at church feel special, loved, and noticed. At my Dad's funeral reception I was struck by how many parents of small children spoke to me of his attention and interest in their children and what it meant to the children.

To me he exemplified how to be a member of a church family. I clearly remember Sunday school and youth group leaders from my time at River Road Presbyterian Church. The time they spent with my classmates and me is without a doubt part of my foundation of faith. Time spent in Boy Scouts is likewise a part of my foundation of faith. I also know the profound effect that people in this church as well as our previous church have had on my own children's lives. A simple smile or greeting says to anyone, not just our young people, I'm glad you're here. Small gifts at graduation time have said I remember your special moments. Giving your time as a Sunday School teacher is another way to support the youth. Even simply attending the functions of the youth or helping in their projects lets them know we care. I understand the youth are working on a project right now to pack shoeboxes for Samaritan's purse—we can all support efforts such as this.

Not only does God want us to strengthen our own foundation, but also he expects us to use our gifts to help strengthen the foundation of others. It takes more than one person to build the foundation for a building and the same is true for our Christian foundation. God's blessings are numerous for each of us. Gifts in the form of talent in areas such as music, art, public speaking, hospitality, leadership, intelligence, financial insight, consoling others, writing, photography, teaching, coaching, and even parenting are assets we must use for God's work. Sometimes it is hard for us to see our own gifts, but if we listen to what our teachers, parents, church leaders, and family members tell us, we can realize our gifts and talents and use them to not only strengthen our own foundation, but to strengthen the foundation of our fellow Christians as well. However, we must remember, no gift is superior to another. A certain gift does not make you superior to others as God loves us all equally as his children and all our gifts work together to make the church as one body. The gift of math is no more valuable in the big picture than the gift of music or art. Seek out your gifts and use them for God's work. Embrace your gifts and look for ways to use your gift for good.

The Foundation of ones faith is not inherited but must be built. It requires action on our part and action on the part of many others. Parents are the first and most important influence on an individual's foundation of faith. I strongly recommend daily bible reading, devotionals, and family time with your children. My very wise wife Lee found a children's bible that we read from at dinnertime. It was much easier to use and for our children to understand than the standard version. As we could, we had the older children read in these sessions. Since we had four children spaced over eleven years we wound up finishing the children's bible and starting over again several times. I believe the older children enjoyed the stories more as we read them again and again. Before we got multiple teenagers we had family game nights during the weekend where we picked games that all of the family could play like Candyland. Later we got to monopoly and

risk. Sometimes these games included the neighborhood kids as well. When we go on vacation as a family we still play games. A sense of family adds to our foundation of faith.

Once we have this firm foundation and the support of other Christians we have the ability to stand strong in the face of many hardships. Know that each of us will face disappointment, hard times, loss of loved ones, and death. These challenges will inevitably come to each of us. They are opportunities to let the light of God shine through us. No matter what the challenge remember the many blessings we have so you can keep things in perspective. Your foundation can keep you strong in times of challenge. Remember that each of us is a piece of the foundation of our fellow Christians. As we face our challenges the prayers, love, and expression of concern from our church family and our larger family of Christians will keep us strong. What we do and say is important and could be a key to another's foundation development.

I am in a battle with cancer like other members of our church and millions of other people in our country and throughout the world. I am determined to win this battle. I lean on my faith, the foundation that our family and church family form as well as knowledge that I am saved to move forward. I feel the prayers and support from you. I am ever mindful of the many blessings God has given my family and me. I thank you for your support and prayers. I can tell you that your prayer is powerful, tangible and effective. Please continue to remember me and the others in our church family in your prayers. Know that your prayers are making a difference.

This is why I think the foundation is so important. Our foundation is God realized though you the church family and you the church family are given the challenge of supporting others in the church family both young and old. All of us need the foundation of faith to help us through our earthly time and must have faith to reach the Kingdom of God when we leave this earth. Keep up the good work on foundation building!

I was told many years ago that brevity in a laypersons sermon was close to holiness. Therefore this is all I have to say about our foundation of faith. May God bless each and every one of you.