

An "Exposing the Word" Sermon Series



1- When the Old House is not Good Enough (Demolition Time) Col 3:1-10

I have often been fascinated with the some of the methods of construction and modernization of malls, and retail outlets. I have watched with wonder as to why they tear down what looks like a perfectly good building to build another one that is to serve the same purpose as the old one in its place. Borrowing from that thought let's talk together today as we begin a series I have entitled, *Blueprint for a Christian Life*, about when the old house is not good enough, demolition time.

Our text today is found in **Col 3:1-10** with emphasis on **Col 3:9-10** ***Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; 10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.***

I- Hidden Flaws:

We are exhorted to put off the old man and put on the new man. This brings us a bunch of question. Among them are; what does this mean? Why do we need a change anyway? Isn't the way I am good enough? Lets pause a moment and see why we need a new house or become a new man.

I told you I have been fascinated by the demolition of what looked like perfectly good buildings. Well the true is not on the outside appearance. The flaws of these building lie deep within them. They many look like a fresh coat of paint or a new landscape job on the outside could make them acceptable but it will not. The wiring has become unsafe and outdated, the structure many times has become unsafe because of foundation problems that have developed.

In much the same way neither will taking a bath and putting on some perfume or cologne make our inside what it needs to be. The flaw of our old house that needs to be demolished is also inside, hidden from view. Let's look at some of the flaws within our old man or old house are the problem.

1- Inherited Nature: Romans 5:12
Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

Most are familiar with the story of the fall of the human race recorded in Genesis 3. Adam as the head and the first created of the human race failed and sin entered the world. This fallen sin nature has passed to all the descendants of Adam. Even if we deny it this is still a fact that causes us to need a demolition of this old sin nature. Paul, even after he was saved, talked about the warfare of the sin nature and the new man in Christ in **Romans 7:22-23** ***For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.***

Now I ask, how much more does the old sin nature rule in a man who has never been redeemed and does not have the Holy Spirit living with them? A man who, while the outside may look good, is still flawed by sin in the worst way. A man who has never had the scars on his soul removed by the blood.

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2- Inherited Death- Along with inheriting the fallen sin nature we also, every man alive or that has lived, the exception being the Lord Jesus Christ, has also come under the condemnation of death. Did you catch in **Romans 5:12 and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.**

Sin and death are irreversibly linked in our humanity. Death is evidenced all around us and is a constant reminder and a constant companion of mankind.

Ecc 8:8 There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death: and there is no discharge in that war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it.

3- Denial of the Truth- Many, we often refer to them as slumlords, have building that are subpar but continue to rent or use them. Sometimes it requires a denial of the truth that they need to be torn down and rebuilt.

Years ago, I did a church conference for a church in East Tennessee. They needed a building in the worst kind of way. Their floor was unsafe when the load on Sunday morning were worshipping. They had one man, supposed to be the wealthiest man in the church, who had argued against a new building for years while it was falling down around them. Then one early spring morning there was a flood that came down the creek beside the church and washed it away and they finally got their new building, in a new location.

Many times we are that way spiritually when we are lost. We deny that the building we are in has any flaws. We do not want to give up the comfort of the

known, though it is not working out, for the new.

Pro 12:15 The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.

Pro 14:12 There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. (repeated in **Pro 16:25**)

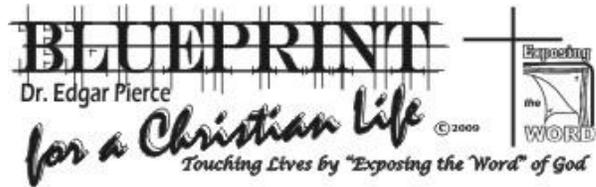
The problem is that men's own heart will deceive them. **Jer 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?**

Pro 21:2 Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts.

4- Wrong Building Inspector: My desire is to not put building inspectors in a bad light. Most do their job and are totally honest. However, we know that some can turn a blind eye to defects at times. The problem we have sometimes admitting that we need to demolish the old building so we can build a new one is that we are being inspected by the wrong inspector. Most of the time that inspector is self-inspector. We have a so-called friend who says well it is your lives do what you want.

Years ago, when I build the first part of my cabinet shop I put a spray book in it that was about 18 by 28 feet. Inside that booth, I was spraying lacquer on the cabinets. While I was building it there were several people who told me to tell the building inspector that it was a garage and it would not be as hard to pass inspection. I told them I would not because I was the one who would be blown up in an explosion. Beloved, many are telling you to not worry about letting God be the inspector and to deny that there is a

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problem but ultimately you are the one facing the fire.

Satan is like my friends were, he keeps telling you it is ok, deny, deny, deny, but in fact it is not. He wants to deceive and blind you, by self righteousness among other things, to the truth of the gospel message and that you need to put on the new man because the old one is irreparably damaged. **2 Corinthians 4:3-4** *But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: 4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*

Beloved the Word of God is plain when it says that no one escaped the problem of sin.

Rom 3:23 *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;*
Rom 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

II- Demolition Time:

Little boys are fascinated with the "big ole" trucks and "big ole" bulldozers and track hoes that tear down buildings. How do we tear down the old building?

Well the good news is that the old building can be torn down by simply putting your faith in Christ.

Did you notice that it said that even though the wages of sin is death the gift

that God gives is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

In our text it says, **And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him. Col 3:10**

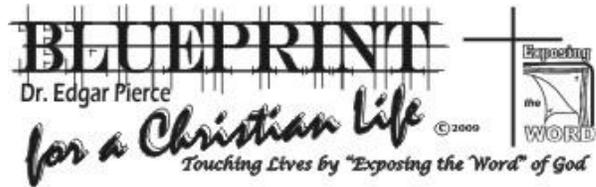
Remember Paul talked about that warfare of the old nature and the new. He said then in **Rom 7:24-25** *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord...*

The outcome of accepting Christ as Savior is that the old building will be demolished and the new one will begin to be constructed. O, it is true that all is complete as far as salvation is concerned when we accept Christ but from there he will begin to build us into a habitat in which God Himself dwells.

2 Corinthians 5:17 *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

Beloved have you not lived in this old house long enough? Aren't you tired of trying to convince yourself and others that you are good enough knowing in your hear it is not true. Don't you think it is time to take the wrecking ball of the truth that Jesus died for you to make you a new man in Christ to that old man?

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2- Study the Blueprints (the Word) 2 Tim 3:15-17

A Christian traveler was once packing his suitcase when he remarked to a friend, "Well, I still wish to pack a guidebook, a lamp, a mirror, a telescope, a book of poems, a number of biographies, a bundle of letters, a hymn book, a sharp sword, a small library containing 66 volumes...." "But," his friend interrupted him, "you've only got about six inches left in one side of your suitcase. How are you ever going to manage to get it all in?" The Christian smiled and his eyes twinkled, "That will be very easy," he said. "You see, all I have to do is put my Bible in the suitcase, for it is all the things that I have mentioned."

2Ti 3:15-17 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Have you ever put a swing set together? It is to say the least an adventure. Life is sometimes like a swing set it can be fun but boy the putting it together just right can be a challenge. Living the Christian life is not easy. It is downright complicated. Now I will admit that some can put a swing set together without the instructions but not many.

When some people begin to build a house, they most times have a full set of architectural drawings that they have paid a good copper penny for. These plans tell them where the plumbing goes, where the wiring is to be located. Where the walls

are to be joined and the doors and windows to be placed.

I had a friend who wanted to build a house. They called it the "house that Wayne built." They had the lot ready and drove the corner stakes and then his wife looked at it and declared that it needed to be a lot bigger. They moved the stakes and the house grew. When it was finally under roof it was a lot bigger than they wanted. They did not have a plan of what they wanted to build.

Today we continue our series of *Blueprint for a Christian Life*. If we are going to live the life that God has called us too then we certainly need to sturdy the blueprint, i.e. the Word of God, for instructions.

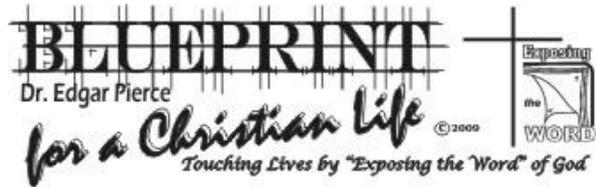
I- The Word is where we find Life:

I realize we touched this last session but in order for us to build a Christian life we must be born again and be a Christian. The why and how is found in the blueprints of God's Word.

In our text, we see that Paul tells Timothy... ***"And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."*** 2Ti 3:15

Now some people want to know the Scripture not so they can live them but so they argue them or attempt to refute them. There are countless testimonies of men who began to search the Scriptures for the wrong reason and found the Lord revealed to their heart. Jesus told the Jews in ***John 5:39-40 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they***

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which testify of me. 40 And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.

It is within this revelation of God that we find the instructions for building our life in Him after salvation.

II- Blueprints are to be Used not Shelved:

Now I think you would agree that if you spend that pretty penny for the plans then when they arrive you never consult them again and just begin to throw things together it would not be wise. Here what Moses said through the Holy Spirit in **Deuteronomy 6:4-9** *Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: 5 And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. 6 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: 7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. 8 And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. 9 And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.*

Have we been guilty of trying to build a Christian life without taking the blueprint out and checking it. **Psa 119:9** says, *Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.*

III- Blueprint Will Guide You When Needed:

How many times has someone built something and then had to redo because

they did not consult the blueprint? More times than you can imagine. The purpose of the blueprint is to guide you so you will minimize mistakes.

2 Tim 3:16 *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:*

Tunnel Lights

Some Bible verses are like lanterns. They were made for dark places and dark hours. Did you ever hear about the little girl in the train? She couldn't understand why the trainman was going through the car lighting the lamps. She said, "Mother, it is the middle of the day and the sun is shining, why is he turning on those lights?" The mother smiled, and said, "Wait a bit and you'll see what the lights are for." In a moment or two the train plunged into a long, dark tunnel, and then the little girl saw the wisdom of the lamplighting process.

Dear friend, that Bible of yours contains thousands of verses that seem very ordinary and unnecessary. You can't see why God has gone to all the trouble of lighting those lamps of truth, but some day you're going into the tunnel of bereavement, or the tunnel of temptation, or the tunnel of suffering, and then you will value and appreciate the verses that appear to be commonplace today.

Psa 119:105 *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*

IV- Blueprints Help Get you Back on Track after a Mistake:

Missing the Point

Orville and Wilbur Wright were excited. On December 17, 1903, they had finally succeeded in keeping their homemade airplane in the air for 59 seconds.

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Immediately they rushed a telegram to their sister in Dayton, Ohio, telling of this great accomplishment.

The telegram read, "First sustained flight today fifty-nine seconds. Hope to be home by Christmas." Upon receiving the news the sister was so excited about the success that she rushed to the newspaper office and gave the telegram to the editor. The next morning the newspaper headline read, "Popular Local Bicycle Merchants To Be Home For Holidays."

One of the greatest stories of the twentieth century was missed because an editor missed the point.

But who has not made the same mistake in reading the Scriptures? If one is too casual about it, he might learn some truth but miss that which is most important.

Beloved we need not miss the point of Scripture, reveal Christ, regenerate the lost and help us grow like Him. He Bible has a way unlike any other Word cutting to the core of our problem. **Heb 4:12** *For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

We are also reminded by James that we need to practice what we are learning.

Jas 1:21-23 *Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. 22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. 23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:*

V- Blueprint Does Not Need to be Altered:

The blueprint needing to not be altered is where my analogy is a little weak. I concede that there are changes that need to be made to house plans. Things just do not always work in wood and sheetrock like they do on paper. Having conceded this fact let me now say that the blueprint of God's Word does not need to be altered nor can it be improved upon. Some call the teachings of the Bible outdated and antiquated but that does not make them such. The Word of God simply needs to be believed, read and understood and then practiced to build a Christian life. As a matter of fact we are warned multiple times about trying to put our modernization of morals and feeling on it to change it.

Deu 4:2 *Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.*

Deu 12:32 *What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.*

Rev 22:18-19 *For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: 19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.*

The word of God is going to be going strong if this world last another thousand or then thousand years.

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When 10,000 Bibles were sent from America to the people of Romania, Communist Director Nicolas Ceausescu accepted them in order to get favored-nation status from the United States Congress. He then shipped them to a paper mill to be recycled into toilet paper. They were so poorly recycled that Bible words such as Esau, Jeremiah and God remained visible (*Reader's Digest*, July, 1990, p. 84).

The wicked Communist leader eventually met a horrible death as his regime was toppled by the people he had persecuted. The anvil of God's Word had broken another little human hammer that beat upon it.

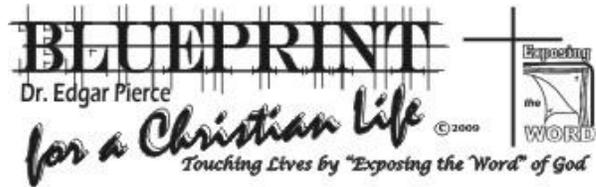
The Word of God is able to do for us many things as we grow in our faith. In

parting let me give us seven things that the Word of God is able to do. These are adapted from *Dake's Annotated Reference Bible*, (NT p241.)

- 1- Make wise unto salvation (**2 Tim 3:15; Rom 1:16; Jas 1:21**)
- 2- Produce faith (**2 Tim 3:15; Rom 10:17**)
- 3- Make Jesus Christ known (**2 Tim 3:15, John 5:39; 1 Cor 15:1-8**)
- 4- Build up (**Acts 20:32**)
- 5- Give inheritance (**Acts 20:32**)
- 6- Produce profit in doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness (**2 Tim 3:16**)
- 7- Make the man of God perfect (**2 Tim 3:17**)

Are you using the blueprints of God's Word to shape your life?

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3- Choosing a Builder (the Son) ... Luke 6:47-49

Building is like a church building committee I read about...

A certain congregation was about to erect a new church edifice. The building committee, in consecutive meetings passed the following resolutions:

- 1. We shall build a new church*
- 2. The new building is to be located on the site of the old one.*
- 3. The material in the old building is to be used in the new one.*
- 4. We shall continue to use the old building until the new one is completed.*

Source unknown

There are horror stories of people who have all their plans to build and all their financing lined up to build a home that then got involved in a morass or a quagmire of a situation that would take all the resolve they had to eliminate. It would take all their mental, physical and financial resources to resolve. Simply, they chose the wrong builder. They chose someone who was not honest and misrepresented themselves to the home builder.

Luk 6:47 Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: 48 He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. 49 But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately

it fell; and the ruin of that house was great.

I- Choosing a Builder:

From our text it is obvious that one of the two houses probably had different builders. One knew what he was doing the other did not. Beloved anyone can build a chicken coop but we are not building chicken coops. We are building lives. Not everyone can build what is needed. Not all builders are qualified. One of the houses stood and the other crumbled.

There are two different entities that want to run our lives. One certainly does not have our best interest at heart and one does. Whom will you chose?

One wants to build upon a solid foundation one wants to build on sand. One is good at building lives while one is an expert prison builder.

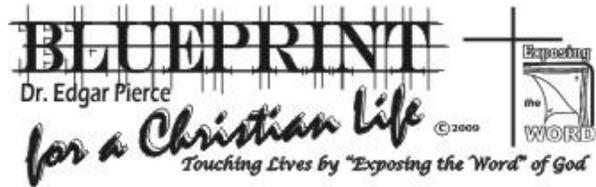
II- Beware of the Con Artist:

As we stated in the introduction we must be on high alert for con artist. We call them shyster, crook deceiver, defrauder, fake, impostor...well you get the point.

Oh, I know you might say I am in charge of my own life. Really, have you really thought about what basis you make decisions upon. Many times, it may look like you and act like you but there is a hidden puppet master pulling the strings.

Toward the end of the fourth and the beginning of the third century B.C. there was a very famous architect by the name of Sostratos. The king of Egypt used him in order to build the famous beacon light of Alexandria. The king's purpose in building this beacon light was that the ships might find their way into the safety

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of the port. When the building was completed, architect Sostratos chiseled his own name on a stone that was part of the building. He did not want it to be readily visible and so he covered it with mud and whitewash. On top of that he wrote with gold letters the king's name so that when the waves hit the mud it would wash it away and his own name would appear.

Source unknown

Now beloved we need not look very far to see that Satan is nothing more than a con artist. He wants men to think they can control their own destiny. He has placed his mark hidden from view until the waves of life crash against it.

In the garden he deceived Eve. **Genesis 3:1** *Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?*

Now that did not go so well for mankind did it? Look at the world in which we live and you will see that this deception was not in mankind's best interest.

He attempted to deceive Christ by false promises. **Matthew 4:8-9** *Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; 9 And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.* Jesus was being offered what Satan could not deliver because it was not his to give.

III- Check out His References:

Paul speaking about the hindrances to God's work spoke in a couple of places. **1Th 2:18** *Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.*

2Co 4:4 *In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*

Now notice the less than glowing recommendation that Peter gave to him. **1Pe 5:8** *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:*

Notice what Jesus had to say about Satan. **John 8:44** *...He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.*

Christ also called him a wolf that scatters the sheep in **Joh 10:12** *But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.*

Well we do not need to tarry on this point any longer. I trust you understand that Satan is not one that we can trust to build our lives. He is a destroyer not a builder.

Now let's notice the references of Jesus the One I submit should be our builder.

First, let's notice Christ was spoken of by the Prophets. Now, space nor time allows us to exhaust the verses that could be brought to bear to give proof of this.

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Let us notice only a couple from the prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah 7:14 *Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*

Isaiah 9:6 *For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.*

Now that is certainly a good reference. He is most certainly qualified to be our builder.

Let us notice one more reference for Christ. He was given a glowing reference by the Father. Notice the following:

At Jesus' baptism by John: **Mat 3:17** *And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* (Also see **Mar 1:11** and **Luk 3:22**)

Then on the Mount of Transfiguration in **Mat 17:5** *While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.* (Also see **Mar 9:7** and **Luk 9:35**)

Peter testifies of the glowing reference of the Father in **2Pe 1:17** *For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

Beloved no higher recommendation can be given then this.

IV- Look at Some of His Other Work:

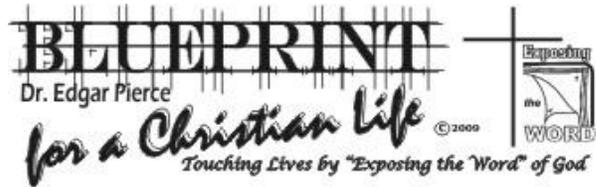
When you build a house many times you will asks to see or have seen some of the work the builder has done. This work speaks volumes about where you want them to build your house.

The drug addict lives in the street, needle marks running up and down their arms. They eyes bloodshot and mind blurry. They trusted the wrong builder. They trusted that the liar was telling them truth but discovered it to late many times.

Notice the contrast with Satan and Jesus. Jesus said in **John 10:10** *The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*

The strongest argument for the Gospel of Christ is the personal testimony of someone whose life has been changed by it. Charles Bradlaugh, an avowed infidel, once challenged the Rev. H. P. Hughes to a debate. The preacher, who was head of a rescue mission in London, England, accepted the challenge with the condition that he could bring with him 100 men and women who would tell what had happened in their lives since trusting Christ as their Savior. They would be people who once lived in deep sin, some having come from poverty-stricken homes caused by the vices of their parents. Hughes said they would not only tell of their conversion, but would submit to cross-examination by any who doubted their stories. Furthermore, the minister invited his opponent to bring a group of non-believers who could tell how they were helped by their lack of faith. When the appointed day arrived, the preacher came, accompanied by 100 transformed persons. But Bradlaugh never showed up.

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The result? The meeting turned into a testimony time and many sinners who had gathered to hear the scheduled debate were converted. *Source unknown*

V- Does His Work Stand the Test of Time?

When architect Sir Christopher Wren designed the interior of Windsor Town Hall near London in 1689, he built a ceiling supported by pillars. After city fathers had inspected the finished building, they decided the ceiling would not stay up and ordered Wren to put in some more pillars.

England's greatest architect didn't think the ceiling needed any more support, so he pulled a fast one. He added four pillars that did not do anything -- they don't even reach the ceiling. The optical illusion fooled the municipal authorities, and today the four sham pillars amuse many a tourist.

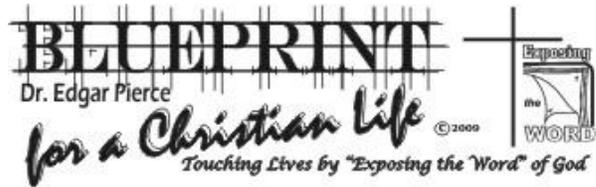
Nino Lo Bello, European Detours (Hammond)

Beloved, we are told that the enemy is bound for a place that it known as hell.

The Word of God says in **Matthew 25:41** *Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.* This is spoken of as eternal death.

The life built with Christ as the builder however will only begin with death of this body. Paul stated in **Philippians 1:21** *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*

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4- Talk with the Architect (the Father) *Heb 3:3-4; 11:10*

The Duke of Gloucesster, commenting at a luncheon meeting in London: 'A home-accident survey showed that 90 percent of accidents on staircases involved either the top or the bottom stair. This information was fed back into the computer to analyze how accidents could be reduced. The computer's answer: 'Remove the top and bottom stairs.'" Building, England

Now it does not take an architect nor a very good builder to realize that you can't take the bottom and top step out.

When men try to build their lives it is often like taking the top and bottom step out. Their decisions are sometimes irrational and at times self destructive.

May I suggest that to build our Christian life by God's blueprint that we need to consult and architect. If you would all in our analogy, the architect of which I speak is God the Father. Notice the following scriptures in Hebrews.

Heb 3:3-4 For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house. 4 For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God.

Heb 11:10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

There are some things about an architect that I suggest we can see that makes God the Father an excellent choice for us.

I- The Architect's Portfolio:

Many times architects will have a portfolio of jobs that they have designed and built that are their bragging rights.

Let us notice a couple of things about God and His portfolio.

We know that He handled the job of creation pretty well. ***Job 26:7 He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing.*** The detail of the creation, from the heart of the tiny hummingbird that beats some 1200 beats a minute, to the massive elephant who uses its ears as a radiator to cool his massive bulk. God is the Master designer.

We also know that God build homes when He is allowed in. He is the one who designs the security system as well. ***Psa 127:1 Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.***

Then there is the church designed by God. ***Mat 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.***

So as you can see the Architect of our blueprint for a Christian life has a substantial portfolio.

II- The Architect draws the plans:

An Architect had a vision for the building that is needed. In our text we clearly see that God is the one who builds all things. We also see that Abraham understood that God had designed a home not of this realm.

Abraham experienced God as the Architect of the plan that unfolded to bless the whole of humanity. ***Genesis 22:17-18 That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the***

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heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; 18 And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

God also has a plan for our lives. Certainly Abraham would not have come to the altar with his son without a clear directive from God. Our plan for our lives many times is not the same as God's.

Futile Renovations

London businessman Lindsay Clegg told the story of a warehouse property he was selling. The building had been empty for months and needed repairs. Vandals had damaged the doors, smashed the windows, and strewn trash around the interior.

As he showed a prospective buyer the property, Clegg took pains to say that he would replace the broken windows, bring in a crew to correct any structural damage, and clean out the garbage. 'Forget about the repairs,' the buyer said. 'When I buy this place, I'm going to build something completely different. I don't want the building; I want the site. Compared with the renovation God has in mind, our efforts to improve our own lives are as trivial as sweeping a warehouse slated for the wrecking ball. When we become God's, the old life is over (2 Cor. 5:17).

He makes all things new. All he wants is the site and the permission to build.

Ian L. Wilson, Source unknown

Let me ask a couple of questions. First, who is the one who's plan you are following? Have you surrendered your building site so that He can design it at His will?

III- The Architect Must Give Stamp of Approval.

Many times having the right stamp on a set of plans with the right numbers of the architect can make it possible to go forward with a project. This stamp is not haphazardly given out by an architect. He must certify that the plan is correct. God's stamp of approval is all over the plan of salvation. We call it grace.

I have often thought of the night that Jesus went to the garden of Gethsemane. He was there in agony while those friends with Him fell asleep.

It says the builder of the house has more honor than the house. May I suggest that the plan of the Father as it unfolded was certified on this night.

Matthew 26:39 And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.

Matthew 26:42 He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.

We have no record of the Father speaking to Christ but may I suggest by implication that God the Father was saying this is my plan...my plan from eternity past.

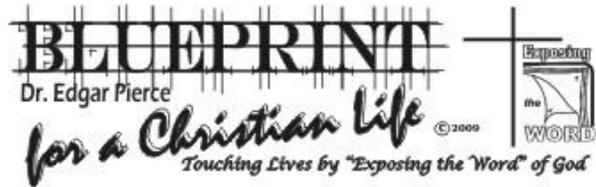
Also, we can see the events that unfolded on Calvary with the darkness in the middle of the day, the earthquakes and other things that were God giving his stamp of approval to the plan of salvation unfolding on the cross.

By the way He has no other plan...

IV- The Architect knows the best method for construction.

One of the purposes of an architect is to understand what method of construction is needed. He needs to know how to build strong for the dangers that

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are to come. Remember we have talked about the house build on the rock and then the one build on the sand. This was talking about the foundation being what was needed. An Architect knows to build a strong earthquake resistant building in California but to build that same building in the middle of Kansas where tornados are would be foolish.

God wants to design our lives to withstand the storms as well. He, as the Architect, knows how to build us up to make us strong.

Romans 5:3-4 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; 4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

Imperial Hotel

Years ago, Frank Lloyd Wright was given the impossible task of building the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo. No comparable construction job ever before had been undertaken. With patience he laid plans for the immense building in this land of earthquakes and terrible tremors. After carefully reviewing the situation, he found that eight feet below the surface of the ground lay a sixty-foot bed of soft mud. Why not float the great structure on this and in some way make it absorb the shock of the earthquake?

After four years of work, amid ridicule and jeers of skeptical onlookers, this most difficult building in the world was completed, and soon arrived the day which tested it completely. The worst earthquake in fifty-two years caused houses and buildings all around to tumble and fall in ruins. But the Imperial Hotel stood, because it was able to adjust itself to the tremors of the earth. *A. Smith, in Resources, #2*

Beloved we are told in **Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work**

together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

We may not understand as God unfold the things that come across our path but may I say we can trust God knows how to build our character and faith.

We need to understand that while we would not want things that come we often look back at them and see the purposes. We need to see the big picture.

The Cathedral

The noted English architect Sir Christopher Wren was supervising the construction of a magnificent cathedral in London. A journalist thought it would be interesting to interview some of the workers, so he chose three and asked them this question, 'What are you doing?'

The first replied, 'I'm cutting stone for 10 shillings a day.'

The next answered, 'I'm putting in 10 hours a day on this job.'

But the third said, 'I'm helping Sir Christopher Wren construct one of London's greatest cathedrals.'

Source unknown

God is working on us to make us like Christ. He need to see the big picture.

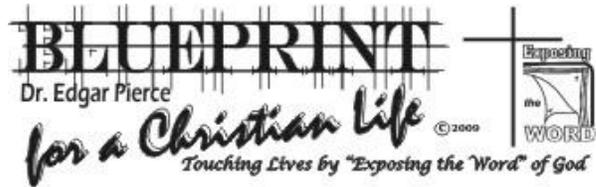
V- The Architect sees the final building before it is complete.

May I suggest that God does not look at us a see what we are but what we can become. Christ called Peter the rock, not that he was at the time, but for what he would become. **Joh 1:42 And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.**

Famous People I

1. The memo from the testing director of MGM, shortly after Fred Astaire's first

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screen test, read: 'Can't act! Slightly bald! Can dance a little!'

2. An older 'expert' once said of another younger coach, 'He possesses minimal football knowledge. Lacks motivation.' In case you're wondering, he was referring to Vince Lombardi.

...

4. Walt Disney was fired by a newspaper editor for 'lack of ideas.'

5. Thomas Edison's teachers gave up on him. 'He's too stupid to do anything,' was their evaluation.

6. Before he succeeded, Henry Ford failed and went broke *five* times.

Charles Swindoll, Kindred Spirit, Vol. 22, No. 3, Autumn, 1998, p. 3.

Beloved God see what we can become like an Architect can view a building he is creating in him mind.

The Bridge

During WWII General McArthur asked an engineer how long it would take to build a bridge across a certain river. 'About three days.' The engineer was told to go ahead and draw up the plans.

Three days later McArthur asked for the plans. The engineer seemed surprised. 'Oh, the bridge is ready. You can cross it now. If you want plans, you'll have to wait a little longer, we haven't finished those yet.'

Source unknown

While we are waiting for the plans many times God is already building us for His purpose.

As we conclude this session allow me to encourage us to talk with the Architect of our lives and submit to His working on us.

Good Enough

I think that many of us, when Christ has enabled us to overcome one or two sins that were an obvious nuisance, are inclined to feel (though we do not put it into words) that we are now good enough. He has done all we wanted him to do, and we should be obliged if he would leave us alone. But the question is not what we intended ourselves to be, but what he intended us to be when he made us...

Imagine yourself as a living house. God comes in to rebuild that house. At first, perhaps, you can understand what he is doing. He is getting the drains right and stopping the leaks in the roof and so on. You knew that those jobs needed doing and so you are not surprised.

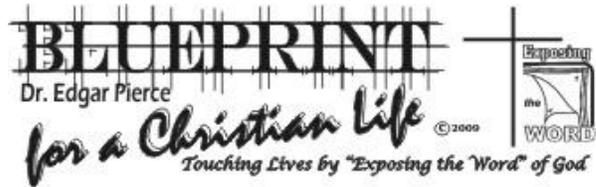
But presently he starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts abominably and does not seem to make sense. What on earth is he up to? The explanation is that he is building quite a different house from the one you thought of, throwing out a new wing here, putting on an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards.

You thought you were going to be made into a decent little cottage, but he is building a palace. He intends to come and live in it himself. - C. S. Lewis

Source unknown

Do you need to talk with the Architect today?

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5- Stay in Contact with the Contractor (the Spirit) Eph 2:18-22

"Life is like a box of chocolates", Forest Gump said in the movie, "You never know what you are going to get."

It is full of problems to be solved and challenges to be overcome.

The story is told of a man who lived for years in fear of strange, hideous animals who would hide under his bed and come out at night to prowl the room. One day the man told a friend, 'My brother finally solve my problem.'

'Oh, is he a psychiatrist?' the friend asked. 'No, a carpenter. He cut the legs off my bed.' *Source unknown*

As we have journeyed through this series *Blueprint for a Christian Life* we have seen that the old house of the flesh is not good enough. We have found that we need to study the Blueprints of the Word of God. We talked about choosing a builder is important and Christ, the Son, is the builder we need to choose. We have also discussed the Father, the Architect of the plan for our life. This brings us to the third Person of the triune God, the Spirit. May I suggest to us that the Holy Spirit is acting as the Contractor for our lives. He is the one who is in charge of the day to day building of the Saints. We know this process as sanctification. In construction many times there is what is known as a project manager whose job it is to control the project day to day.

Our text today is found in **Eph 2:18-22** with the main emphasis on verse twenty two.

Ephesians 2:18-22 *For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. 19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the*

household of God; 20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; 21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: 22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

I- Promise of the Spirit:

In order for us to understand the work of the Holy Spirit we need to see what was promised by Christ concerning Him.

Joh 14:16 *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.* While it is true that God dwells in our hearts it is equally true that He dwells there in the form of the Holy Spirit who is the permanent presence with us.

Joh 14:26 *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

He is to teach us all things. The Holy Spirit was promised to be the one who would be with us day to day to build us.

II- Coming of the Spirit:

Acts chapter two records for us the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. **Acts 2:1-3** *And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled*

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all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

I know we are some two thousand years removed from this. Some teach that we get the Holy Spirit with a special infilling after we pray and seek Him after salvation. I think the clear teaching of the Scriptures is that the Holy Spirit is the one who facilitates the new birth by Christ. **1Co 12:13** *For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*

II- Built Together:

It tells us we are all built together. God uses all kinds of material in construction the body of Christ, the church. Jews, Gentiles, slaves, freemen etc. We see in **Eph 2:21** that we are fitly joined together. Not a one of us should be exempt from, nor are we, from the conviction of the Holy Spirit as He build us. **1Co 3:9** *For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.*

Notice Jesus said that was one of the purposes of His coming. **John 16:8-11** *And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 Of sin, because they believe not on me; 10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; 11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.*

We also see these words in **Pro 3:11-12** *My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction: 12 For whom the LORD loveth he*

correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.

Billy Graham comments on the subject:

'The Bible says, 'Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth.' If life were all easy, wouldn't we become flabby? When a ship's carpenter needed timber to make a mast for a sailing vessel, he did not cut it in the valley, but up on the mountainside where the trees had been buffeted by the winds. These trees, he knew, were the strongest of all. Hardship is not our choice; but if we face it bravely, it can toughen the fiber of our souls.

'God does not discipline us to subdue us, but to condition us for a life of usefulness and blessedness. In His wisdom, He knows that an uncontrolled life is an unhappy life, so He puts reins on our wayward souls that they may be directed into the paths of righteousness.'

So the Contractor is working on us day by day to build us together.

III- Habitat of God:

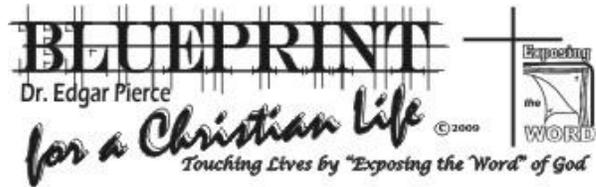
Notice vs 21 says He is building us together to be a holy temple in God. Then in verse 22 it says we are being built for God to live in us. The NIV says in **Eph 2:22** *And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.*

God wants to become a permanent resident within us. His presence is there day to day in the form of the Holy Spirit who is working to build us into a place for God.

IV- Let the Contractor Build:

Lets spend just a few moments and understand how we can let the Holy Spirit build us day by day.

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Many times when the builder is building their house there are a lot of decisions to be made. Some people want to argue with the contractor constantly and not listen to good experienced advice. Would you not say the same

1- Do not Quench Spirit.

We are told in **1Th 5:19 Quench not the Spirit.** The HCSB says, **"Don't stifle the Spirit."** This means do not put out the fire. **2Ti 1:6 Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.** Stir up means fan the flames.

This can also be understood as not using the gifts that God has given you by the Holy Spirit.

Many times we are like the lamp I read about.

Imagine a wick that is placed in oil, and then lit. If the oil runs out, the wick burns. As long as there is oil, the wick doesn't burn. As long as we are living in dependence on the power of the Holy

Spirit, we don't burn out. The question to ask: what's burning?

2- Do not Grieve the Spirit:

could be true in our contractor analogy of the Holy Spirit.

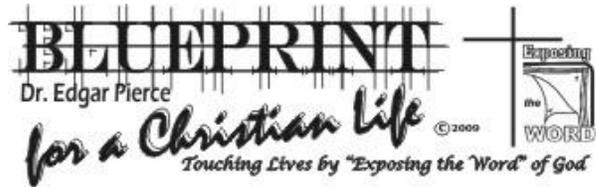
Eph 4:30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

The word grieve means to make sad or sorrowful. As He seeks to build us we need to realize that we are to be about the work ourselves as well. How do we grieve the Spirit and hinder growth.

By open sin, by anger at the brethren, by evil thoughts and desires, by not being thankful to God, by neglect when He prompts us, by resisting Him when He leads.

Speak to Him then, for He hears, And spirit with spirit can meet; Closer is He than breathing, And nearer than hands or feet. - Tennyson

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6- Getting on the Jobsite (Answering the Call of the Cross)

Luke 14:27-30 & Matt 16:21-26

Have you ever passed a building that was only partially constructed? Oh, the walls were standing but the roof was never put on. Perhaps the walls and roof were there but there were neither windows nor doors. You know, you have seen these buildings. Did it not leave you wondering what happened? Why was it not complete? Perhaps they just did not stay on the jobsite long enough to finish it.

Jesus spoke to a multitude of men and women who were tagging along.

Luk 14:27-30 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. 28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? 29 Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, 30 Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.

He was telling them to make sure they were ready to build and to get on the jobsite and continue.

Then another place Jesus told us that we as believers have to get about the business of answering the call of the cross.

One of my favorite movies is "The Call of the Wild." The gist of the movie is about a dog that responds to his nature to answer the call to run with the wild wolves. He only responded to what he was.

In ***Luke 9:51*** it is said of Jesus that ***"...when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem."*** I

submit this was a call of the cross. Jesus was going to the jobsite.

What is the call on our lives as Christians? Is there a call to service, to suffer for the cause of Christ? Are we comfortable in our irresponsibility? Have we become complacent in our Christians service?

"When I make people comfortable in their irresponsibility, I'm heading away from the cross.-- Fred Smith, Leadership, Vol. 13, no. 3.

Does the nature of what it cost for our redemption call us? What was the call of the cross for Jesus? Let us look at our text in Matthew to see the call of cross for Jesus and us as His followers.

Matt 16:21-26 "From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. 22 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. 23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. 24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. 25 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. 26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own

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soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

I- The Call of the Cross for Jesus:

Matt 16:21 "From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day."

The cross of Christ is a subject that has been expounded over the centuries by men as they preached the gospel. **Phil 2:8** "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

The cross was one of the most humiliating things that could happen to anyone. We get offended and think it is too much to bear when some says, "boo!"

Heb 12:2 says, "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

In our text we see that Jesus deliberately set out toward Jerusalem knowing that the cross awaited Him. He attempted to explain this to the disciples. He felt the call of the cross. Why we may ask? May I suggest a few reasons for the call of the cross to Jesus?

First, it was the plan of God. **Rev 13:8** "...the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." God had planned the cross to be the instrument of sacrifice before He created the world. The cross was always God's plan. It was the very reason that Jesus came. It was a natural call because of who He was in His inner being.

Second, He had to do what we could not for ourselves. Notice with me **Rom 3:10-12**; "There is none righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one."

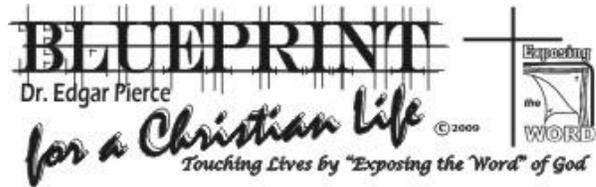
Rom 3:18-19 There is no fear of God before their eyes. 19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."

Rom 5:6-9 "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly....8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." The cross of Christ compelled Him because He knew there was no hope without His sacrifice.

He set His face toward the cross. Notice it says He knew He must suffer many things. **Matt 16:21** Not only was Jesus coming to Jerusalem knowing He would be killed but also knowing He would suffer prior to death. Jesus embraced the cross for our salvation. He did not have to go except for the compulsion of need. He was not crucified because He did not have power to overcome His foes.

Only Matthew tells us this. **Matt 26:53** "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" He answered the call of the cross. He was on

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the jobsite making it possible for us to build our Christian lives upon His sacrifice. Will we answer? Will we get on the jobsite?

II- The Call of the Cross for Believers:

Matt 16:24 *"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."*

When Jesus was being taken to be crucified there was a man who was conscripted to carry the cross of Christ.

Mark 15:21 *"And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross."* This is a literal taking up of the cross. Is this what it means to take up our cross? We see men today who carry a cross across the US. Is this the meaning? Some men even go so far as to have themselves crucified. Is this the meaning of taking up the cross?

I believe every Christian should hang on a cross for at least thirty seconds. Their lives will never be the same. -- Actor Bruce Marshiano, who portrayed Jesus in the Matthew video series. Christian Reader, Vol. 34.

In our text we clearly see there is a call of the cross for believers. May I suggest that there can be no cross without suffering? We cannot sanitize the cross and take all the suffering out of it for Christ. Neither can we truly sanitize the cross and take the suffering and sacrifice out of the Christian life and call. It may not be physical suffering, in may not be emotional suffering but it will involve at times giving up our will or conforming our will to His.

In **Acts 5:40-41** we find the early church suffering because of their faith. **"When they had called the apostles,**

and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. 41 And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.

The apostle Paul a man who certainly was acquainted with suffering for the cause of the cross said in **2 Tim 3:11-12** **"Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me. 12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."**

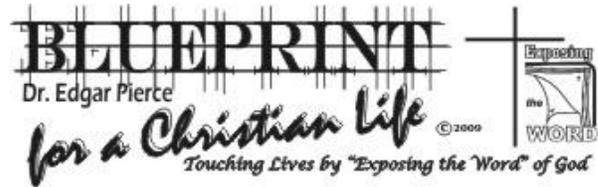
This brings us a good point. A soul searching point. One that requires us to look inward at our lives. When we suffer is it for the cause of Christ or of our own doing?

1 Peter 4:15-16 **"But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. 16 Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf."**

1 Peter 3:14-17 **"But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; 15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear...17 For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing."**

So this points out that we must make sure we are attempting to live as God

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would have us to do and when we suffer it will be for the cause of the cross not because of our sin.

Clarence Jordan, author of the "Cotton Patch" New Testament translation and founder of the interracial Koinonia farm in Americus, Georgia, was getting a red-carpet tour of another minister's church. With pride the minister pointed to the rich, imported pews and luxurious decorations. As they stepped outside, darkness was falling, and a spotlight shone on a huge cross atop the steeple.

"That cross alone cost us ten thousand dollars," the minister said with a satisfied smile.

"You got cheated," said Jordan. "Times were when Christians could get them for free."

-- Michael Jenkins, Itasca, Texas. Leadership, Vol. 5, no. 3.

The call of the cross I believe we need to see is not an option for us. Remember that the call is something within us. It is a natural thing for a Christian to answer the call of the cross. So how do we answer the call?

By fully submitting our whole being to God to use. Two times the apostle Paul in the letter to the Corinthians spoke of us being bought. We were bought by the cross of Christ and the Christ of the cross. Notice first **1 Cor 6:20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.** We are

to be sold out to God with our whole being. Have you surrendered to Him all that you have? Your life, your possessions, your job, your time and energy. Have you surrendered your all as you answer the call of the Cross. Are you on the Jobsite?

Lets now look at the second place Paul said we are bought with a price. **1 Cor 7:23 "Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men."** One of the other things that is evident here about the call of the cross is that we should seek to please God and not men. In the book of Acts we have an illustration of this. In **Acts 5:27-29** Peter and the Apostles had been put in prison for preaching. They are called before the Sanhedrin and notice their response. **"And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them, 28 Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. 29 Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men."**

Have you answered the call of the cross for your life? Will you surrender today to the call and say Lord here I am, all that I am for you to use as you see fit?

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7- Sticking by the Plan (Resist Temptation) 1 Cor 10:12-15

The Taj Mahal is one of the most beautiful and costly tombs ever built, but there is something fascinating about its beginnings.

In 1629, when the favorite wife of Indian ruler Shah Jahan died, he ordered that a magnificent tomb be built as a memorial to her. The shah placed his wife's casket in the middle of a parcel of land, and construction of the temple literally began around it. But several years into the venture, the Shah's grief for his wife gave way to a passion for the project. One day while he was surveying the sight, he reportedly stumbled over a wooden box, and he had some workers throw it out. It was months before he realized that his wife's casket had been destroyed. The original purpose for the memorial became lost in the details of construction.

Dr. James Dobson, Coming Home, Timeless Wisdom for Families, (Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton; 1998), p. 122

We discussed the need for a plan before we start building early in this series. We have seen that a good builder, Jesus, is important. Last time we saw we need to stay on the jobsite in order to finish the job.

Let me ask us another question. Have you ever known someone who went over budget, way over budget, building a house or project? Unfortunately, most of us do not have the resources that will let us build a Taj Mahal.

What causes the over budget expenditures? Sometimes it is because of the volatility in material prices. But sometimes is that those building do not stick to the plan. They want to upgrade the doors, the windows, the cabinets, the floors, the walls, the exterior, the roof, the

insulation, the bathtub, the shower, the landscaping, the...oh, well you get the point. When you build you must resist the temptation to do a lot of these things or you will bust the bank, would you not agree. You have to stick with the plan.

I- Temptation to Deviate:

Is it any different in our Christian life? Temptation to deviate from the Master's plan and try to chase everything that glitters, shines and looks good is important. Paul talking about the purpose of the spiritual gifts warned us by the Holy Spirit in **Eph 4:14** *That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.*

Our text says in **1 Corinthians 10:12-15** *Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. 13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. 14 Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. 15 I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say.*

Temptation is kinda is like when the next door neighbor gets a new fancy door it went from being a want to a need. Temptation to not follow the plan in home or construction a building project always gets you in trouble. Temptation to not follow the plan of God always gets us in trouble as well.

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James warned us in **James 1:14-15** *But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. 15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.*

We see from our text that we need to be careful because we will all face temptation to stray from the plan. He who thinks he is strong is warned in **1 Cor 10:12**. We are told also however that when we are tempted there is a way out in **1 Cor 10:13**.

Therefore, to help us to understand temptation lets look at two ways of handling it as a warning to us to stick with the Master's plan and not chase every distraction. These two ways are given to us in living examples in the Bible. One is a man named Joseph and the other is David.

II- David's Temptation:

Let us go to the story of David first. David, as you probably know, was the second King of Israel. He was anointed when he was a shepherd boy at a very young age. He is known as the greatest king Israel ever had. God said recorded in **1 Sam 13:14** that David was as man after His heart. It is found again in **Act 13:22** *And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.*

So surely a man like that could not be tempted so that he would fall. Let us look at David.

The story of David contains a great many triumphs of character and faith. David while being pursued by King Saul who was trying to kill him had two

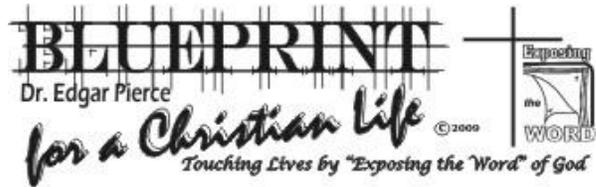
occasions that he could have killed Saul. David also had a desire to build the temple that his son Solomon built with the material that David secured. David also was the one who had faith to slay the giant Goliath. Then at the height of his power we pick up the story in the Bible.

2 Samuel 11:1-5 *And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem. 2 And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon. 3 And David sent and enquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite? 4 And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house. 5 And the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said, I am with child.*

David did not handle temptation very well here. In fact he willfully submitted to the temptation. He did not stick with the plan.

Some people fall into temptation, but a great many make plans for disaster ahead of time. 'Son,' ordered a father, 'Don't swim in that canal.' 'OK, Dad,' he answered. But he came home carrying a wet bathing suit that evening. 'Where have you been?' demanded the father.

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'Swimming in the canal," answered the boy. 'Didn't I tell you not to swim there?" asked the father. 'Yes, Sir," answered the boy. 'Why did you?" he asked. 'Well, Dad," he explained, 'I had my bathing suit with me and I couldn't resist the temptation." 'Why did you take your bathing suit with you?" he questioned. 'So I'd be prepared to swim, in case I was tempted," he replied.

The first thing that went wrong with David is he neglected his duty to go to war and sent others.

The second was he allowed himself to be tempted and then to act upon that temptation. By the way it is not sin to be tempted. James also said in **Jas 4:7** **Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.**

David didn't resist nor flee. He deviated from the plan. If we are going to complete the plan for our lives we must not see the temptation and run and embrace it. He ended up having the husband of Bathsheba killed. What a tragedy.

III- Joseph's Temptation:

Not let us turn to Joseph. Who does not remember the story of Joseph and his coat of many colors, his brothers jealousy that ended with him being sold as a slave into Egypt. When he gets to Egypt he is sold into the house of Potiphar.

Genesis 39:1-13 **And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar... 4 And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand. 6... And Joseph was a goodly person, and well favoured. 7 And it came to pass after these things, that his**

master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me. 8 But he refused...10 And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her. 11 And it came to pass about this time, that Joseph went into the house to do his business; and there was none of the men of the house there within. 12 And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out. 13 And it came to pass, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and was fled forth.

Now obviously there is a stark difference in the way that Joseph handled temptation and the way David did. May I encourage us all to be like Joseph.

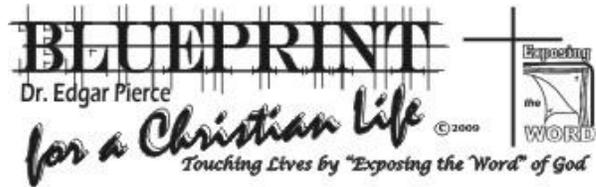
IV- Stick with the Plan:

I want to encourage each of us today to stick with the plan of God for our lives and not be distracted. Remember our text says, **1 Corinthians 10:12** **Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.** The writer of Hebrews warns us in **Heb 12:1** **Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,**

How are we going to do this? May I suggest we encourage each other? Let me end with one last story.

'One Saturday afternoon I watched the telecast of the world's light-weight boxing championship match. The boxers were a thirty-one-year-old Scotsman and a man from the United States who was six years

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younger. The Scot was the reigning champion, and the bout was being fought before a crowd of twenty thousand in Glasgow, Scotland. The champion had said before the match that he would rather die than be beaten before his own people; but the younger contender had never before been beaten in a professional contest.

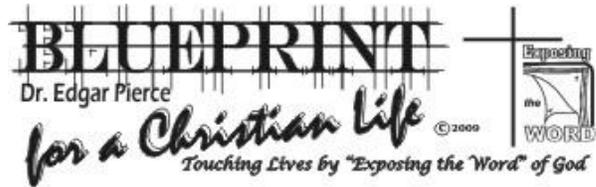
'Soon after the match began it became clear that the battle would be close. As I sat watching, I heard something unlike anything I had ever heard before. It was faint at first, but it seemed to be singing, singing at a boxing match! Gradually, it became louder; hundreds and hundreds of male voices singing a strange Scottish

melody. I could hardly believe it. They were singing encouragement for their champion. As he fought for his crown, but even more for the respect of the Scottish people, they sang to encourage him.

'I have not thought about that contest since without a lump rising in my throat; nor have I thought of it without thinking how like the Christian's battle it was, and how like the role of the church to sing encouragement for its members".

From Charles Durham, Temptation, InterVarsity Press, 1982, p. 125

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8- When Change is Necessary, (React to Conviction) 2 Sam 12:1-10; Ps 51:1-4

In our analogy of building we have our discussed our plans, enlisted a builder, have consulted the architect, we have held the cost down by sticking with the plans. Then the unforeseen occurs. The contractor calls and says that the way that you wanted something has to be changed. He is insistent that it must be changed to stay on track of building.

In our spiritual life, both saved and unsaved, we have a parallel to this. It is called conviction. We often refer to it as the Holy Spirit dealing with us. Some may even think it is only their conscience speaking to them.

Years ago, I stood on a weeknight at a carport of a house with a friend of mine along with a grandmother and her grandson of about 8 or 9 years old. My friend talked with the grandmother about Christ and attempted to present the gospel to her. I will never forget what occurred next. The grandson looked at his grandmother and committed, "Why does your face look so funny grandma." The conviction of the Holy Spirit was so strong on her that her face had distorted causing the comment.

Conviction is something that we very seldom talk about from the pulpits in our time. We make the presupposition that everyone understands what is happening when conviction is present. But do we?

When our breath does not seem to be entering our lungs, our legs shake and our palms sweat from the feeling we have that we need to change something in our live, do we understand? How should we react to conviction?

The purpose of the Holy Spirit is to convict men of their need of Christ for the forgiveness of their sin. Notice *The*

Message rendering of John 16:8-11
"When he comes, he'll expose the error of the godless world's view of sin, righteousness, and judgment: 9 He'll show them that their refusal to believe in me is their basic sin; 10 that righteousness comes from above, where I am with the Father, out of their sight and control; 11 that judgment takes place as the ruler of this godless world is brought to trial and convicted.

Lets talk a bit about when change is necessary, reacting to conviction.

I- Face to Face with Others Sin:

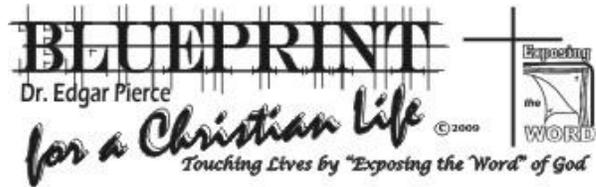
Last time we saw that David was involved in what is commonly called a "moral failure" today. He committed adultery and then murder. We might change the names but it is still sin in the eyes of God.

We continue with the story of David after he had made the decision to not do the things that were best for him and not pleasing to God. We pick up the story after Uriah, Bathsheba's husband, has been killed in battle because David placed him at the front so he would be sacrificed.

God sends a message to David by a prophet named Nathan. Would he reject it or accept it? When he came face to face with his sin, would he make matters worse or admit his sin?

2 Samuel 12:1-4 And the LORD sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. 2 The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds: 3 But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and

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nourished up; and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. 4 And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.

This story by Nathan the prophet was a simple illustration. Notice the reaction of David to the story. Might I suggest that we often get angry at others sin more than our own?

2 Samuel 12:5 And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die: 6 And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.

Now David had the authority as king to pass this judgment and see that it was executed. He was angry at such a reprehensible sin.

Let us hear the words of Jesus again recorded in **Matthew 7:1-5 NASB "Do not judge so that you will not be judged. 2 "For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. 3 "Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? 4 "Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye? 5 "You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye,**

and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

Learn to see your own faults and flaws is the message here. In order to understand conviction perhaps we need to understand what sin is.

Anything that fails to conform to the law of God. Evil is a complex phenomenon in the Scriptures. The idea of sin is conveyed by a variety of expressions with meanings like missing the mark, rebelling, going astray, transgressing, stumbling, etc. Basically, 'sin is lawlessness' (1 John 3:4), referring to an inward attitude as well as to the breaking of written commandments. All people commit sin (1 Kings 8:56; Rom. 3:23). To deny that we have sinned is to make God a liar (1 John 1:10); all his dealings with humanity are on the basis that we are sinners. But the blood of Jesus cleanses from all sin (1 John 1:7).

The Shaw Pocket Bible Handbook, Walter A. Elwell, Editor, (Harold Shaw Publ., Wheaton, IL; 1984), p. 359

II- Face to Face with Our Sin:

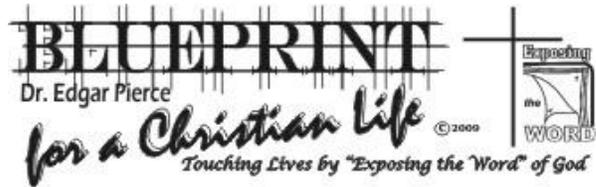
A Sunday School teacher had just concluded her lesson and wanted to make sure she had made her point. She said, 'Can anyone tell me what you must do before you can obtain forgiveness of sin?' There was a short pause and then, from the back of the room, a small boy spoke up. 'Sin,' he said.

Bits and Pieces, May, 1991

Inside the quote above is a verse that we need to hear. **1Jn 1:10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.** So before we get to thinking we are above sin hear this well.

Not to David and Nathan. **2 Samuel 12:7 And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man.... 9 Wherefore**

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hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.

Have you ever come face to face with the sin in your life? My prayer is that today we all are coming face to face with it. Repentance is needed but before we can find a place of repentance I think the word of God would teach us that we have to come to a place of conviction. We need to realize that there is something wrong before we can fix it if you will. You ever notice when we have a cold or a small problem we act like we are dying but just as soon as we think it may be serious we act like nothing is wrong. Is it not the same way with sin and conviction?

How would David react? He had the power to have Nathan killed. You just did not talk to the king this way, unless, God sent you and you were willing to lose even your very life for the truth.

We are not left to wonder about David reaction. **2 Samuel 12:13 And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD...**

Out of this experience, we have the great Psalm of repentance that David wrote in response to this time.

Psalms 51:1-4 Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. 3 For I

acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. 4 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.

Beloved this is how we react to conviction. We ask for God's forgiveness. When things need changed we change them.

Notice a New Testament verse that applied as we bring our sins to God. **1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

III- Help! I Need Your Help!

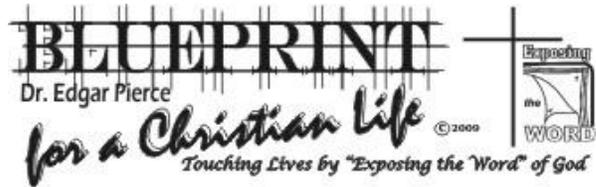
Gal 6:1-2 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. 2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

Let me close with a plea. We all need help in building our Christian lives. We need each other.

It was F. B. Meyer, I believe, who once said that when we see a brother or sister in sin, there are two things we do not know: First, we do not know how hard he or she tried not to sin. And second, we do not know the power of the forces that assailed him or her. We also do not know what we would have done in the same circumstances.

Stephen Brown, *Christianity Today*, April 5, 1993, p. 17

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9- Getting Fresh Water in our House - Digging the Wells...Genesis 26:17-22

Man we are moving forward in our house building analogy. Today we will look at one of the most important things that any house can have, fresh water.

We use water for a multitude of things, drinking, cooking, bathing, washing clothes, cleaning, watering plants, freezing into ice among other things. So I think we could agree that water is important in our physical lives.

What about our spiritual lives> Fresh water is spoken of in the Bible in many ways. We often read about the water of life.

God is the source of the water of life. **Psa 36:9 For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.**

The water of life flows from Christ according to **Joh 4:14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.;**

We as believers should be a channel for fresh water. Notice **Joh 7:38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.**

Vivian H., for 2 and a half years lived in a home without running water. She had to drive to a spring and load up five gallon jugs to haul back home. All the while there was a perfectly good well with a 600 gallon reservoir on her property. The water was there, she didn't know it could be used.

We all have the resource for fresh water in our lives if we are believers. Fresh Water is within reach of everyone today. The question is will we do what we need to

do to dig our wells so that fresh water can flow freely into and out of our lives.

Our text today is found in **Genesis 26:17-22 And Isaac departed thence, and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there. 18 And Isaac digged again the wells of water, which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father; for the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham: and he called their names after the names by which his father had called them. 19 And Isaac's servants digged in the valley, and found there a well of springing water. 20 And the herdmen of Gerar did strive with Isaac's herdmen, saying, The water is ours: and he called the name of the well Esek; because they strove with him. 21 And they digged another well, and strove for that also: and he called the name of it Sitnah. 22 And he removed from thence, and digged another well; and for that they strove not: and he called the name of it Rehoboth; and he said, For now the LORD hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.**

I- Background:

Abraham is dead and Isaac is living in area of Canaan. There is again famine in the land and he is instructed to not go to Egypt as Abraham had done. **Gen 26:1.** He instead goes to Abimelech, king of the Philistines and settles in Gerar. **Gen 26:6.**

He tells the same lie that his father had told that being that his wife was his sister. **Gen 26:7.** When he is seen with her,

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the king knows the truth. After a season of crops in which God blessed Isaac greatly the Philistines were jealous and stopped up the wells that Abraham his father had dug. **Gen 26:14-15.** Abimelech asked him to move away. **Gen 26:16.** So Isaac moved away and settled in the valley of Gerer.

II- Applications:

We see that the Philistines filled in the wells with dirt. This compares to our spiritual wells being allowed to fill with dirt. (**26:14-15.**) As Isaac dug the well of his father we to need to unstop or dig our spiritual wells.

The dirt that we have allowed in and that Satan has filled our wells with is the dirt of sin. Paul speaking of those who have walked by faith in the past said, **"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which cloth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us" Heb 12:1**

Remember **John 7:38** says, **"...out of his[our] belly shall flow rivers of living water."** We know that Jesus is the living water that is needed for a dry thirsty land.

III- Wells we need to Unstop:

During this time we will look at what clogs the well and then what we need to do to unstop or dig the spiritual well. May God allow fresh water to run into our lives today.

A- Well of Compassion:

1- Clog:

a- Selfishness: Jesus speaking concerning the time of judgment to come said in **Matt 25:43** **"I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and**

ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not " There are times when we allow our own selfishness to prevent us from doing what we need to do for others,

b- Worldly Cares: We all have our concerns of making a living. May I say that if you are a child of God's and your job prevents you from serving Him it is not God will.

We all have our well of compassion stopped up by an attitude of, **"not wanting to get involved."** We turn our heads at time to needs of others.

c- Judging: Rom 14:13 says, **"Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way."** Sometimes we are so full of our spirituality that we fail to relate to others as what we are as well as them, SINNERS.

2- How to Dig:

a- Through Prayer: Unstopping this well will take *effort*. It is not easy to be concerned, as a matter of fact it is extreme work. It is not like human flesh to do this but it is like God. Many are afraid to ask God to make us more concerned? Are we afraid of the commitment it will take from us?

b-Through Practice: By recognizing we as humans can be selfish, unconcerned, judgmental and try not to let Satan have the victory because of our lack of compassion.

B- Well of Communication:

1- Clog:

a- With Men- Pride I'm right and you are wrong attitude. I'm better than you attitude. This closes the ears of those we are trying to reach. It stops up the well of communication.

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b- With God- Unconfessed Sin..."Unconfessed sin is not hid from God."

Satan likes for us to be burdened down with sins that we carry because he knows if we confess them then God will forgive them and we can again be productive. Sin hinders prayer life and fellowship with God and others. Notice **Isaiah 59:1-2** *Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: 2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.*

2- How to Dig:

a- With Men- Remember the TV show Happy Days where Fonzie could never say he was wrong or that he was sorry.

We need to learn to say I was wrong, I'm sorry, give up right to be right.

In our text Isaac moved alone three times to another well.

Love is quick to reconcile. When we hold onto hurts and won't be reconciled to others it says more about us than them.

Phil 2:3 *"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."*

b- With God- Confession This bring me to the next well we need to unstop. We spoke of this in our last session as well.

C- Well of Confession:

1- Clog:

a- Guilt of Sin. Remember we said Satan don't want us to confess our unconfessed sins. Guilt of sin drags us down and we can even get to the point that we are ashamed to ask God to forgive us. We are afraid that He won't.

2- How to Dig:

a- Take God at His word- I John 1:9 *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

However we see that God has a place for us if we will keep on trying. Isaac **stated**, *"For now the Lord hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land"* **Gen26:22** Might I remind us that if God had not been a forgiving God Christ would never have gone to Calvary. He is a God who forgives the sins of men. When we confess our sins it is us that is admitting them and not a surprise to God. He will never say I didn't know you did that.

D- Well of Consecration:

Webster defines consecration as "To set apart for sacred use; to dedicate"

1- Clog:

a- Compliance- Christians look like the world; tell jokes like the world and talk like the world. Someone said there is so much of the world in the church you can't tell us apart from them.

b- Sidetracked from God Will and Purpose: Even with good things. Lets not get so busy doing good things that we fail to do the best thing, God's thing.

2- How to Dig:

2 Cor 6:16-18 says, *"And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God, as God hath said; I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ¹⁷ Wherefore come out from among them, and be aye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, ¹ And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my saris and daughters,*

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saith the Lord Almighty. "

a- By cleaning up our walk in the world's eyes. Proverbs 22:1 A good name is to be chosen over great wealth; favor is better than silver and gold.

b- By getting back to God's will and timed schedule. This brings me to the last well...

E- Well of Faith:

1- Clog:

a- Human effort: One thing that fights against faith constantly is when we begin to see only what we can do with our effort.

What if I told you that in the next five years we would need to raise between 2 and 3 million dollars to pay off our church and build another church because our current facilities would become inadequate.

In today's dollars that is probably a conservative estimate to begin to build what our forefathers built that we are in today. What if they had their wells of faith stopped up? Where would we be today? One of the greatest challenges that we face in affluent America is never truly see in our lifetime a great act of faith in God when faith is exercised and God moves.

b- No Vision of moving forward:

The Message says in **Prov 29:18** **"If people can't see what God is doing, they stumble all over themselves; But when they attend to what he reveals, they are most blessed."**

One of the great principles in the work by Henry Blackaby, *Experiencing God* is that God is always at work around us we just need to learn to recognize it and get involved.

We are told in **Hebrews 11:6** **But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.**

2- How to Dig:

a- By realizing God wants to do more than we are capable of. I don't know about you but I want to see a God sized task accomplished not just what we can do with our human strength. Remember **Philippians 4:13** **I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.**

b- By becoming sensitive to the movement of God around us.

Conclusion:

Satan will strive against us to prevent us unstopping our wells. **Gen 16:18, 20.** However, we see that God has a place for us if we will keep on trying. Isaac stated, **"For now the Lord hath made room for us..." Gen 26:22**

Joh 7:37 ...Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

There is fresh water if we will let it flow and receive it.

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10- It's Time to Get the Keys *John 10:10*

There is nothing that is anymore thrilling than to move into a house after all the construction has been complete. All the hard work has paid off. The contractor gives you to the keys to the house. We tend to romanticize the moving into a new house, in the past men would carry their bride over the threshold into the home. In our series of *Blueprint for a Christian Life* we come today to the time of getting the keys to our new house. What joy in moving into a new place, what an adventure.

We moved into our home in Kingsport and got many surprises that the former homeowner did not tell us about. The first time we turned on the shower the knob came off in our hands. We turned on the faucet to water the dogs outside and flooded our basement because we did not know the outside faucet was broken. But, our new house should have no such problems if we have learned our lessons from the past.

Remember we are building our house on the Blueprint of the Word of God, we have Christ as the Builder, the Father as the Architect of the plan, the Holy Spirit responsible for the day to day building as the Contractor. We have answered the call to be on the jobsite and decided to stick with the plan and only change what is necessary in our lives. We got fresh water in our lives and now we are getting the keys.

We as individuals as well as the church need to make sure we focus on the right things after we move in.

G. Campbell Morgan- While he always kept abreast of the activities of the church, Campbell Morgan detested committee work. He told a friend, 'I would

prefer to preach three sermons a day rather than spend half an hour at a deacon's meeting discussing who ought to keep the keys to the door."

The Wycliffe Handbook of Preaching & Preachers, W. Wiersbe, p. 209

We need to focus on the keys to the kingdom and not allow small things to upset and divide. Jesus said to us in ***John 10:10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.***

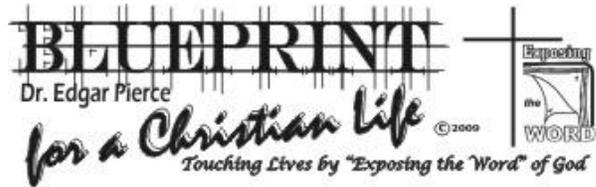
Let talk about the keys to this abundant life that Jesus talked about.

Back in the 60's many young men and women set off on a journey to discover themselves. They were searching for fulfillment in life. They found what was known as the "flower child, free love" generation. Rebellion was everywhere. They grew a little older and found they had not found the abundant life after all, just bodies wrecked by drugs and ruinous living.

Almost any given day we read or hear on the news about some star or starlet from Hollywood that has entered drug rehab for addictions, divorced, or died either from overdose or suicide. Yet the glamour and shimmer of Hollywood continues to be held up before our children, as well us, as the greatest life. Fame and fortune seems to not bring anything but heartache.

What little boy and girl has not at some times been given to flights of fantasy about being famous or being a great world class athlete that wins it all. Still it is a common occurrence for athletes to go to drug rehab or to be caught in some crime

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of aggression. Is fame and fortune what it takes to have an abundant life?

The scripture tells us of a man we know, as the prodigal son who left home with his part of the family fortune and found it was not what life was about. I'm sure he would agree with the scripture that says, "**And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.**" **Luke 12:15** Jesus said he came that we might have life, not only life but also an abundant life.

First, however, please notice that it is God who wants us to have this abundant life. On the other hand, in the scriptures you will notice it is the devil that desires to kill, steal and destroy. One needs to look no farther than the fact that Jesus came to realize that God wants us to have a life that is full and rich. Allow me to offer you a few of what I feel are the keys to having this abundant life.

I- First Key is Jesus.

Look at the context of our text.

Joh 10:1-2 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. 2 But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

Joh 10:7 Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.

Jesus made this statement in the context of discussing that he is the door for the sheepfold. It is obvious that He is talking about those who are called his own. Recently we have had the ad that asks, "Got milk." Some Christian shirts have asks, "Got Jesus?"

We can go back to the garden of Eden and find that God created man to have fellowship with Him. **Genesis 3:8** records for us the events that took place shortly after the fall. The intimacy of man with God had been broken. "**And they [Adam and Eve] heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.**"

Since this fall of man there has been a God sized and God shaped void in the life of men. May I say that there is no life that can totally be complete unless this void is filled? The void is filled when Jesus comes to live within.

Jesus is the one who hold the keys of both life and death. **Rev 1:18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.**

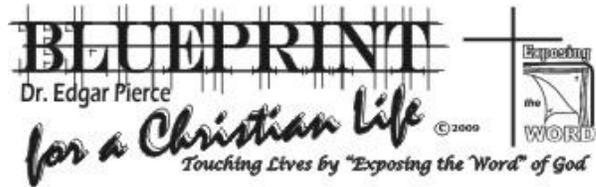
So when we get the keys we really are just getting Jesus, the key and the door of entrance into the abundant life.

II- Second Key is to be in fellowship with Jesus.

Once we are in Christ as far as salvation is concerned we need to continue to grow in our relationship. It is possible to be a Christian positional and not be in fellowship with Christ because of sin. We has discussed in this series when we talked about resisting temptation and demolition of the old building infested with sin.

Paul's pray for the Ephesian church, found in **Ephesians 3:17-19** was, "**That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth,**

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and height; ¹⁹ And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."

You may have often heard that God should be the guest in our home and at our table continually. Beloved for our lives to be lived by God's blueprint it must be so.

Many times we have exercise equipment in our homes, you know the one that has the clothes hanging on it. Many exercise so they can walk to stay in physically shape.

A retired couple decided that they should walk two miles a day to stay in shape. They chose to walk a mile out on a lonely country road so they would have no choice but to walk back. At the one-mile mark on their first venture, the man asked his wife, 'Do you think you can make it back all right, or are you too tired?' 'Oh, no," she said. 'I'm not tired. I can make it fine.' 'Good," he replied. 'I'll wait here. You go back, get the car and come get me.'
Joyce Redding in Reader's Digest, February, 1980

Beloved many times we begin our walk with God and then abandon it. In order to have an abundant life we must continue even after we think we have arrived.

III- Third Key is to walk in fellowship with other believers.

Countless times when the storms of life blow the winds of adversity we know the value of being in the body of Christ and fellowship with other believers. **Heb 10:24-25** says, "**And let us consider one another to provoke unto love**

and to good works: ²⁵ Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

One of the things I have a privilege of is being in many homes. Each is different because each of us are different. One of the things that I think we have lost is the fellowship of visiting with others. One key to and abundant life is to have friends intertwined with your life.

IV- Fourth Key is to count Your Blessings.

Have you ever looked around at most homes? We hang the pictures....move in the furniture...hang the clothes in the closet. However, beloved we fail many times to take stock of the blessings. Every picture has a story, every piece of furniture has a tale, and our closets speak of blessings.

How long has it been since you have taken inventory of all the good things in your life. When we stop and look at our lives we will see indeed how abundant they are. Our lives are rich because of Christ, family, friends and our church.

Three Keys to Happiness

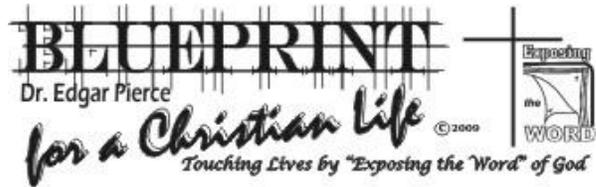
Someone has cited these three keys to happiness:

1. Fret not, He loves you (**John 13:1**)
2. Faint not, He holds you (**Psalm 139:10**)
3. Fear not, He keeps you (**Psalm 121:5**)

Source unknown

Let's enjoy the presence of the Lord, the fellowship of others and count our blessings, keys to and abundant life.

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11- Living in the House....Luke 19:12-13

Accepting Christ as Savior and making a commitment to serve Him at times seems like the easy thing when compared to living it out day to day. The new wears off and the work of being like Christ begins. Our series on the Christian life today moves us in our analogy down the road to days, weeks, months and years after we have occupied our home.

Jesus told a parable recorded in which He stressed the working out of the faith; the parable of the ten pounds.

The parable, spoken in an environment of some hearing that the Kingdom of God was going to appear immediately, teaches us to keep living in our house until He comes.

Luk 19:12-13 He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. 13 And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.

A lot of the recent translations render occupy with "Do or engage in business until I come."

So how do we get on with the business of living in our house day to day and year by year? Most of what we are going to look at is not new or earth shaking but is simply a reminder of things.

I- By Loving Like Christ:

When I think of Christ love I always think of forgiveness. The Bible tells us while we were yet sinners and enemies of God Christ died for us. For us to love like Christ we must learn to practice forgiveness and not be so judgmental of others who are caught in some act both within the household of faith and without.

I think of the story of the woman taken in adultery found in **Joh 8:3-4 And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, 4 They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.**

Now according to the law of the day they should have brought the man caught in adultery as well but then it was the men who were bringing the woman so they left him out. The bible tells us that God is no respecter of persons but we find ourselves being if we are not careful.

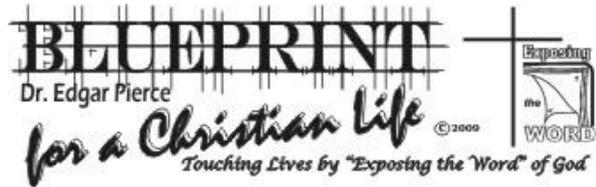
How would we have reacted as an individual? As a church? Notice how Christ reacted. He stooped and wrote in the dirt for a moment and then told the ones without sin to cast a stone at her. Then he again wrote in the dirt. They were convicted by their own guilt of sin and disappeared from the oldest to the youngest. I love the next portion...

John 8:10-11 When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? 11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

Was she guilty, sure; so was the crowd. Are those we are called to love guilty, sure but so are we. As we live in our house that God is building let us love like Christ and get rid of all our stones.

II- By Having the Mind of Christ:

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Next notice **Php 2:5** *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.*

I have thought of this often. While there are million things potentially involved in having the mind of Christ to me it melts down to a couple of thoughts.

- 1- Surrender of Own Will to Fathers;
- 2- Laying Self Aside for Benefit of Others.

Christ prayed in the garden the night before He was crucified, **...Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. Luke 22:42** He willingly surrendered His will to the Father.

Also, I think it involves laying aside ourselves for the benefit of others. Christ was born for the purpose of dying for our sins. think about this in conjunction to this. Before He left heaven, ask yourself why He would come to be a man of flesh knowing that it was going to be a death sentence. It was because we were helpless and doomed if he had not. The plan of God was for Him to come, not for His benefit but for ours.

One animal sacrifice per man, Genesis 3
One sacrifice per family, Exodus 12:3-14
One sacrifice per nation, Tabernacle in wilderness, Day of atonement
One sacrifice per world, John 1:29, Heb 10:1-14
Charts of Christian Theology and Doctrine, H. Wayne House, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publ. House, 1992), p. 108

So how does this flesh out in us living in our house? Perhaps the answer is another question. Have we surrendered our will to the Fathers? I do not know if you caught one thing that jumped out to me that Randy Pool said, the answer needs to be yes to God before we even know the question.

Then the next question is, are we laying aside our self for others? We will explore this a bit more in a moment.

III- By Walking in the Word:

Notice **Jas 1:22** *But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.*

As we live in our house as days go by we need to constantly walk in the Word of God. Make our decisions in a way that do not contradict the Word.

Let me give us a little Bible Study assignment. I did not give the scripture in the follow on purpose only the reference. This little study will help us to see the importance of the Word.

Born again by the Word **1 Peter 1:23; James 1:18**
Cleansed by the Word **Eph. 5:26; Psalm 119:9**
Saved by the Word **1 Tim. 4:16; James 1:21**
Growing by the Word **1 Peter 2:2; Jer. 16:17**
Sanctified by the Word **John 17:17; 1 Tim. 4:6**
Enlightened by the Word **Psalm 19:8; 119:105**
Kept by the Word **Psalm 17:4; Rev. 3:10**

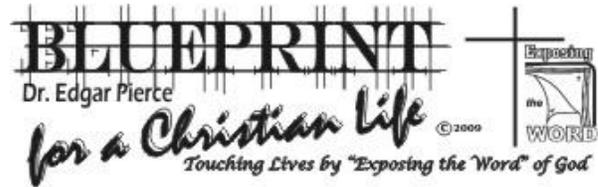
(from 750 Bible and Gospel Studies by George W. Noble from 1909.)

Living in the house means we must constantly be aware of the Word of God in our live.

IV- By Present a Living Sacrifice

What does God expect of you? What does God expect of me? I think this is a very personal question. I cannot answer it for you...often I cannot for me. Notice what the Word says in **Rom 12:1** *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy,*

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acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Presenting our bodies as living sacrifices involve making a lot of little decisions more than a big one. What is the motive? Christ sacrifice!

A wealthy English family once invited friends to spend some time at their beautiful estate. The happy gathering was almost plunged into a terrible tragedy on the first day. When the children went swimming, one of them got into deep water and was drowning. Fortunately, the gardener heard the others screaming and plunged into the pool to rescue the helpless victim. That youngster was Winston Churchill. His parents, deeply grateful to the gardener, asked what they could do to reward him. He hesitated, then said, 'I wish my son could go to college someday and become a doctor.' 'We'll pay his way,' replied Churchill's parents.

Years later when Sir Winston was prime minister of England, he was stricken with pneumonia. Greatly concerned, the king summoned the best physician who could be found to the bedside of the ailing leader. That doctor was Sir Alexander Fleming, the developer of penicillin. He was also **the son of that gardener who had saved Winston from drowning as a boy!** Later Churchill said, 'Rarely has one man owed his life **twice** to the same person.'

What was rare in the case of that great English statesman is in a much deeper sense a wonderful reality for every believer in Christ. The Heavenly Father has given us the gift of physical life, and

then through His Son, the Great Physician, He has imparted to us eternal life.

May the awareness that we are doubly indebted to God as our Creator and Redeemer motivate us to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto Him. - D.J.D.

Our Daily Bread, April 29

V- By Dying Daily and Living Eternally:

Perspective is important. The way we see things often determines how we will react. Do we see with temporary eyes or eternal eyes. May I suggest in closing that we need to embrace the fact that we are going to die and live with eternity in mind.

Paul said in **1 Cor 15:31 "I die daily."** We also need to keep in mind these verses. **1 Corinthians 15:19-22 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. 20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. 21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.**

When John Owen, the great Puritan, lay on his deathbed his secretary wrote (in his name) to a friend, 'I am still in the land of the living.'

'Stop,' said Owen. 'Change that and say, I am yet in the land of the dying, but I hope soon to be in the land of the living.'

John M. Drescher

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12- Deciding to Become a Master Craftsman Heb 5:12-13

Experience is a great teacher and to pass along the knowledge and wisdom is a great blessing.

We have spend the last several months talking about building our Christian lives with the Blueprint that God would have us use.

There is one more thought that cries out for exploration before we move away from this series. In the world of construction you will find many times that a older man will take a young man under his wing and teach him how to be a carpenter. A Master Craftsman, satisfied not only by knowing how to build, desires to pass along the knowledge. They may be called a journeyman in the electrical field, a apprentice or whatever in other fields.

May I suggest that the Bible would teach us that we need to pass along the things we learn to others as we build our lives? As we learn the lessons from God in our lives as he shapes a builds us we need to mentor, disciple, become friends with, apprentice, or whatever term is in vogue at the time.

The Bible clearly teaches us that there is a calling to be a teacher. A calling that is gifted by spiritual gifts. **1Co 12:28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers...** The books of Acts give numerous instances where Paul and the other apostles and missionaries taught for many months and even years at different locations.

Many in the churches today have been called and equipped by God through the Holy Spirit to be teachers. Many who have been called have not responded.

I- You Ought to Be Teachers:

Having said that may I suggest that we all have a calling to teach the faith not just the ones who hold the position. We all need to make a decision, are we going to become a master craftsman who passes along the knowledge?

Notice what the writer of Hebrews said in a challenge to the Christians to become more mature and pointing out their lack of spiritual growth.

Heb 5:12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. 13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

The *English Standard Version*(ESV) says, **For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God...**

They had been Christians long enough to have grown in the faith.

David Guzik said the following:

Their failure to mature is exposed. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need *someone* to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God;

...You ought to be teachers: It wasn't that these were unique people who would hold a unique role of teaching. Instead, they **ought to be teachers** in the sense that all Christians should be teachers.

There is an important sense in which every Christian must be a teacher, because

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we can all help disciple others. We really only master something after we have effectively taught it to someone else. Teaching is the final step of learning.

So the challenge today is that a decision needs to be made. Are we going to become someone who passes the faith along and teaches others or not. We are called to be teachers and all have a sphere of influence that we are stewards of. It is a simple fact that we all are teachers. Now it is only a matter of what we teach.

What Kind of Teacher?

The mediocre teacher tells.

The good teacher explains.

The superior teacher demonstrates.

The great teacher inspires.

Progress Magazine, December 23, 1992

II- Milk Babies:

Heb 5:12...are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. 13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

Some verses sum up the world today and many of our church attendees. Notice **2Ti 3:1-2 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. 2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy... 7 Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.**

We might call these milk babies. Now when someone is first saved they are often like a newborn baby that needs nourishment of the word of God to grow. We are even told in **1Pe 2:2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.** Now the idea is not that we always remain milk babies. So the first decision many time we need to make is to

get off the milk and onto the meat of the word.

If we fail to mature then we run the risk of become a weak Christian that does not recognize the Bible when it is taught and mistake other things as they are taught as the Word.

In April, 1985, I [John Underhill of Spokane WA] visited in a couple's home who told me how they had been fans of Dr. Gene Scott from Southern California, and what a great preacher he was. They hadn't been at church for a while, so I went to visit them. When I arrived, Dr. Scott was on TV, they'd purchased a satellite dish in order to stay current with his teaching. After some chit-chat, the husband turned to me and said, 'You're probably wondering why you haven't seen us at church lately. Right then, Dr. Scott held up a book about the lost city of Atlantis and the pyramids, and the husband looked at me and said, 'This is what we want in Bible teaching, and we haven't ever heard this taught in any of the churches we've been in!''

Now obviously the pyramids and the lost city of Atlantis is not found in the Bible.

Paul said in **2Ti 4:3-4 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; 4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.**

The call for Master Craftsmen to teach the word with their voice, lives and commitment is needed sorely in our times.

III- A Family Affair:

What if we do not do this? What if we continue to not study the Word, not learn

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so we can teach, not put into practice the things we hear? May I say if we do not teach our kids and the family of our church and community someone will. Others will teach them and many times it is things contrary to what we claim to believe but do not pass along.

It is a commonplace how easily a child of 3 or 4 picks up a foreign language if exposed to it without any formal teaching. Yet we are unwilling to admit that a child of the same age picks up our unconscious attitudes and prejudices without being taught, and often retains these longer than any of his formal education. - Sidney J. Harris

Paul talked about Timothy and his heritage of faith in **2Ti 1:5** *When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.*

This illustrates from the Scriptures that the passing of the faith along is a family affair.

IV- Results Best Settled in Eternity:

Many times, we wonder if we are making any impact. Often we are not aware of the influence we are having as we teach with our lives and words. Hear **Gal 6:9** *And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.*

Dyson Hague, a chaplain in an English hospital...visited a ward of dying soldiers. One man asked him if he would write his Sunday school teacher and tell her he would die a Christian because of her teaching.

Chaplain Hague wrote the letter. A few weeks later he received this reply: 'Just a month ago I resigned my class of young men which I had been teaching for years, for I felt that my teaching was getting nowhere. Then came your letter, telling how my teaching had helped win this boy to Christ. I've asked for my class back. May God have mercy on me!'

Leslie B. Flynn quoted in Our Daily Bread, September 26, 1992

V- Call to Action:

The next verse in Hebrews 5 after our text is **Hebrews 5:14** *But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*

The call to action today is simple. Are you doing what needs to be done in your life at your stage of spiritual life to pass along the faith? Are you learning the Word so you can teach it, are you willing to step out and commit to become a Master Craftsman who passed the trade along?