

FOUNDATIONS FOR A SUCCESSFUL CHRISTIAN LIFE: PART II THE BOOK OF ACTS SERIES

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TEXT: Acts 2:37 Now when they heard *this* (the gospel being preached by Peter), they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?” **38** Peter *said* to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. **39** For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.”

40 And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation!” **41** So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls. **42** They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer...

46 Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, **47** praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

INTRO: As your pastor, I love you very much. I want each one of you to be successful in life. I want all of you to finish well. As I am getting older, I am more conscious of finishing well. To me finishing well is loving and obeying Jesus, and by God’s grace, I have loved and obeyed Jesus.

In almost 50 years of walking with the Lord, the truths that I share with you today, if applied, will lay a foundation to help you to walk faithfully with the Lord. Last week I shared the foundations of repentance, water baptism, and baptism in the Holy Spirit. Today, I want to cover personal holiness, devotion to God’s Word, commitment to the *Ekklesia* (the church), a consistent prayer life, and evangelism.

I. PERSONAL HOLINESS

A. Acts 2:40b “Be saved from this perverse generation.”

- 1. Acts 2:40** And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation!”

2. Peter gave “many other words” on this important subject of sanctification: “be saved from this perverse generation.”
3. Even though the early Church became born again, new creatures in Christ, being liberated from sin and clothed with Christ through baptism—and being empowered with the Holy Spirit—there is a very important practical step for Christians to take, and that is to be saved or separated from the evils of the worldly society.

B. A SEASON OF SEPARATION

1. **2 Corinthians 6:14 Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? 15 Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? 16 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, “I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. 17 Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE,” says the Lord...**
2. **2 Corinthians 7:1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.**
3. **1 Corinthians 15:33 “Bad friends corrupt good morals.”**
4. **Proverbs 13:20 He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.**
5. When I gave myself to the Lord, I was delivered from drug addiction, but I also knew I could not hang out with my friends because I knew that they would bring me down. My first encounter with Jesus was at my friend’s house in early May of 1973. I encountered the love of Jesus and wept for three days, but I was still hanging out with my friends and doing drugs with them. I knew I had to give up the drugs. The Spirit was convicting me. The turning point took place on May 25 when I went to the Deep Purple concert. The first band to play was Rory Gallagher, the Irish rock star who played with the band Cream. During the intermission before Deep Purple came onto the stage, my friends wanted to walk around the Civic Center, and I stayed back to save their seats. I was thinking of the encounter I had two weeks earlier and I started to bargain with God. I remember to this day what I said to God: “God, I won’t sell drugs, but is it OK to take it? I won’t do anything hard, but I will just smoke weed. Is that OK? Is it OK to have sex as long as it is a serious

relationship and not casual?” Two teenagers came up and immediately sat in my friends’ seats. I leaned over to tell them the seats were already taken, but before I could get a word out of my mouth, the person who sat the closest to me said, “You think you are right with God, but the truth is that you are far from Him. You have to show God that you are serious about following Him.” And with those words the two guys got up walked away. I was shocked. I cried out, “OK, God, what do You want me to do?” In a flash I saw that the rock concert and everything going on (the drugs, sex, rock and roll) represented a perverse generation that I was still part of, and I heard the Lord speak to me for the very first time, “Throw away your drugs, leave this concert, and follow Me.” I had to fight my way through a sea of 15,000 people, but the moment I walked out of the Civic Center, I was instantly delivered from drugs, and by God’s grace, that was the last time I did drugs.

6. Some of you need to come out and be separated.
7. Be careful because throughout church history, the Church trying to be holy totally withdrew from the world and lost the vision of reaching the lost for Jesus. E.g., the monastic movement, the Amish.
8. Remember, it is a season of separation, not a total separation. For me it was one year. As you get stronger in the Lord, you want to reach out to them in love, and the Holy Spirit will lead you back to your friends to win them over without you stumbling.

II. BEING DEVOTED TO THE WORD OF GOD

A. Acts 2:42a They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching...

B. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ETERNAL WORD, THE BIBLE

1. 1 Peter 2:2 As newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word...

2. The Green family (Hobby Lobby) and The Bible Museum. This major foundation gives themselves to organizations that are winning souls around the world and anything to do with translating and getting the Bible out. Their rationale? They want to invest in something that is eternal. Souls and the Word of God. (Matthew 5:18, **Matthew 24:35 “Heaven and earth will pass away but my words will not pass away.”)**

3. Joshua 1:8 “This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.”

C. WE ARE ALL CALLED TO TEACH GOD'S WORD

1. **Proverbs 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old, he will not depart from it.**

D. A WORD ABOUT YOUTUBE

1. I want all of you who watch me online to subscribe to my YouTube channel. I almost never say this, but I am realizing the power of getting Apostolic Teaching out through media, and we must steward this well.

III. FELLOWSHIP (LIFE GROUPS)

- A. **Acts 2:41 “There were added about three thousand souls. 42 They were continually devoting themselves to... fellowship, to the breaking of bread...”**

B. **Fellowship starts with commitment to God's family.** The Jewish people knew about covenant. Covenant with God and covenant with the people of God. Family is founded on the marriage covenant. So, too, is the family of God. But Jesus redefines the family of God.

1. **Matthew 12:46 While He was still speaking to the crowds, behold, His mother and brothers were standing outside, seeking to speak to Him. 47 Someone said to Him, “Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You.” 48 But Jesus answered the one who was telling Him and said, “Who is My mother and who are My brothers?” 49 And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, “Behold My mother and My brothers! 50 For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother.”**
2. **Luke 14:26 “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.”**
3. This is so misunderstood. Jesus of course wants us to love, honor, and obey our parents. What He is saying is that your love for Jesus must be so great that it is like hatred toward your family in comparison.
4. **Obviously if your family is born again, your commitment to your family is also commitment to the church family.**
- C. **“Fellowship, to the breaking of bread...”** The word fellowship is *koinonia* in the Greek, and it means social participation, community, a life in common.

IV. PERSONAL AND CORPORATE PRAYER: Acts 2:42 “devoted to the prayers” (Note it is plural in the Greek)

A. Mark 11:17 “My house will be a house of prayer for all nations.”

- 1. Praying for the lost, beginning with your family and friends.**
- 2. 1 Timothy 2:1 First of all, then, I urge that entreaties *and* prayers, petitions *and* thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, 2 for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. 3 This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.**

B. PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

- 1. A prayer list.** Peter Wagner. *Oikos* list of lost family members.
- 2. Journal your prayers.**

V. EVANGELISM

A. Acts 2:46 Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

B. How were unbelievers being saved? Because the church was sharing the good news with them.

1. Romans 10:14 How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? 15 How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, “HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!”

2. Matthew 5:14 “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; 15 nor does *anyone* light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

3. Dream Fest

C. PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

1. PRAY, 2. LOVE, 3. SHARE

CONCLUSION: A fresh commitment to Jesus and His Church.