

“Foundations for the Future”

“For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building. By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward.” I Cor. 3: 9 - 14

I am building a house, I am learning some things that I didn't know and the whole experience is trying to teach me patience, but the one thing I know that I have been reminded of... The most important part is the foundation; 90 – Piers □24– ranges from 6□ to 9□ deep.

Jesus knew that the foundation was the most important part of a building.

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.” Matthew 7:24 – 27

Jesus compared our lives to a House.

Whether or not you build a life whose influence and impact will last depends on the foundation.

Faith Room – Built on the solid foundation of God's Word.

Family Room – If your family is going to endure and hold together, it needs a solid foundation. It must have a foundation built on a stable marriage, parental leadership, mutual love and commitment to God's Word and work.

Financial Room – But you also have a financial room in that house, and your finances also need to be based and built on a solid foundation because money matters. Your money matters to the government; that is why they tax it. Your money matters to you; that's why you work so hard to get it. AND your money matters to God; that's why He gave it to you.

Most Christians/people have a weak financial house because it is built on a weak foundation. Why do I say that? Well, consider just two statistics:

- Average Christian gives less than 2% to the Lord's work.
- 45-50% of church attendees give absolutely nothing to the church.

I. HOW TO BUILD A FINANCIAL FOUNDATION

Jesus said something interesting about money that we should remember. “No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.” Matthew 6:24

Two truths: No one can serve two masters. Everyone serves one. Either you are master over money or money is master over you. I am convinced that anyone can build a solid, strong foundation that will last for eternity if they will just remember...

A) Two words:

1. Ownership: That's God's part

“The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;” Ps 24:1

2. Stewardship: That's Our Part

“You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet” Ps 8:6

Whenever and wherever money's discussed you can discuss it under

B) Four Categories

1. Making It

2. Giving It

3. Saving It

4. Spending It

Can you honestly tell me that you would prioritize the categories that way? NO! Most of us put #4 right after #1 and in many cases they never get to #2 and rarely get to #3.

Allow me to share with you...

C) What Jesus said God desires and what the Bible teaches

1. First priority after making it, is to give it

“Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops;” Prov. 3:9

First fruit – when you pick the apples, the first goes to God. When you write the checks, the first ought to be to God's Church. God doesn't leave it to chance what that check ought to be

2. What's the amount: A tithe

“ ‘Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, ‘How do we rob you?’ In tithes and offerings.’ ” Mal. 3:8

I heard Dr. James Merritt, President of the Southern Baptist Convention; say once, “You are not right financially with God unless you are giving a tithe of your income to the budget of your local church.”

3. Where do you give it: The Church

“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.” Mal 3:10

God doesn't leave it to chance – give it to the regular budget of the church because that's the foundation; the centerpiece of God's work on earth. The rest is great. BUT the foundation is the church – it's STILL the church!

Hugh's Song

D) After the giving comes the saving of money.

“In the house of the wise are stores of choice food and oil, but a foolish man devours all he has.” Prov. 21:20

“The Rule of 72”

12% - your money doubles in 6 years. Interest can work for or against you.

The problem that too many people have is that they are in financial bondage

E) The meaning of being in financial bondage.

- 1. You owe money you cannot repay.**
- 2. You owe so much money that you cannot tithe and give offerings to other things.**
- 3. You owe so much that you cannot save.**

Political Truth - The only money the government has belongs to me.

Spiritual Truth - The only money I have belongs to God.

F) Does money matter to God?

Yes! He is vitally interested in how you, make, give, save and spend your money. Jesus told 38 Parables – 16 of them had to do with money!

- 1. 500 verses on prayer.**
- 2. 500 verses on faith.**
- 3. 2350 verses on money.**

IT MATTERS TO GOD THAT WE HAVE A STRONG FINANCIAL FOUNDATION.

II. HOW TO ENJOY FINANCIAL FREEDOM

(Matthew 25: 14 – 30)

A. When you save money, You expect a return; God has invested in you and God expects a return.

B. Building the right financial foundation, family, is the key to achieving financial freedom. The foundation for giving is the tithe, But the...Freedom of giving is the offering. It is through your tithe and your offerings that you invest in God's work, and in people, and in souls that will last for eternity!

C. Grunt giving vs. glamour giving

Foundation is the tithe – to the budget of your local church, then we get to really have fun! We have to do the grunt but we must go forward and do the glamour also.

III. HOW TO SEE OUR FINANCIAL FUTURE

“Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.” Luke 6:38

Over the last 120 days we have presented to you a picture of where God is leading in the future. It is a great and exciting picture. How does it happen?

A. Members to the Church

B. Church to others

Illustration: Peabody Hotel & the ducks

I have stayed at the Peabody Hotel in Orlando. One of the things that makes that hotel famous is that twice a day they have the one and only parade of ducks. While John Phillip Sousa's March, “Stars and Stripes Forever” plays in the background, ducks come from everywhere; gather at the fountain on the main floor and a red carpet is unrolled. Then without a quack, they march as they go from the fountain back to the curtain. It's an unbelievable sight. It's hard to understand why those ducks are so motivated to do that until you do a little investigation.

If you will follow those ducks behind the curtain, you will notice that when they get behind the curtain there is no order at all. Those ducks act just like ducks and go everywhere. Why? Because behind that curtain scattered all over the floor is duck food, it's everywhere. They're not quiet anymore and they're not marching anymore; they're quacking and eating and enjoying themselves immensely. You see, those ducks do not march everyday because of the applause of the crowd. They do it because of what is behind the curtain.