



REEXAMINING OUR FOUNDATIONS AND WORLDVIEWS

Our perceptions, perspectives and priorities are influenced by our worldviews, and our foundations fashion our worldviews. Consequently, analysis of our perceptions, perspectives and priorities must begin by examining our foundations and then evaluating our worldviews to make certain that they are biblical.

We are especially concerned in this article with finding integrity—integral living—in the body of Christ. We see so much that is dysfunctional in individuals, families and fellowships. We are addressing these issues with a hope that bringing them to light might lead to wholeness. Through repentance and discipline, the light of Christ will shine in this desperate world through the ordered lives of maturing sons and daughters of the King.

The vast majority of people, both those who identify with Christ and those who do not, are primarily fixed upon living life to suit themselves. They are in the very center of their own little worlds, and everyone and everything orbits around them. While many would deny that this is true of them, observing how they make decisions and how they live their lives will support this conclusion.

The Good Life has replaced The God Life. The Path to Prosperity has become more popular than The Calvary Road. We are more interested in getting a breakthrough than brokenness.¹

The “American Dream” lifestyle has been with us for many years. Much of the Western world has sought to chase after, to emulate a lifestyle popularized by American icons through various forms of media. However, we are currently observing a battle to preserve this way of life, and it may already be too late to change its outcome. Many Christians find themselves in the midst of this battle. We might refer to it as a *culture war*. The questions before believers are these:

- Should we be engaging a Babylonian system?
- Can we do so without compromising our spiritual birthright?
- Is this our God-given priority?

It takes a long time to turn a large ship, especially when so many people are just waking up from a long winter’s nap (in the bow of the boat?). What is happening here has been in the process for more than fifty years. Let’s take a look at the stark realities, and—in the process, examine our own hearts and foundations.

¹ J. Lee Grady

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL REVOLUTION

Social revolutions began to appear as waves, crashing upon the shores of American—and then most of Western—civilization, following the Second World War.

- The economic boom of the 1950's in America provided the means for a new, restless spirit to find its voice.
- The shifting culture provided a marketplace primed and ready for Elvis and “Jail House Rock” in 1957.
- Beatle mania began in Liverpool, England. The group came to be perceived as the embodiment of progressive ideals, seeing their influence extend into the social and cultural revolutions of the 1960s.
- The Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco is famous for its role as a center of the 1960s hippie movement, a post-runner and closely associated offshoot of the beat generation or the beat movement, members of which swarmed San Francisco's "in" North Beach neighborhood two to eight years before the "Summer of Love" in 1967.
- Five hundred thousand predominately young concert-goers braved the rain to hear thirty-two rock-n-roll acts at Woodstock, New York, in August 1969.
- The Vietnam War spanned the season of social and cultural revolutions, beginning in 1955 and ending in 1975
- Psychology Today began publication in 1967 reflecting in print the changing focus in the minds of people. Folks whose memories do not predate this era will be unable to track with those of us who do remember life as it was.
- The soul of western nations was gutted during those cathartic years, and we became something we were not before.

HUMANISTIC PHILOSOPHIES

Two radically differing philosophies of life simultaneously emerged with new energy—*capitalism* vs. *socialism*—both holding to the righteousness of their causes, neither of them offering a holistic and balanced lifestyle. Capitalism, espoused by the establishment, had the infrastructure and momentum on its side for many years. But, the revolutionaries kept increasing in numbers and structure until we find ourselves now living in a season of shifting momentum.

Both extremes actually share the same foundation—the foundation of *self*, the fruit of more than fifty years of social and cultural revolutions. Sub-philosophies include *selfish self* and *benevolent*

self.² (Yes, there is even a magazine that is called “Self.” It began publishing in January 1979. Hmmm.)

Neither philosophy—capitalism or socialism—reflects the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Nor do the variety of *spiritual gurus* that have found their way to prime time television with their captivating messages of self-help and self-improvement. Many of their books are on the shelves of Christian bookstores.

No nation has a corner on corruption in government. Corruption is inherent in *the foundation of self*. Unfortunately, there is corruption in the church (for the same reason). And, Christian people are getting caught up in fighting for a philosophy and way of life that has little to do with the mandates of the Christian faith. Christianity was birthed into and has always thrived in hostile environments. Understanding our faith and our foundation will help us understand how we are to posture ourselves in today’s raucous social/spiritual climate.

Whether we’re talking politics, ministry or any other career, there are basically only two options for building. One is I, the “self,” and the other is He, Jesus Christ.

- Adam or Christ?³
- Merely Born? Or Born Again?⁴
- Flesh or Spirit?⁵
- Old Creation? Or New Creation?⁶
- Man’s Ways? Or God’s Ways?⁷

NO OTHER FOUNDATION

There is no third option. Actually there are no options. Because, for us to build upon *self* is exactly the same as building upon *sand*.⁸ So many who built careers on sand have come crashing down. We are witnessing an epidemic of human failure. We are aware of these especially among politicians and ministers, because they lead such public lives.

Of those who claim to be building upon Jesus as their foundation, but build their lives on *self*, Jesus asks,

“Why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say?”⁹

Jesus described the futility of such hypocrisy:

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven.”¹⁰

² Genesis 2:17

³ 1 Corinthians 15:45-49

⁴ John 3:3-7

⁵ Romans 8:5-8; Galatians 5:16-25

⁶ Galatians 6:14-15; 2 Corinthians 5:16-17

⁷ Isaiah 55:8-9

⁸ Luke 6:49

⁹ Luke 6:46

Paul built his life on the Lord Jesus Christ. Allow us some journalistic liberty as we consider his confession:

*“Adam” has been crucified with Christ; it is no longer “Adam” who lives (in me), but (the Spirit of) Christ lives in me.*¹¹

Jesus would describe Paul this way:

*“He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against the house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock.”*¹²

Paul clearly enunciates the only foundation meant to support the life that God gives us:

*No other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*¹³

BUILDING MATERIALS THAT PASS THE *ETERNITY* TEST

Paul goes on to discuss what materials are acceptable for building upon Christ:

Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is.

*If anyone’s work which he has built upon it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.*¹⁴

“*He himself will be saved*” because of trust in Jesus Christ as his foundation. But, what he did with his life will result in suffering loss. He could have been rewarded had he built with the right materials. *Gold, silver* and *precious stones* increase in purity and value when tested by fire. Wood, hay and straw are destroyed by fire.

Eugene Peterson’s *The Message* helps us to grasp the gravity of these choices:

Let each carpenter who comes on the job take care to build on the foundation! Remember, there is only one foundation, the one already laid: Jesus Christ. Take particular care in picking out your building materials. Eventually there is going to be an inspection. If you use cheap or inferior materials, you’ll be found out. The inspection will be thorough and rigorous. You won’t get by with a thing. If your work passes inspection, fine; if it doesn’t,

¹⁰ Matthew 7:21a

¹¹ Galatians 2:20

¹² Luke 6:48

¹³ 1 Corinthians 3:11

¹⁴ 1 Corinthians 3:12-15

your part of the building will be torn out and started over. But you won't be torn out; you'll survive—but just barely.

You realize, don't you, that you are the temple of God, and God himself is present in you? No one will get by with vandalizing God's temple, you can be sure of that.¹⁵

Jesus provides us with the simple understanding of how to build on the foundation: obedience!

"Whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock."¹⁶

"He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."¹⁷

Gold, silver and precious stones typify the revelation of Jesus. They remain a mystery to those who have no foundation in their lives. The tragedy is that so many who do have Christ in them remain dysfunctional, continually fall short of glorifying Him, because they build their lives with faulty, temporal materials. Many who claim faith in Jesus give their lives to building careers (or merely surviving) focused upon *wood, hay and straw*.

Jesus, our model of personhood, the consummate individual, *only did what He saw His Father doing*.¹⁸ He had no will of His own, and therefore offered only *righteous judgment*.¹⁹ He spoke only *just as the Father told Him*.²⁰

God invades time and space, makes His presence known in the cosmos, through His people. Redemptive grace needs to be extended into all arenas of life—politics, business, industry, education, medicine, science, etc. *Creation eagerly waits the revealing of the sons of God*.²¹

Representing God's kingdom in the world, piercing the darkness with the light of Christ, cannot happen through people whose philosophies, lifestyles and worldviews are skewed—skewed by political party emphasis, capitalistic or socialistic tendencies, or any philosophy of life that hinders or distracts people from fully seeking and embracing *first the kingdom of God and His righteousness*.²²

Wherever you are, whatever you are doing, we pray that you are building on the foundation of Jesus Christ, and using heaven-sent building materials, so that you may be rewarded for your work. Father wants to reward you!

¹⁵ 1 Corinthians 3:10-17 TM

¹⁶ Matthew 7:24

¹⁷ John 14:21

¹⁸ John 5:19

¹⁹ John 5:30

²⁰ John 12:49-50

²¹ Romans 8:19

²² Matthew 6:33

COUNTING THE COST

Jesus infuses us with His spiritual life through new birth. Everything that He was and is becomes ours in seed form. *Christ is in us, the hope of glory.*²³ Our new lives are to be lived *through the faith of the Son of God.*²⁴

*Narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.*²⁵

The Seed of Christ, the Anointed One within, grows and develops into abundant life as we *seek first His kingdom and righteousness,*²⁶ and are disciplined by the *guardians and stewards* He provides for us.²⁷

It is tragic that the gospel of the kingdom has been distorted into a gospel of personal salvation, a gospel of “me first” and “I deserve – fill in the blank.” The true gospel reveals Jesus as Lord and King of His kingdom. Those who build with eternal building materials (typified as *gold, silver* and *precious stones*) will go from glory to glory through the purging process—the fiery trials of this life.

Those who embrace Him as Savior, so that their sins are forgiven and they can go to heaven, must also totally yield to Him as Lord. The familiar saying is hard for the flesh to accept and unpopular to the extreme, but it is nevertheless true: “Jesus is Lord of all, or He is not Lord at all.” God will not accept a second place position in any man’s list of priorities.²⁸ His *kingdom* (government) *on earth as it is in heaven*²⁹ is a present reality to be embraced here and now. As followers, disciples of Christ, our thoughts and lives are to be ordered by His Spirit.³⁰ *The kingdom is within us.*³¹

Jesus did not mince words. Speaking to the great multitudes, He was totally forthright:

“If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.”

“And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.”

“Whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.”³²

Disciples are Christians; Christians are disciples. These are synonymous terms. Those who are not disciples, followers, are not truly Christians. There is a huge price to pay to be a disciple.

²³ Colossians 1:27

²⁴ Galatians 2:20

²⁵ Matthew 7:14

²⁶ Matthew 6:33

²⁷ Galatians 4:1-2

²⁸ Deuteronomy 5:7

²⁹ Matthew 6:10; Isaiah 9:6-7

³⁰ Philippians 2:5-8

³¹ Luke 17:21b

³² Luke 14: 26, 27, 33

Jesus made it clear. There are no classes of disciples. The same is expected of everyone who comes to Jesus—*everything*.

*The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.*³³

TO FULLY EMBRACE CHRIST IS TO EMBRACE WHOLENESS

If you endure chastening, God deals with you as sons. But if you are without chastening, then you are illegitimate and not sons.

*Therefore, strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed.*³⁴

God's gift of His Son brings us wholeness, not merely forgiveness. Wholeness is essential for the fulfilling of God's purpose for creating us, and for fulfilling our destiny in Christ. Our purpose in Him, in His body, is to be executed with precision. This is not something that we can accomplish. His working in us His will and ways is a process of discipleship under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The Archer knows that he cannot simply nock an arrow on the string, draw the bow, aim and release his arrow and hope to consistently hit any target. What is critical to consistency of accurate shooting is the "anchor point," a pre-established "set point" on the string, marked by two, typically copper and rubber caliper-acting devices crimped onto the string. Thus, every arrow that is nocked has the identical alignment, the same "start point."

Without a precise anchor point, our judgments become faulty, we buy into situational ethical opinion, and we stray from the Maker's mark. We shift and fluctuate in our priorities and our principles. We love Jesus one day and deny Him the next in our manner of life; we have built our houses upon sand.

Our "anchor point," or "set point" must be the Cross. This is the starting point from which everything in our lives is judged as good or evil, right or wrong, acceptable or unacceptable. What we allow, what we pursue, what we spend our energies, time and material resources on, all these are dictated by our starting point – by the foundation that establishes our worldview.

CHRIST, OUR FOUNDATION AND FULLNESS

When Jesus asked the rhetorical question concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?" We think he was referring to John's foundation. John's understanding was lacking, (observed in John's sending of two disciples to ask if Jesus was the Coming One), but lest the multitudes misunderstand, Jesus verified John's foundation. "Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John

³³ Acts 11:26

³⁴ Excerpts from Hebrews 12:5-11

the Baptist.” And then the almost cryptic, “He who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he,” is held out as something to be attained, to be found by those under Jesus’ voice.

We have been *called out of darkness into His marvelous light*.³⁵ Yet, our entire natural lives have been saturated with all that is around us. The insidious, incessant “creep of culture” makes inroads into our natural lives, infecting and contaminating our spiritual lives until, when held up to the light of Christ and His Gospel, our lives bear little, if any resemblance to the template of His life. In a great measure, we are the products of our environment. And, the ways of man have permeated our souls.

We can think that we are serving God, yet fail to embrace His higher thoughts and ways.³⁶ Remember that *gold, silver and precious stones* are ours for the asking. (We are not speaking about the riches of this world, which are so often a snare.)

The knowledge of His will for you, together with the faith that He is *in you both to will and to work for His good pleasure*,³⁷ are true riches of eternal value.

May our worldview be adjusted based upon the right foundation, so that our perceptions and perspectives are accurate. Our worldview should be seen through the cross, and from our place *seated together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus*.³⁸

God will show His mercy forever and ever to those who worship and serve Him.³⁹

God does not save us because of what we’ve done.

Only a puny god could be bought with tithes.

Only an egotistical god would be impressed with our pain.

Only a temperamental god could be satisfied by sacrifices.

Only a heartless god would sell salvation to the highest bidders.

And only a great God does for His children what they can’t do for themselves.

God’s delight is received upon surrender, not awarded upon conquest. The first step to joy is a plea for help, an acknowledgment of moral destitution, an admission of inward paucity. Those who taste God’s presence have declared spiritual bankruptcy and are aware of their spiritual crisis. Their pockets are empty. Their options are gone. They have long since stopped demanding justice; they are pleading for mercy.⁴⁰

³⁵ 1 Peter 2:9

³⁶ Isaiah 55:8-9

³⁷ Philippians 2:13

³⁸ Ephesians 2:6-7

³⁹ Luke 1:50

⁴⁰ Author Unknown

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are (in the process of) being saved (coming to wholeness) it is the power of God.⁴¹

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⁴¹ 1 Corinthians 1:18