

Welcome to Foundations of the Faith!

1 Corinthians 3:11

For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus [the Messiah].



The purpose of this study is to build a foundation IN you so that you can live the rest of your life pursuing God! Knowing God is the greatest and most privileged pursuit that human beings can attain to. In fact, you were MADE and put on earth in order to KNOW God in a real, personal, and meaningful way. The MORE time you spend building your foundation correctly, the MORE likely that anything you build on that foundation will not crumble, fall, or lean in the long run! When you develop a DEEPER foundation in God, it allows Him to build a TALLER building through your life long term. A deep foundation also insures that 3 years, 5 years, 20 years, or even 50 years from now you will still be in love with God and living for His purposes—in other words, that you will still be “founded” in Him.

Believe it or nor, most new believers in traditional American denominations are never taught how to develop depth in their foundation with God. Most foundational teaching series involve lessons on how to be a “good” Christian, how to witness, how to observe the ordinances of the faith, how to be a “good” church member, and understanding doctrines that a church or denomination find to be the most important. All of these are actually worthy subjects to spend time studying... but each of these pursuits of knowledge have to be BUILT on top of some kind of foundation.



What happens when time is not spent properly developing a foundation?

What happens when something is built on a “weak” foundation?

If you build a foundation with wrong materials or even build it skewed, disastrous results can occur! The Tower of Pisa, which was built in the 1100s, is “leaning” because its foundation went only 3 meters deep and it was built on ground that was unstable in nature. It is very important that we build or lay the RIGHT foundation for a life that pursues God. You have not come to a religion, a church, a minister, or a set of beliefs. You have come to the living God that created the universe. He is the ONLY true foundation that you can have or should ever need. If you want to reach your destination in God, you must dig deep into the person of God—who He is, what He thinks, what He is like, what His ways are, what His personality is like, and what He thinks and feels about you as His child.

Luke 6:46-49

46 But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say? 47 Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: 48 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 that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock. 49 But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great.



What are three characteristics that Jesus used to describe those who call Him "Lord"?
Do you think the order is important for these steps? Why or why not?

- 1 Whoever _____ to me.
- 2 Whoever _____ my sayings.
- 3 Whoever _____ my sayings.

Now that you have made Jesus the Lord of your life, you have in essence said "Lord, I am willing to follow you and obey you the rest of my life." More importantly than that, you have said, "Lord, I am COMING to you with my life." This is equivalent to saying, "Lord I am yours!" Do you notice that Jesus never expects anyone to hear His sayings or obey them without first COMING to Him? What do you think happens when people are taught to read the Bible and obey the Bible without first being taught they have to come to the one who wrote the Bible?

John 5:38-41

38 But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe. 39 You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. 40 But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

People approach the Bible for many different reasons and with many different motives. The Bible, like some other books, is a collection of words (from different authors) that are spread over hundreds of pages. However, unlike any other book, the words on the pages of the Bible were inspired by God and are without error in terms of truth. The very Spirit of God and the Author of Life has the ability to take the words on the pages of the Bible and cause them to give us LIFE when we use the Bible to COME TO God through His Messiah, Jesus. The problem with many Christians and theologians is that they approach Bible study as an end in itself... whereas God has given us the Bible as the primary (and only error-free) tool with which we can COME to Him and discover Him.



In Luke 6, what does Jesus liken a person to who hears and does what He says?
What happens if a person hears the Bible but doesn't really intend to put it into practice?

Did you know that becoming a believer and follower of Jesus does not preclude you from experiencing pain, trouble, or storms in life? Did you notice that when Jesus talked about those who build a foundation that He made sure to let us know that streams and torrents and storms will come against BOTH those who hear and obey His words and those who do not hear or obey as well? In fact, it is very likely that your trials will increase now that you have decided to follow Jesus as His disciple [*disciple* means one who follows a path of "discipline", a "learner" or "follower"]. The point is that a person who hears and obeys Jesus' words will have a foundation that will prevent their life from being destroyed long term... they will have a life that stands the test of time and stands the storms of life. In order to hear and obey, however, we have to first "COME" to Jesus. That is the beginning of the foundation.

2 Timothy 2:19

19 Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of [the Jesus the Messiah] depart from iniquity."

You may or may not have an idea of what being a "Christian" is really all about. That's OK! Most people who think they know what being a Christian is really about are most likely very tainted or influenced by the particular religious tradition that they are in... which may not be a truly "Biblical" view of being a Christian after all. Obviously, part of being Christian involves turning from our sin, changing our minds about how we view the world and how we view God, and then obeying God and obeying what the Bible commands. God never commands us just to "stop" doing bad things. His heart is that we would turn from "doing wrong" to "doing right". This process, however, does not come overnight! One of the greatest battles you are going to face as you grow in maturity in the Lord is the sense of condemnation from your failures and your sins. Developing the right foundation in the Lord will hopefully prevent this condemnation from causing you to turn from following the Lord or from giving up in the race.



What are two things that God considers part of a "solid" foundation?

- 1 The LORD _____ those who are His.
- 2 Let everyone who names the name of Messiah _____ from _____.

Do you think that the ordering of these two foundation elements is important? Why?

It is important for you to understand that a solid foundation comes from the fact that the LORD (the creator of the universe, the one who made everything) KNOWS who you are! This fact assumes that you ARE HIS first. What do you think it means to "be His"? Whose were you before you were His? Human beings ultimately live our lives for our own desires and our own purposes. When we give our heart to God, we in essence say "God, I give my life back to you because I acknowledge it belongs to you anyway." Now that you have changed your mind (repented) and believed in Jesus as your savior, the Bible says that you are a "new creation" that belongs to Him. We are still humans, but now we are humans that are a "special" possession of God. God is the master of all ultimately, but only those who voluntarily say "yes" to Him can be said to "be His"! We have been and are "reconciled" or "made right" with God by the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah. Your faith in Jesus and what He has done for you has given you access into the very family of God!

2 Corinthians 5:15-19

15 He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again. 16 Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known [the Messiah] according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. 17 Therefore, if anyone is in [Messiah], he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. 18 Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus [the Messiah], and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 that is, that God was in [the Messiah] reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.



What do you think it means to "be in Jesus"?

What's the difference between new life versus a life that is only made better?

Romans 6:19

I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh.

It is important for you to realize that in order to depart from iniquity over the long term of your life, you must first know who you are and who you belong to. You might actually find it easy right now to make decisions for God regarding turning from sin because as new believers there is normally a fiery zeal in your heart for Jesus that is given by the Holy Spirit. This is normal and almost all believers testify to a similar experience in the first seasons of their new life with the Lord. Over the long term, however, you will be confronted with just how weak you are in your own "natural" self and in your own in-ability to serve and love God. That is why coming to know WHO you are in God is the greatest part of the foundation you need to build right now. Someone who is not founded in the person of God and God's great love for them has a greater chance of falling away later on... when it usually becomes "harder" to follow Jesus and make decisions for Him. This foundation series is designed to form a Biblically based image of what God looks like to you and what you look like to God in truth. Unless you take time and effort to develop this foundation of love, **your** efforts to turn from iniquity will eventually fail in the long term. When it does, you will need to know who you are to God and how God views you in truth.



Why do you think God wants us to depart from iniquity (stop sinning) so much?
Why do you think God's greatest enemy (satan), wants you to sin so much?

John 10:10

The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy [you]. I have come that they [you] may have life, and that they [you] may have it more abundantly.

Romans 6:21-23

21 What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. 22 But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in [Messiah] Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:6

For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

Ephesians 2:8-10

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

You should be aware of this fact: sin will kill you! Spiritually, emotionally, and physically... sin (which is any type of disobedience or lack of obedience toward God) has great detrimental impact on human life. It ruins us, ruins our relationships, and ruins our purpose for being created! The disobedience of man concerned God so much that He was willing to become a man and die in our place to deliver us from sin. On top of this, when you asked Jesus to be Lord of your life, His greatest enemy has now become YOUR greatest enemy. This enemy (who is a fallen angel called satan) desires to KILL you and cause you to sin because he hates God and he knows how MUCH God loves you and values you.

The reason God wants us to depart from iniquity is because iniquity brings death, suffering, and loss! He does not want to see our lives destroyed or for us to suffer loss. The world is the way it is today not because God made it that way but because of our (mankind's) sinful choices. Your iniquity separates you from God as well. Some sins will kill you faster [physically] than others, but in the end, all sin brings death and separation from God.

God does not want us to turn from sin primarily because He is afraid we might give Him a bad name if we don't! He is indeed concerned that we represent the Kingdom of God well so that lost people can find the knowledge of salvation in Jesus through us. However, your Heavenly Father is MORE concerned that you turn from sin so that you don't suffer its very real consequences. Many Christians, however, believe that God is more concerned about how we make Him look. As a result, we focus on cleaning up ourselves *so that* God will like us, love us, and accept us. The very foundation of your faith, however, rests on the fact that you are ALREADY loved, accepted, and clean in God's eyes because of what Jesus has done on your behalf!

1 Peter 3:1

Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed.

2 Corinthians 5:21

For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Romans 5:7-9

7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, [the Messiah] died for us. 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.

Ephesians 4:20-24

20 But you have not so learned Christ, 21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: 22 that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, 23 and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.



What condition were we all in when we asked Jesus to be our Lord?
Why don't we have to be perfect in order for God to love us?

The great love of God was DEMONSTRATED when Jesus died for our sins, before you or I ever thought of God or even cared about God. This foundational truth must remain in your minds as you mature in the Lord: God loved us in spite of our imperfections and while we were yet still in our sins with no power to save ourselves.

John 17:19

And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.

Hebrews 10:14

For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

1 Corinthians 1:2

To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in [Messiah] Jesus, called to be saints...

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

9 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, 10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

Acts 26:18

To open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.'

These verses talk about a paradox in terms of our relationship with God. The paradox lies in the fact that God by His righteousness has to judge sin but yet in His great love He has burning passion and desire for those who are sinners—people like you and me! Some people refer to this as "hating sin, but loving the sinner". This is exactly how God is. He knows sin destroys us and separates us from Him... He knows that sin breaks us inside and out. Because of His great passion for us, it is only natural that He would hate the very thing that brings about and causes our destruction. Never ever confuse His hatred of sin, however, with His feelings toward you. Based on the fact that you said a simple "yes" to His Son Jesus, God sees you as the most beautiful and holy creation there is. He doesn't see your sin as beautiful and holy and good... but He does see you that way. This is one of the paradoxes of "grace", and something we will explore in greater detail as part of our foundations study.

The word "sanctify" means to "set apart" or "make holy". As you read more of the Bible, it will hopefully become clear that we are ALREADY sanctified or perfected in God's eyes because of our faith in Jesus while at the same time we are BEING sanctified and perfected in our real every day lives as we obey the truth and follow Jesus more and more. The point is that we START from a position of being "clean" and "accepted" before God... we are not "earning" or "working" for our acceptance or "working" to make ourselves clean. This again, is part of having a "right" foundation in the Lord.

Don't worry so much right now that you understand everything there is to know about words like justification, sanctification, or perfection. These terms all have to do with how God sees you through the eyes of His Son Jesus and your gradual growth in looking more like Jesus over time. Each of these ideas are covered more in depth as we progress through the foundations study... but the starting point of your life in God is that you have already been declared righteous, pure, and clean! Your response (which will take the rest of your life) is to allow God to possess you so that you become in practice what He says you already are!



Why does God want you to work on your foundation before you work on the “building”?
What are examples of things that might be part of the “building”?

What did Paul use as a wise master builder in laying the foundation for new believers?

- 1 He built according to the _____ of God given to Him
- 2 He built according to the only foundation one could lay: _____

1 Corinthians 3:10-13

10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. 11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus [the Messiah]. 12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 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.

Ephesians 1:6-7

6 To the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved. 7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace

Paul used grace to establish people IN Jesus the Messiah. It was “according to the grace” that God gave Paul that he then laid foundations in those who heard his message about Jesus. Paul made it clear that the ONLY foundation that is sure and solid is the PERSON of God Himself. We see the clearest revelation of WHO God is in the person of the man Jesus. Jesus the Messiah was and is the express image of the invisible God and is therefore the BEST object of study you can pursue initially. The Greek word “Christ” is the same as the Hebrew word “Messiah” and it means “anointed one”. It is not Jesus’ last name but rather it is a title given to Him. To many people in our society, “Christ” is so overused as a curse word that it has lost its meaning. I use the word “Messiah” because it helps me remember that Jesus was the unique and anointed One who was God incarnate (God in human form). That means that when you read and study about Jesus, you are seeing and hearing and observing the very heart of the invisible God in action.

Many new believers are taught that works of service will establish them in God.. and this is just not true. You WILL do works of service, don't get me wrong. However, works of service must flow out of a heart of love for God. That is the object of this study and will hopefully be your PRIMARY goal right now... to develop love for God. Paul says that we must **take heed** as to HOW we build on our foundation in God. We will discuss what it means in depth to have works that are of a “gold, silver, and precious stones” quality versus those that are of a “wood, hay, and stubble” quality. Before we even get there, however, remember that Paul says the foundation that “works” are built on is the foundation of God Himself---namely Jesus the Messiah. This is where *we* must all start and continually come back to. Try not to get too impatient wanting to “DO” something for God. God wants to DO something FOR YOU and IN YOU first before you start trying to do things FOR Him. Let this process take place as long as it needs to ... and don't rush it. You must learn to BE before you can learn to DO. That is the essence of building a strong and sure foundation in the Lord Jesus. You are already accepted and loved by God through the work of Jesus on the cross: this is the solid and sure foundation that you should build your life in God upon!

Questions

1. To call Jesus "Lord", a person must be *willing* to do what? _____ (Luke 6:46).
2. What are three characteristics of someone who has Jesus as their "Lord"? (Luke 6:47)
 - 1)
 - 2)
 - 3)
3. _____ will cause you to be separated from God, which is another way to describe "death" (Romans 3:23).
4. God's solid foundation for us is based on the fact that we are _____ to God as members of His family. (2 Timothy 2:19)
5. True or False. The Bible teaches that we must be perfect first in order for God to love us and accept us (Romans 5:8).
6. One of the primary purposes of Scripture is to testify about _____ (John 5:39).
7. The primary way that we are _____ or "made holy" is by our faith in Jesus (Acts 26:18).
8. If we want to have spiritual life, we must be willing to _____ first. (John 5:40).
9. We have already been made _____ by the one sacrifice of Jesus on the cross but yet we are being progressively _____ in our words, thoughts, and actions as we follow Jesus and live our lives for Him daily. (Hebrews 10:14).
10. True or False. God is more concerned about sin's effect on us (towards destruction) than He is that we might make Him "look bad" as children of His who still do sinful things.
11. The first priority of the Christian life is to build a _____ based on what _____ look like to God and what _____ looks like to you in truth.
12. Long term, God desires that you would depart from _____. In order to do this, however, you must FIRST grow in your _____ of Him. (2 Timothy 2:19)
13. _____ of service for God must flow out of a heart of _____ for God.
14. If we want a good foundation in the Lord, we must dig _____ into the person of God (set Him as the object of our affection and the goal of our life) and we must build with _____ materials (the revelation of who God is and who we are to Him in truth).
15. When we come to Jesus, we are in essence saying "Lord, my _____ is _____!".
16. The foundation of our faith rests on the fact that we are already _____ and _____ by God based on what Jesus accomplished for us on the cross.