
Spiritual Formation Part 19

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The Foundation of our Christian Faith Part 2

1 Kings 5:1 to 9:9; 2 Chronicles 3:3 to 5:1; 6:1-7:22; Psalm 118:18-27; 127:1; Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Peter 2:4-10

In Revelation 18:1-24, is a clear warning to both those in the world (in sin), and those who claim Christ as Lord yet want to be in the world. The question is “What lures you away from faith and what replaces faith?” We have to be on guard against sin and its allure. The ways of the world are tantalizing and seductive and will cater to Christians, seeking to entice them away from God and/or compromise their faith—and be gleeful about it (Jer. 50:8; 51:6; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; 1 John 2:15-17)!

God hates compromise and lack of faith! He wants us, as committed Christians, to place Him first and be proactive—to be on the offense, not just the defensive with our faith. He is greatly saddened when we seek to be one with or identified with the world and its ways. This behavior results in the compromising of our faith! This means our spiritual formation becomes a pathetic, weakening of our character and the absence of Fruit, making us neutral, or apathetic, or insulting to God and others as Christians. When we mold ourselves or the church after the world, we create selfishness, pride, and thus discounted and disgruntled Christian lives without purpose or meaning. When we allow Christ to mold us and our church through His Word and Spirit, then we can be change agents to the world, effectively used by God, and pointing others to Him.

At the same time, God does not want us so isolated from the world that we cannot influence it; rather, He wants us insulated from its evils so we can influence it for His Glory. We can be a voice that says “seek Him first” in the midst of evils and not be touched by its evils. The key is where our eyes and trust lie; is it with luxury or with Him? So, who is your Babylon? What entices you, and how can you be on guard? Remember, accountability is key! Do not live for what is fleeting and temporary; rather, seek what is real, effectual, and eternal: Christ as LORD!

There is something much more important than the foundation materials and placement in constructing a church or in navigational procedures, and that is the understanding of who and what the “cornerstone” is. A cornerstone was a large stone laid at the foundation of stone buildings prior to the 1950s to be a “footer” and to “plumb” the rest of the building so it was square and secure. This cornerstone was the first stone, usually an exceptionally large one, placed above ground on top of stones placed underground at the beginning of the northeast corner of the building. This was essential to the structure of the building. These buildings were laid with cut stones, interlocked by gravity and force and without mortar. They were stacked stone on top of stone, all relying and leaning on one another. Many such structures have lasted for many millennia. Without proper stone placement, buildings in the ancient world would not

have lasted long or would have fallen during construction. Here, we have an image of how our Lord is our Cornerstone (Psalm 118:18-27; Matt. 21:42; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11; Eph. 2:20).

The propose of the Christian life and what Spiritual formation is really about is simply to know Christ, encounter Him, worship Him, grow in Him, and then, when we leave those physical doors, make Him known to others. We cannot let our pride, petty whims, and trends derail us from our core principles distilled from biblical precepts. The bottom line is that we must be willing and able to get rid of anything that contradicts or compromises the Word of God! It is OK to search and use insights from varying sources. In fact, that is what we do here at *Into Thy Word* as we research and develop curriculum for *Discipleship Tools* to help you grow closer to Him personally, and run your church more biblically for His glory. However, it is never too late to repent and turn your life or church around! I have undertaken many spiritual setbacks and made many mistakes, personally. I have followed bad teachers and have forsaken my growth in Him at times. I have been prideful and perhaps broken all of the above precepts in this series from time to time. But, God is a God of grace and forgiveness; He still uses me, and He will use you, too. However, we can be better. Let us be willing to grow in Him and serve Him in love and faithfulness, setting aside our pride and will; then our life will be dynamic in Him and our churches will be healthy and vibrant for His wondrous glory!

Questions

1. For you, what is the most precious merchandise that you seek and want? How would you feel if you were never able to have or buy it again?
2. Why is God greatly saddened when we seek to be one with, or identified with the world and its ways?
3. What lures you away from being proactive with your faith?
4. What things can replace your faith? How is sin "at home where it is welcomed?"
5. How are the ways of the world tantalizing and seductive to you or to Christians in general?
6. Why would someone who claims Christ seek to be enticed away from God and/or compromise his or her faith?
7. How would you contrast trusting in wealth and possessions to trusting Christ and having faith? Do you think the greatest fear of the wealthy is that they might lose their wealth? What is your greatest fear?
8. How and why can arrogance never give anyone true security?

9. Why would someone seek to be arrogant? (Keep in mind that when Christ walked this earth, He was fully God, fully man, and humble!)
10. What are some of today's hideouts for evil? How have you seen these crush in upon themselves, taking out the people who followed it?
11. Can you think of a stern warning that would cause people to turn from their sins? Why does God want to remove the sin?
12. What do you seek to place first in your life? Why would a Christian seek to pursue evil? Consider prodigal teens who, though raised in a Christian home, still choose to rebel.
13. Knowing that Satan and evil offer fleeting, temporary pleasure that only ends in self destruction and helplessness, why do people seek them?
14. Have you ever thought that the gossip, power plays, and manipulations in the local church can be evil? Don't think so? Look up *gossip/tongue* in a concordance! How does gossip create bad character? How does the gossip of Christians show that they really seek to follow the world, not the Word? What can your church do to solve and prevent gossip?
15. What entices you? How can you be on guard? How can accountability be of help to you? Knowing that God hates compromise and the lack of faith, what can you do to be on guard? What can you do to be on guard against sin and its allure?