"HOW TO BUILD FOR ETERNITY"

I Corinthians 3:10-17

3-12-2023

INTRODUCTION: Verse 10

***Take heed how you build others for Jesus Christ!**

I. Build on the <u>RIGHT FOUNDATION</u> (v. 11)

II. Build with the <u>BEST MATERIALS</u> (v. 12)

III. Build so as to be <u>INSPECTED</u> and <u>TESTED</u> (v. 13)

IV. Build with the <u>LONG LOOK</u> in View (v. 14-15)

V. Build, Don't <u>CORRUPT GOD'S TEMPLE</u>! (v. 16-17)

CONCLUSION:

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INTRODUCTION:

If Christ were to walk in this room today, approach you, and say, "I want you to construct a building for me. . . and I will give you all the wisdom, time, strength, and talent to do the job." --
How would you respond?

How would you build?

In verses 10-17, Paul shifts from the analogy of farmer (v. 6-8) to builder, from agriculture to architecture.

V. 9 - *"Ye are God's building"*

He is the owner of every Biblical assembly of believers.

Although He uses us as His tools to build with, ultimately, He is the Builder. He built this church and owns it.

Paul was not content to merely contend in life -- He wanted to win for Christ! (I Cor. 9:24-27)

There exists much apathy in Christianity today.

Paul here describes not the Great White Throne Judgment, but the Judgment Seat of Christ (the *Bema* seat - a reference to the place where awards were given out to the victors of ancient Olympic games).

Believers will not be judged based on what they did for their salvation, but what they did with their salvation (cp. Phil. 2:12).

V. 10

"The grace of God" - Paul is quick to attribute his privileged responsibility to point men to Christ to the grace of God.

The wisdom, ability, and office of apostleship which Paul had for the ministry came to him via God's unmerited kindness and favor.

You are a humble man of God when you attribute your wisdom, talents, and position to God.

"Masterbuilder" - Greek *architecton* - architect, skilled craftsman.

Paul didn't design the foundation -- He simply ***"laid"*** it (MacArthur, p. 81).

"I have laid the foundation" - the foundation Paul placed down among the Corinthians was Jesus Christ (v. 11).

God used Paul to give the simple message of salvation in Christ (2:2). Since it was Paul who introduced them to Christ, he was in a sense a spiritual "father" to them (SEE: 4:15).

Paul led the Corinthians to Christ and thus was used by God's grace to get their eternal souls anchored in the bedrock foundation of Jesus Christ.

Paul did not just contribute knowledge, he contributed labor! (Morris, p. 67).

"Another buildeth thereon" - Apollos, then others would build on the work Paul had initiated. They picked up where he left off (just as I picked up where Pastor Lowery left off in terms of building upon the lives God used him to lead to Christ).

"Laid (aorist - past complete) . . . ***buildeth***" (present - continuous)

The laying of the foundation in a person's life never needs repeating (Heb. 6:1ff); however, the building is to be continuous and repetitious all our lives.

All of us, whether we like it or not, are building something onto someone else (whether intentionally or unintentionally).

"Take heed how he buildeth" - "Seriously look at" or "pay careful attention" to how you are building the lives of others (with whom you come in contact).

***Take heed how you build others for Jesus Christ!**

I. Build on the RIGHT FOUNDATION (v. 11)

You can't choose any foundation you want or like.

Salvation and Christianity are only built on the foundation of Christ (not Paul, Apollos, Peter, good works, humanism, or science).

True Bible Christianity is exclusive.

Not all roads lead to Heaven. Not all foundations are sure.

Only one road goes to Heaven (Jn. 14:16). Only one foundation is sure!

People may attempt to build other foundations, but those foundations will all crumble. On Judgment day, those foundations will be "slippery" places from which people will fall and be destroyed (Ps. 73:18; Jer. 23:12).

Jesus Christ is the bottom line of Christianity.

He is the foundation from which everything else builds.

A building is only as good as its foundation. If the foundation is *"sand"* [Mt. 7:26], it doesn't matter how good the building is, it will not stand when the storm comes.

EX: Many well-meaning people attempt to build Christian principles, ethics,and morals on people who are not even saved. This is like building an edifice on quicksand. Totally futile!

The foundation determines

the size of the building

the shape of the building

the strength of the building (Wiersbe)

II. Build with the <u>BEST MATERIALS</u> (v. 12)

"Gold" - Can be refined (Job 23:10)

"Silver" - Can be *"purified"* (Ps. 12:6)

"Precious stones" - Will take on a different molecular structure

"Precious stones" - costly, valuable stone like granite or marble.

However, ***"wood, hay, and stubble"*** cannot pass through fire without being totally consumed.

"Stubble" - Straw. Was often used as a building material for thatching roofs (Rienecker, p. 394). It can't handle fire at all! (nor even heavy winds - EX: "The Three Little Pigs" story)

Note the order from ***"gold"*** <u>down</u> to ***"stubble"*** (straw).

The elements display a:

<u>decrease</u> in value

<u>increase</u> in flammability

GOLD, SILVER, PRECIOUS STONES	WOOD, HAY, STUBBLE
* Permanent	* Passing; Temporary
* Beautiful	* Ordinary; Even Ugly
* Valuable	* Cheap
* Hard to Obtain	* Easy to Obtain

Chart by: Warren Wiersbe

III. Build so as to be INSPECTED and TESTED (v. 13)

When building a new house in New York, one will find that the codes and inspectors are strict.

"Every man's work" - In context the "every man" refers to believers (and all believers; none excluded).

Believers who attempt to build on the foundation of Christ (v. 10) and who themselves will be *"saved"* (v. 15) will have their works evaluated at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Each Christian will be judged for his own works (don't worry about others; concern yourself with your own; you will answer for yourself).

"Work" = In context, a positive deed done for Christ. All works built on Christ's foundation will be made evident.

"Every man's work" - Note: it is not people (believers) who go through the fire (not RCC Purgatory), but our works go through the fire.

It is our works not our sins that will be judged. Our sins were judged at Calvary (II Cor. 5:21; Rom. 8:1).

"Shall be made manifest" - to be brought out into the open so as to be seen for what it really is.

--The secret works will be made known (Ro. 2:16)
--The motives of "why" will be evident
--The methods of "how" will be evident

Just a small box full of gold, silver, and precious stones is worth more than a barn or warehouse full of wood, hay, or stubble!

Bigness (mass and bulk) does not necessarily mean goodness or precious value (cp. DeHaan).

When someone builds a house using only the cheapest of inferior materials, that house may look good at first glance, but it will:

1) Not stand the test of close scrutiny (an expert builder could look beneath the facade and determine its real worth)
2) Not stand the test of time (it will deteriorate rapidly)

"The day" - the article points to a day which is well known (Schlatter).

"The day shall declare it" - "The day" refers to the day of Christ's coming (1:8; cp. I Th. 5:4; Heb. 10:25). The Day of the Lord, when Jesus catches His Bride away.

When He returns, He will bring His rewards with Him (Rev. 22:12 - *"And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be")*.

"Revealed by fire" *(apocalupsis)* **-** Unveiled, uncovered, opened up to plain sight.

"By fire" - The refining fire of Jesus Christ [Particularly His all-searching, penetrating eyes (Heb. 4:13), which are like blazing fire (Rev. 1:14), will see right through to the true value (quality) and motives of the works we did for others.]

Just as hot fire purges the dross out of gold and the alloys out of silver and the sediment out of stone, so the fire of Christ's judgment will test or try every work we did for Him.

ILLUS: of a fire sweeping through a building and consuming everything combustible except valuable metals (Morris, p. 68).

"The fire shall try" - Test so as to prove genuineness. What is a "genuine" work?
--A work performed by His power (Holy Spirit)
--A work performed by His rules (Biblical standard)
--A work performed for His glory (right motives)

All works done by Christ's power (Jn. 15:4-5) and for Christ's glory (I Cor. 10:31) will be rewarded (whether: witnessing, discipling, teaching, preaching, ushering, cleaning, translating, babysitting, building, visiting, leading . . .all forms of serving).

"Of what sort" = of what kind of quality

God is not merely keeping records of what we did but how and why we did it.

--Gold, silver, precious stones =Products of a mighty supernatural creative act
--Wood, hay, stubble =Products of common natural growth and development (DeHaan)

If you are not in the Word daily, you are no doubt building with the wrong materials. If you are not in prayer daily, you are no doubt building with the wrong power!

"What sort" - Quality examination. Why do we do what we do? What is our intention? Do we have interior motives (please self), exterior motives (please others), ulterior motives (get something). . . or "superior" motives (to please God)? (SEE: II Cor. 5:9-11a).

IV. Build with the LONG LOOK in View (v. 14-15)

V. 14

ILLUS: How people don't build things to last.

"Abide" - To remain or survive the revealing fires. That which still exists after going through the fire will earn a reward.

"Built thereupon" - Only works built on the foundation of Christ will merit reward in Heaven.

--You may be involved in a lot of social programs, relief organizations, and humanitarian societies, etc., but your efforts will not be rewarded by God unless they were done for God's glory and His cause!

"A reward" - A reward for each and every "work" is promised (In this life, you may not get the recognition you deserve, but remember, nothing [not even a cup of cold water - Mk. 9:41] will go unnoticed by God.

ILLUS: of a old veteran missionary couple returning to America after many years serving God on the foreign field. As they left the ship, huge crowds were cheering, reporters were crowding around, etc. The couple soon learned that Teddy Roosevelt was also leaving the same ship. The woman sighed and complained of how there was no one there to welcome or cheer for them. Her husband replied, "Don't worry, dear, our recognition and reward come later-- when we reach Heaven's shore."

Rewards are often spoken of as crowns:

I Cor. 9:25 - *"Incorruptible crown"* - for striving lawfully

II Tim. 4:8 - *"Crown of righteousness"* - For those who love His appearing

Ja. 1:12 - *"Crown of life"* - for enduring testing out of love (cp. Rev. 2:10)

I Pet. 5:4 - *"Crown of glory"* - for the faithful pastor

Salvation is by grace alone, but rewards are based on our works.

Entrance into Heaven is not determined by our works, but the metals and honors we receive in Heaven are based on our works

Note: Even our works are the result of our allowing Christ to work through us (I Cor. 15:10 - *"But by the grace of God I am what I am: and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.";* Phil. 2:13 - *"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.")*

Our chief focus ought to be on laying up treasures in Heaven (Mt. 6:19-20 - *"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.")*.

V. 15

Note, it is the believer's *"work"* which is burned up and not the believer.

"He shall suffer loss" - loss of reward throughout eternity.

It is never a pleasant feeling to *"suffer loss."*

II John 8 - *"Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward."*

"But he himself shall be saved" - Delivered by Christ from the fire. The same fire that tested our works could have tested our souls (if our souls were not justified by God's grace).

No believer can lose his salvation, but he can lose rewards.

"Yet so as by fire" - As one who escapes through the flames without being burned.

As Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego endured the fiery furnace (Dan. 3), yet had just their ropes burned, so we will endure a fire that will only burn works performed by the flesh.

"The thought here is of a person who runs through flames without being burned, but who has the smell of smoke on him -- barely escaping!" (MacArthur, p. 85).

ILLUS: the explosion and fire at Chipper's Paint Warehouse, and Vernon's escape

V. Build, Don't CORRUPT GOD'S TEMPLE! (v. 16-17)

V. 16

"Ye. . . temple" - You Christians (plural) form a temple (singular).

The Church at large is a holy shrine (holy place, sanctuary). All the company of the redeemed comprise a temple which God owns and His Spirit indwells.

He owns us individually (6:20) and indwells us individually (6:19).

That which God owns and indwells must be respected. We must take serious heed how we treat God's property and house (ie. His people)!

How you build a fellow believer ought to take on a new perspective after today.

The ***"Temple"*** spoken of here is God's local church (cp. I Tim. 3:15).

V. 17

Here a greater crime than inferior workmanship is in mind (Morris, p. 70).

(Paul is evidently referring to the corruption spread over God's work by an unsaved person.)

"Defile" - to destroy by means of corrupting (I Cor. 15:33).

Any church, pastor, layman, who corrupts God's temple of believers by either:

corrupt morals, corrupt doctrine, corrupt practice . . . is in deep trouble!

The corruption in context refers to building something on someone else that is unclean or impure.

To hammer bad building materials onto God's temple, which is founded on Christ, is to disgrace God's property.

"Him shall God destroy" - lit. him will God destroy with corruption (same word).

You corrupt God's temple and god will see to it that you are corrupted.

God intends that His temple remain "holy" (set apart from corruption).

CONCLUSION:

If you are a child of God, you automatically have a "Building Permit."

Are you building anything for eternity?