

## Give Your Best

1 Corinthians 3:8-15

### Introduction:

- Principles of how to build a strong building:
  1. A firm foundation;
  2. We need to carefully choose the material to build on the foundation so that the building won't come tumbling down when disasters come
- The church in Corinth needs to decide how they are going to build upon the foundation which Paul has laid, and that foundation is Jesus Christ. Paul uses the metaphor of a building to speak of the value and quality of each person's contribution to the church. Is it going to be gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay or straw?
- Corinth is a great cosmopolitan city, people are relatively better educated. They have access to new information and knowledge. For the believers, there are many resources available for them to get equipped. As a result, the church in Corinth is blessed with many teachers
- Paul sends a warning – whatever it is that they are teaching, it must be in keeping with the foundation, Jesus Christ Himself. Anything that lifts up Christ in his true greatness is gold, silver, and precious stones. Anything that downplays the fullness of His truth is wood, hay, and straw.
- As Christians, we need to decide how we are going to build upon the foundation in three areas of our lives:
  1. Our relationship with God
  2. Our relationship with people
  3. Our duties and responsibilities in every stage of our life

### Our Relationship With God

- It is God's command to love Him!!
  - Mark 12:28-30 *"One of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, "What commandment is the foremost of all?" Jesus answered, "The foremost is, 'HEAR, O ISRAEL! THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD; AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.'*
- With All Your Heart
  - Heart refers to our affections, emotions, and longings. Our heart directs our moves, so whatever we set our heart to pursue, our emotions and affections will also follow
  - We need to make that our goal, put Jesus above all things and turn our back on anything that will hinder us from reaching that goal. When we do that, our affections for Him will increase, and we will love Him more.
  - ❖ **What and where do you pour most of your emotions and energy into?**
- With All Your Soul
  - In the original Greek text, "soul" literally means life

- It means to give our life to Him. It could mean physical death, but it could also mean dying to ourselves, our comfort, and our conveniences: to care for someone we don't really like; to forgive someone who has offended us; to sacrifice our sleep, waking up a bit earlier just so that we can spend some time with God before we start our busy day or to live a simple life.
- ❖ **What are some of the things you can do to practice "dying to yourself?"**
- With All Your Mind
  - It means to apply ourselves to know Him and know His holy will. This is done through reading and meditating on His Word.
  - Keep a journal to jot down your thoughts and the things that God may be telling you.
  - We need to fill our minds with His word so that what outflows from us will reflect the image of Christ. And by filling our mind with Jesus Himself, we banish all other ungodly thoughts
  - ❖ **How is your devotion life? Has it been impacting your thinking and action? Why or why not?**
- With All Your Strength
  - It means to use our resources, such as time, money, talents, reputation, and influence to bring glory to God, and to exalt God in his greatness
  - Ex: quote from Jeremy Lin, *"A lot of people are motivated to play basketball for the money, the girls, and the lifestyle. But to understand that I'm not playing for anything on this earth, I'm playing for my prize in heaven, for the upper calling that Paul talks about, that's what I need to remind myself everyday when I wake up."*
  - ❖ **What strengths do you think God has given you? How can you use them to glorify God?**

### Relationship With People

- God has placed many different people in our life: family, friends from school, from church, colleagues from work. If we want to keep these relationships strong, we need to proactively invest and make deposits into their lives.
  - Our role as a parent
  - Our role as a husband/wife
  - Our role as a child
  - Our role as a friend/colleague
- Jesus says in His commandment, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF."
- Notice that there's no condition mentioned in loving your neighbor. Jesus wants us to love with a genuine love, to love without expecting something in return (even when they do not accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior). Can we love someone whose religion is different than ours?
- Using gold, silver and precious stones to build a relationship with people means to take the initiative to sow into other people's lives without wanting anything back. It means to love others with no conditions.
- ❖ **What are some of the challenges you face when building a relationship?**
- ❖ **Share with your group about how you invest in different relationships. Is there an area in which you would like to get better?**

### Our Duties and Responsibilities

- God has given us different duties and responsibilities in different stages of our lives. We may or may not like them.
  - Duties and responsibilities as a student
  - Duties and responsibilities as a working professional
  - Duties and responsibilities as a full-time mom/dad
- ❖ **Of all the responsibilities you have, what do you least enjoy doing? Why do you think that's so? How can that be changed?**
- Whether you like your current stage or not, God's purpose is all the same – demanding you to be faithful and to give your best in everything you do
- Ephesians 6:7, "With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men."
- The Bible teaches us that if we are faithful with just a few little things, then God will put us in charge of greater things.
- Let's serve with the quality of gold, silver and precious stones, not as to men, but to the Lord.

### Conclusion

- v.13-15 tell us that "the Day" will come when we will all stand before God with the work we have built upon the foundation and be tested by fire. The work reveals the way we have lived our lives as a Christian. If it remains after going through the fire, then we will receive a reward. If it gets burned up, then we will lose the reward.
- Wood, hay and straw seem so easy to obtain and work with. They can stack up and make a big pile in a very short time, and it'll look like you've accomplished a lot. Whereas, gold, silver and precious stones cost so much and require a lot of labor and work, and don't seem to pile up as high. But when the fire of God comes, wood, hay, and straw will be burned up in no time, because to God, they have no eternal value. Gold, silver, and precious stones, on the other hand, will stand the test of fire and last into eternity.
- ❖ **Evaluate the quality of your work in these three areas of your life. Is it of gold, silver, and precious stones? Or is it of wood, hay and straw? Where do you need the most improvement? How can others pray for you?**