

## Building for Blessings

By Harold & Bette Gillogly

As a child, did you ever sing, “The wise man built his house upon the rock...and the rains came tumbling down. The rains came down and the floods came up...but the house on the rock stood firm”? As you pounded one fist upon the other and wiggled your fingers in the air like rain drops, did you ever ponder what building a house on the rock was all about? The usual answer is, “We have to build our lives on the Lord.” Yes, that is a true statement, but this parable is about a whole lot more than that.

Jesus tells this parable about house building after He asks a probing, profound question: “Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?” (Luke 6:46) Good question. If we believe Christ is LORD, doesn’t it follow that we should obey Him?

### Come...Listen ...Practice

He continues, *I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice* (6:47). So the parable is meant to show us what a person is like who does these three things: (1) he **comes** to Jesus, (2) **listens** to what He has to say, and then (3) **obeys** what He says. What is that person like? *He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built* (6:48). If you want a house that is well built...if you want a life that will stand firm even when floods and torrents hit you

hard...there is only one way to have a house like that. **Go** to Jesus, **listen** to His words, and put them into **practice**.

If on the other hand, you like the prospects of falling apart, here are your building instructions. *But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete* (6:49). The storms of life **will break us** if we are not built on the foundation of obedience. Unless we are putting Jesus’ words (the Bible) into practice, making obeying Him a **habit** in our lives, we are a demolition project in the making. Putting Scripture into practice is our protection against destruction.

Obeying God’s word not only enables us to **not fall apart** when the storms of life hit us, it also assures **His blessing** in our lives. James 1:22-25 – *Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but **doing it** – he will be blessed in what he does.*

Now this is not a promise you will win the Clearing House sweepstakes, or your kids will straighten up and fly right – come to think of it, your mate may not even straighten up and fly right. But God

is going to pour joy all over **your** heart, He is going to somehow prosper you and bring good into your life. The word “blessed” even has a congratulatory aspect to it, like God saying, “Ata boy!” “Ata girl!” “Well done, good and faithful servant!”

### Putting Scripture into practice is our protection against destruction.

Obeying God is also proof positive that we **know Him personally**. 1 John 2:3-6 – *We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. The man who says, “I know him,” but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But if anyone obeys his word, God’s love is truly made complete in him: Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.* Hmmmm...how did Jesus walk? If we are going to walk like He did, we really need to know **how** He walked, don’t we?

How did Jesus walk? Well, let’s see.... He always **loved unconditionally**. He didn’t just love people who loved Him or people who deserved His love. In fact, while we were still sinners and incapable of loving Him, He loved us already.

He had **deep compassion** for people. He looked into their hearts and felt their pain. He reached out to them with love and healing.

He **never retaliated** when treated poorly. Instead He **forgave**. Even in excruciating pain while hanging on the cross, He looked at the jeering crowd and begged the Father to forgive them. He always

offered forgiveness freely and fully, **never holding a grudge.**

He is the perfect Son of God, completely free from sin, yet He asked the Father to lay all our sins on Him and **bore them in His own body** on the cross.

### **That's how He walked!**

Focused on **others** instead of Himself. Read all four gospels. Look for signs of selfishness. You won't find them. Now look in the mirror. See any signs of a stubborn commitment to self? "He never listens to **me**." "She never thinks about **my** needs." "Nobody appreciates **me** around here." "Why can't you do it **my** way once in a while?" "**I'm** not your maid." "You just don't think **my** feelings are important." And on and on and on. We've heard a lot of such complaints from a lot of couples. Gasp...we've even heard them from our own mouths. And they all have something very basic in common. They are all about **self**.

Our commitment to **self** makes us ambitious in seeking our own self interests. That is why God **commands** us to...*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interest, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the*

*same as that of Christ Jesus...*  
(Philippians 2:3-5).

## **We are stubbornly committed to self.**

Every one of us is **stubbornly committed to self**. We are self-centered, self-focused, self-protective, self-gratifying, self-defensive, self-indulging and self-promoting. Self is at the heart of all sin. It was at the heart of the very first sin. The serpent whispered to Adam and Eve that they would be like gods if they ate the forbidden fruit. "Oooo, just think, you and me like gods! Gotta have it!" They didn't think it was such a bad sin. I mean, one little piece of fruit – big deal!

We excuse our self-focus the same way. "Sure, I admit I'm a little selfish. Who isn't? No big deal." **But it is a big deal.** And until we see our self-centeredness as the horrible sin that it is, we'll never be able to *walk like Jesus did*. We'll never experience all the blessings He wants to lavish upon us. And we will fall apart when the storms hit. Why? Because our goal will not be to **obey God and His word**; our goal will be to make sure we **take good care of self**.

So what can we do to receive God's blessing and stand firm when storms come our way? We can **go to Jesus and His word**. We can **listen – study** and dig in His word – to find out what He has to say. And then we can choose to **put what He says into practice**. We can make this our **regular habit**. And then God, Who wants even more than we do to *conform us to the likeness of His Son* (Romans 8:29) and enable us to *walk like Jesus did*, will **work in us to will and to act according to his good purpose** (Philippians 2:12-13).

## **Building with wisdom leads to blessing.**

So, what will it be? Wise or foolish? Firm foundation or destruction? Obedience or disobedience? Blessing or no blessing? Walking like you or walking like Jesus? Self-focused or other-focused?

Jesus asked the crowd, "Why do you call me Lord, Lord, but do not do what I say?" Is He asking us the same question?

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