

Rock Or Sand?

Foundations

Building a House

My dad was a general contractor who built custom homes. I was fortunate to work for him as a teenager and for a while after I graduated from high school. Every new house starts with a foundation. Most home owners don't think much about their house's foundation. After all, you don't really see it or even understand what went into its design and construction. Unfortunately, there are some home owners who have become all too aware of the importance of a good foundation when their house started developing problems with settling, leaking ground water, or a host of other problems caused by poor foundations. In worst case scenarios the house has to be totally demolished and the building process starts over again, this time with a good foundation.

After I retired, I built my own house. I was able to incorporate all that I learned from my dad starting with a good foundation. In addition, my architect was also making sure I was building on a good foundation by incorporating proper design into the blueprints.

Working With Horses

What do horses have to do with the topic of "foundations". Stick with me for minute and I think it will make sense.

I got my first horse when I was 47 years old. It turned out that my horse had "issues" and I had no idea what to do about it. In a nutshell, my horse didn't like people in general, and men in particular. He had not been previously treated very well and would just as soon be left alone. I wanted to understand what the problems were and how to deal with them.

In my search for answers, I ran across the concept of doing ground work with horses. Ground work involves working with a horse on the ground. No saddle, no bridle, no bit, no tack at all on the horse. The purpose of ground work is to give the human and horse a chance to "start over" and develop a good working relationship. Once that is established you can move on to other things like riding, packing, pulling a cart, etc.

So, I took this advice without understanding exactly how that was going to help matters. I was amazed at the change in my horse. I was also amazed at the change in

myself. That horse went on to be the best horse I have ever owned and (in my humble and clearly unbiased opinion) the best horse in the world.

As an unexpected side effect, other horse people noticed how well my horse was doing and started asking me for advice. I went on to train quite a few horses, most of which had “issues”. In every case, I took the horse back to ground work and it never failed to have a huge impact in resolving issues that the horse had. (Of course, the issues were typically caused by humans, but that’s another story).

The bottom line is that proper ground work is the same thing as building a good foundation. Once the foundation is in place, you can successfully build on that foundation and the end result is a horse that is solid, dependable and who will do anything you ask him to do because he has learned to trust you and accept your leadership.

Vocations

I have enjoyed several vocations in my life. In each case, the success or failure of those careers were directly dependent on the quality of the foundation. I also recognized the need to repeatedly return to and review my foundations. In some cases, I found faults in the foundation and had to either reinforce the foundation or start over.

Spiritual Life

Our lives in this world are temporary. But, we have an eternal aspect to our being that is meant to continue on when our physical bodies die. Since we’re talking about eternity versus temporariness, one would think that it would be obvious which aspect deserves the greater consideration. Unfortunately, far too many people put off or refuse to think about this spiritual aspect.

Rock or Sand?

For those who take the spiritual (eternal) seriously, it is imperative that we start with a good foundation. Since I believe that Jesus Christ brought us the ultimate words of God to humans, I would like to refer to what he said about this all-important topic:

“Everyone therefore who hears these words of mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man, who built his house on a rock. The rain came down, the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat on that house; and it didn’t fall, for it was founded on the rock. Everyone who hears these words of mine, and doesn’t do them will be like a foolish man, who built his house on the sand. The rain came down, the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat on that house; and it fell—and great was its fall.” (Matthew 7:24-27)

For those who are fortunate to have access to Jesus' words we have the opportunity to build our lives on a solid foundation. But, a foundation doesn't get built by just listening to words, it gets built by action that is based on the words ("Everyone therefore who hears these words of mine, and **does** them").

Notice that Jesus does not tell us to listen to the words of the OT, or the words of men who would come after him (e.g. Paul). He taught us everything we need to know: **"It is the spirit who gives life. The flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and are life."** (John 6:63)

In all of Jesus' teachings he tells us that we should listen to him. He never tells us that we should listen to anyone else. This is because: **"whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never thirst again; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life."** (John 4:14)

Will Your House Stand or Fall?

Foundations are an integral part of our lives in all areas of life. Many people discover, too late, that things are falling apart due to an improper (or a total lack of) a solid spiritual foundation.

How is your foundation built? Whose advice have you listened to in building your foundation? When your physical life ends and you stand in the presence of the Creator you will then find out whether the house you built stands or falls.

Also, consider the possibility that your foundation is faulty and you may have to start over.

"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Listen to him." (Matthew 17:5)

Unless otherwise noted, all quotes from the Bible come from the World English Bible translation (<https://worldenglishbible.org>).