

THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

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“Except The Lord Build The House...”

About 1000 years before Christ, David wrote, “Except the LORD build the house, they labor in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain” (Ps. 127:1). These words are just as valid today as when they were penned. Our work is in vain (worthless, a waste of time) unless the Lord builds the house (i.e., one’s family).

Men today say a family can include two men marrying one another or two women marrying one another. Some have said that polygamy is acceptable before God. Yet, when we read the Bible, God has described who is to be married and why. In the beginning, we find that God created man and woman, and these two, male and female, are the ones to be married (Gen. 2:18-25). This was God’s intention from the beginning. So said Jesus in Matthew 19:4-6.

How can the Lord build your house? Is this some mystical saying wherein God chooses your mate for you? Of course not. Allowing the Lord to build our house means we allow the Lord to take first place in our lives. All we do and say in our home must be based upon what the Lord has already said (Col. 3:17; I Pet. 4:11). When a husband and wife submit their lives to the Lord’s will, He will build the home, and they will be blessed.

When a husband and wife determine that, no matter what, they will live as husband and wife for life (Matt. 19:6; Rom. 7:2-3), they are allowing God to build their home. Sadly, our world says marriage should only last so long as it is “convenient” for both partners. In fact, one widespread practice is children being brought into the world by parents who do not feel the “need” to be married. Many people today are just “playing house” as the innocent children born to them are made to suffer.

Sometimes, people live this way because they allow their passions to get out of control. What is beautiful within the relationship of marriage (I Cor. 7:2) was made ugly due to sin. Sometimes, this behavior is excused as a way to get a “tax break” or a larger check from the government. How terrible that we justify our sins in the name of money! This is not only justified by younger folks. Widowers and widows have justified their adultery in the name of, “I’ll lose my SSI check if I get married.” Such people need to get acquainted with I Timothy 6:10! This society has forgotten the words of Scripture, which say: “Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge” (Heb. 13:4).

Still others wish to make things “legal” and be married, but they have either divorced for an unscriptural reason or are marrying someone who does not have the Scriptural right to be married (Matt. 5:32, 19:9). In such a case, they are not allowing the Lord to build their house, either! God does not sanction sin. He does not bless people spiritually for their wrongdoing. Since this is true, we know that someone trying to build their house this way is doing it in vain! They are trying to build a house without the authority of God (Matt. 7:21-23). In such cases, the result is hearing Christ’s sentence on judgment day: “Depart from me”!

Psalm 127:1 ends by saying, “Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.” In other words, if we do not put our trust in the Lord and allow Him to rule us, then it is a vain thing to try and protect ourselves! This is true in a city, a church, a family, or a country! (Remember, as goes the family, so goes the city, the church, the state, and the nation!) Therefore, if we think we can build a house, a church, a city, or a nation without God, we are already defeated before we start. In thinking about God’s protection, I like the words of Benjamin Franklin. More than 200 years ago, Benjamin Franklin stood before the Constitutional Convention and said, “I have lived, sir, a long time and the longer I live the more convincing proof I see of this truth: that God governs the affairs of men. If a sparrow cannot fall without His notice, is it possible that an empire can rise without His aid?”

Conclusion

Are we trying to build our house without the Lord? If so, why are we doing this? David makes it clear that it is a waste of our time to do so. Friend, let us humble ourselves before God and accept His way of doing things. God loves us, and He always has our best interests in mind. When we try to build a house without the Lord, we will fail every time. If we are doing this now, let us come to our senses and repent!

✍ Jarrod M. Jacobs

DON'T LET SOCIETY CORRUPT YOU

A person's environment has a tremendous impact on one's life. The society in which we live affects each of us. At the very least it affects us all to some degree. In many cases it affects people to a great degree. A corrupt society is a corrupting society. It tends to corrupt those within it. Attitudes slowly change. Moral standards soften. Sin becomes tolerable, then it becomes acceptable. Alexander Pope wrote: "Vice is a monster of so frightful mien, as to be hated needs but to be seen, yet seen to oft, familiar with her face, we first endure, then pity, then embrace." Yes, a person's environment really does have a tremendous impact on one's life.

Bible believers, however, have a counterbalance to the corrupting influences of the world. You see, the Scriptures can help us keep our thinking straight, and our priorities right. In Rom. 12: 2 God says: "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." In this sense the Christian is to be a nonconformist! His manner of life is reformed, springing from a transformed or renewed mind. One source of strength for those fighting the corrupting influence of the world, is God's will found in His written Word. It is the will of God that first works in the heart (renews the mind) to produce this transformation. Psalms 119: 11 says: "Your Word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You." That Bible-approved solution to the corrupting influence of a morally bankrupt society will still work. Through study, meditation, and memory, you can put God's Word into your heart and renew your mind.

One obviously knew what he was talking about when he said: "Unless there is within us that which is above us, we soon yield to that which is about us. My friend God's Word in your heart will give some fortification and preparation when the temptations of corrupting influences come.

✍ Dennis Abernathy

Do Not Show Partiality

Partiality can be defined as, "a preferential attitude or treatment of a person over another having equal claims or rights." Sadly, too many today are prone to treat others differently based upon things such as how one looks, one's social status, how one may agree or disagree with them, or even by how many valuable possessions one may have. However, we learn in Romans 2:11, "For there is no partiality with God."

You see, God does not show partiality (Acts 10:34). He shows no favoritism to no man (Galatians 2:6), and just as there is no partiality with our God, He likewise expects for there to be no partiality with us (Ref. James 2:1-9). Knowing that, my beloved brethren, may we all refrain from showing partiality, realizing that if we intentionally show preferential treatment to some, and intentionally exclude showing that same kind of treatment to others that we are committing sin by showing partiality (James 2:9).

Once more, do not show partiality, understanding that if you do, you commit sin (James 2:9), and failure to repent of that sin will ultimately cost you to lose your soul, resulting in eternal separation from God (Romans 6:23). So, since God shows no partiality, neither should we. "Therefore be imitators of God as dear children" (Ephesians 5:1).

✍ Brad Phillips

Belleville church of Christ

5635 S County Rd 200E - Belleville, IN - (317) 539-5258

www.bellevillechurch.net

Schedule of Services

Sunday Bible Study	9:30 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30 a.m.
Sunday Evening Worship	4:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study	7:00 p.m.

Evangelist

Brad Phillips (765) 720-2816