

Monday: Foundations First: Faith Working Through Love

In a Nutshell

This past Sunday, Pastor Reuben reminded us that our spiritual lives are like a house God is building, founded on essential blocks like faith and love, followed by humility and the fear of the Lord, which leads to wisdom. These foundations are crucial for receiving God's blessings and fulfilling His purpose for us.

Anchor Verse

"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love." - Galatians 5:6 (NKJV)

Unpacking the Word

Pastor Reuben began by revisiting the foundational stones of the house God is building in us: faith and love. These aren't just abstract concepts; they are the very mechanisms through which we connect with God and each other. Faith, as the sermon highlighted, is how we are saved (Ephesians 2:8) and how we receive *everything* God has for us. It's not our need or even God's love alone that triggers His provision, but our belief. Faith activates God's grace in our lives.

However, faith doesn't operate in a vacuum. Galatians 5:6 clearly states that the only thing that counts is "faith working through love." This means our belief in God must translate into tangible love, particularly towards one another. Pastor Reuben emphasized that this love isn't merely an emotion; it's often costly and requires patience and kindness, especially in relationships. It's the evidence the world sees that identifies us as Christ's disciples (John 13:35).

Think about the connection: Faith receives from God, and Love gives to others. Faith connects us vertically to God, while love connects us horizontally to the world and the church family. Without active love, even great faith or numerous good works profit nothing (1 Corinthians 13). Our faith journey deepens as we receive God's kindness and love, which in turn should lead us to repentance and a changed life, motivating us to express that same love outwardly.

Are we actively allowing our faith to work *through* love? Does our belief in God manifest in how we treat our family, friends, colleagues, and fellow believers? True faith isn't passive; it's an active force that, fueled by God's love for us, flows out in love towards others. This dynamic duo forms the bedrock upon which the rest of our spiritual house is built.

Building requires a solid foundation. Let's ensure our lives are firmly established on faith that actively receives from God and love that actively demonstrates His character to the world. This is where the building truly begins.

Pause and Reflect

1. In what specific ways does your faith in God actively influence how you interact with others daily?
2. Reflect on a time when showing love (patience, kindness, forgiveness) felt costly or difficult. What did you learn about faith working through love in that situation?
3. How can you be more intentional this week about allowing your faith to manifest through practical acts of love towards those around you?

Faith in Action

1. Identify one relationship where you can more intentionally practice patience or kindness this week, seeing it as an outflow of your faith.
2. Spend time thanking God for His grace received through faith, and ask Him to show you one specific way to share His love with someone today.
3. Read 1 Corinthians 13 slowly, asking the Holy Spirit to highlight one aspect of love He wants you to focus on developing.

A Moment With God

Ask God to deepen your understanding of how faith and love intertwine. Pray for opportunities to demonstrate faith-filled love and for the strength to love even when it's difficult, reflecting His character to the world.

Tuesday: Humility: The Posture for Receiving Grace

In a Nutshell

Pastor Reuben taught us that God builds our spiritual lives on foundations of faith, love, humility, and the fear of the Lord (leading to wisdom). Humility is essential because it positions us to receive God's grace and favor, shaping how we see God, ourselves, and others.

Anchor Verse

"But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: 'God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.'" - James 4:6 (NKJV)

Unpacking the Word

Following faith and love, Pastor Reuben introduced humility as a crucial building block. Why is humility so vital? Because, as the anchor verse states, it's the prerequisite for receiving God's grace. God actively opposes the proud but generously pours out His favor on the humble. This isn't about earning grace through hard work, long prayers, or fasting; it's about maintaining a posture of humility before Him.

What does this humility look like? Pastor Reuben defined it as how we think – specifically, how we see God (as supreme), ourselves (realistically, not too high or too low), and others (valuing them). It's "thinking of yourself less and more of God and others." Our value doesn't come from external factors like wealth, status, or achievements, but from our identity as beloved children of God. In Christ, we stand equal before Him, stripped of worldly credentials.

Furthermore, humility isn't just a mindset; it's marked by obedience and submission. Pastor Reuben referenced James and 1 Peter, highlighting that the humble submit to God, His Word, elders, and even one another in mutual respect. Jesus Himself is the ultimate example – He humbled Himself to the point of obedience, even death on a cross (Philippians 2:8). This profound humility led to His exaltation.

Walking in humility means recognizing God's authority and aligning our lives with His Word. It involves setting aside our own inflated self-image or crippling self-deprecation and embracing our true identity in Christ. It requires a willingness to submit – not in a controlling way, but in mutual deference within the family of God, respecting spiritual authority and valuing the input of others.

When we cultivate this heart attitude, we position ourselves under the flow of God's grace. Psalm 37:11 promises that "the humble shall inherit the earth and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." Humility isn't weakness; it's the pathway to God's strength, favor, and blessing in our lives. It safeguards us from the pride that leads to a fall and opens the door to the riches, honor, and life God promises (Proverbs 22:4).

Pause and Reflect

1. In what areas of your life do you find it most challenging to walk in humility (e.g., accepting correction, valuing others' opinions, admitting mistakes)?
2. How does understanding your identity as a beloved child of God (rather than relying on external validation) help cultivate humility?
3. Think about Jesus' example of humility. What specific aspect of His humble obedience challenges or inspires you the most right now?

Faith in Action

1. Practice "thinking of yourself less" today by intentionally focusing on encouraging or serving someone else without seeking recognition.
2. When faced with a decision or disagreement, consciously seek God's perspective through His Word before relying solely on your own reasoning or feelings.
3. Identify one person or authority structure God has placed in your life (family, church, work) and pray for a spirit of respectful submission and cooperation.

A Moment With God

Pray specifically for the grace to walk in genuine humility. Ask God to reveal any areas of pride in your heart and to help you cultivate a mindset of obedience and submission to Him, His Word, and others, rooted in your identity in Christ.

Wednesday: The Fear of the Lord: Wisdom's Starting Point

In a Nutshell

Continuing the theme of building our lives, Pastor Reuben highlighted humility and the fear of the Lord as key elements following faith and love. The fear of the Lord is presented not as terror, but as the essential starting point for gaining true wisdom.

Anchor Verse

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom..." - Proverbs 9:10a (NKJV)

Unpacking the Word

Yesterday, we looked at humility as the posture for grace. Pastor Reuben linked humility closely with "the fear of the Lord," stating that "by humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, honor, and life." While the sermon focused more on the *fruit* of the fear of the Lord – namely wisdom – understanding this foundational fear is crucial.

What is this "fear of the Lord"? It's not about being scared *of* God in a way that makes us run from Him. Rather, it's a profound reverence, awe, and respect for His holiness, power, and authority. It's recognizing who He is and our position relative to Him. This reverence naturally leads to a hatred of evil (Proverbs 8:13) – hating what God hates and loving what He loves. It motivates obedience not out of dread of punishment, but out of a deep desire to honor and please Him.

The sermon explicitly connects this reverential fear to wisdom: "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." It's the starting line. Without this foundational respect and awe for God, we cannot access the divine wisdom needed to build our lives well. This wisdom, as we'll explore more tomorrow, is the "mind of Christ," enabling us to navigate life's complexities according to God's perspective.

This fear fosters humility. When we truly grasp God's majesty, our own pride shrinks. We become more teachable, more willing to submit to His ways, more aware of our need for His guidance. It protects us from presumption and foolishness. Pastor Reuben shared a poignant example of a famous person who fell, admitting they never stopped loving God but lost the *fear* of God, leading them to presume on His grace.

The fear of the Lord acts as a guardrail, keeping us on the path of righteousness. It prevents grace from becoming a cheap license to sin, reminding us of the consequences of disobedience and the beauty of holiness. It cultivates a desire not just to be forgiven, but to be transformed, to walk in ways that honor the awesome God we serve.

Cultivating the fear of the Lord means consciously choosing to live with an awareness of God's presence and authority. It means prioritizing His Word, seeking His will, and quickly repenting when we stray. It's the essential soil in which true, godly wisdom takes root and grows.

Pause and Reflect

1. How would you describe the "fear of the Lord" in your own words, based on your understanding? Is it more about awe and reverence, or something else?
2. In what ways does a healthy fear (reverence) of the Lord protect you from making foolish choices or presuming on His grace?
3. How does contemplating God's majesty and holiness naturally cultivate humility in your heart?

Faith in Action

1. Spend a few minutes meditating on a passage describing God's majesty (e.g., Psalm 145, Isaiah 6:1-5). Ask God to increase your sense of awe and reverence for Him.
2. Identify one area where you might be tempted to compromise or take God's grace for granted. Pray for a renewed fear of the Lord in that specific area, leading to obedience.
3. Practice seeing situations through God's perspective today. Before reacting, ask yourself: "What would honor God most in this situation?"

A Moment With God

Ask God to instill in you a deeper, healthier fear of the Lord – a profound reverence and awe that leads to wisdom and obedience. Pray that this reverence would guard your heart against sin and guide your steps in pleasing Him.

Thursday: Built By Wisdom: Heaven's Blueprint for Your Life

In a Nutshell

Pastor Reuben emphasized that after establishing foundations of faith, love, humility, and the fear of the Lord, our lives (our "house") are built through wisdom. This wisdom, originating from God, is crucial for making right choices, discerning truth, and constructing a life that honors Him.

Anchor Verse

"Through wisdom a house is built, And by understanding it is established; By knowledge the rooms are filled With all precious and pleasant riches." - Proverbs 24:3-4 (NKJV)

Unpacking the Word

"Wisdom is the principal thing," Pastor Reuben reminded us, quoting Proverbs 4:7. It's not just important; it's paramount. The sermon stressed that our spiritual house – our life, family, and contribution to the church – is built *through wisdom* (Proverbs 24:3). This isn't just worldly cleverness; it's the "mind of Christ," knowing and doing the best thing in any situation because we are influenced by the Holy Spirit.

Pastor Reuben highlighted a critical point: love without wisdom can be dangerous. We can be deceived or make costly mistakes, thinking we're acting in love but lacking discernment. Wisdom protects us. It helps us distinguish between good ideas and God-ideas, between genuine need and manipulation. Even Jesus, the Son of God, had to *grow* in wisdom during His earthly life (Luke 2:52).

Crucially, the sermon distinguished between two kinds of wisdom (James 3): wisdom from above and wisdom from below. Demonic wisdom is characterized by bitter envy and selfish ambition, leading to confusion and evil. Heavenly wisdom, the kind we need to build with, is "pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy." These characteristics, Pastor Reuben noted, are like the seven pillars upon which wisdom builds her house (Proverbs 9:1).

This heavenly wisdom is both a mindset (knowing what to do) and a character quality (being pure, peaceable, etc.). These are linked; as Romans 12:2 says, we are transformed by the renewing of our minds. Praying for wisdom (James 1:5), especially during trials, allows God to shape both our thinking and our character. As we walk in the *fruit* of wisdom (meekness, purity, peace), God entrusts us with more of the *mind* of wisdom (Daniel 2:21 - "He gives wisdom to the wise").

Building with wisdom means allowing God's truth and character to shape our decisions, reactions, and relationships. It means filtering life through the lens of His Word, asking the Holy Spirit for guidance, and cultivating the character traits of heavenly wisdom. This is how we build a life that is not only strong but also filled with the "precious and pleasant riches" of God's kingdom – peace, joy, purpose, and His very presence.

Pause and Reflect

1. Think of a past situation where you acted out of compassion but perhaps lacked wisdom, leading to a negative outcome. What did you learn?
2. Consider the characteristics of heavenly wisdom (pure, peaceable, gentle, etc.). Which one does the Holy Spirit prompt you to focus on cultivating more intentionally right now?
3. How can you actively "renew your mind" this week to better align your thoughts and character with God's wisdom?

Faith in Action

1. Make James 1:5 your prayer today: Ask God specifically for wisdom regarding a particular situation or decision you are facing.
2. When interacting with others, consciously try to embody one characteristic of heavenly wisdom (e.g., being peaceable in a conflict, gentle in correction, willing to yield when appropriate).
3. Choose one "pillar" of wisdom (e.g., purity, mercy) and spend time studying what the Bible says about it, asking God to build that quality into your life.

A Moment With God

Pray for an impartation of heavenly wisdom. Ask God to renew your mind, transform your character, and grant you discernment to build your life according to His blueprint, avoiding the pitfalls of foolishness and demonic wisdom.

Friday: A House of Presence and Rest

In a Nutshell

Pastor Reuben taught that God builds our lives through faith, love, humility, and wisdom for a specific purpose: He desires our lives to be a "house" that hosts His presence and operates from a place of His rest, regardless of external circumstances.

Anchor Verse

"And He said, 'My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.'" - Exodus 33:14 (NKJV)

Unpacking the Word

Why does God emphasize building our lives with wisdom, rooted in faith, love, humility, and the fear of Him? Pastor Reuben pointed to the ultimate purpose: God desires to dwell *with* us and *in* us. He wants our lives, individually and corporately as the church, to be His house – a place marked by His tangible presence and profound rest.

The sermon drew a powerful parallel between Jacob's experience at Bethel (Genesis 28) and God's promise to Moses (Exodus 33). At Bethel, Jacob recognized God's presence ("Surely the Lord is in this place") and experienced a vision connecting heaven and earth. He declared it "the house of God" and "the gate of heaven." Later, God assures Moses, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." These two elements – God's presence and His rest – are the defining characteristics of the house He intends to build in and through us.

This isn't just about feeling peaceful when things are good. It's about cultivating an inner state of rest and abiding in His presence *despite* life's storms and challenges. Pastor Reuben used the examples of Jesus sleeping in the boat during the storm and Moses praying from a position of rest (sitting) while Joshua fought. Wisdom from above enables us to maintain this inner peace and connection with God, preventing the enemy from robbing us through stress, anxiety, or offense.

When our lives are built on God's principles, they become conduits for His presence. We learn to guard our peace, knowing that rest comes from focusing on Him, not our circumstances. We cultivate an atmosphere where His Spirit feels welcome. This "house" then becomes a place where, like Jacob's ladder, there's an open heaven – divine exchange, angelic ministry, answered prayer, and the manifestation of God's glory (Shekinah).

The enemy, using demonic wisdom (envy, strife, etc.), constantly tries to disrupt this peace and presence. But a house built soundly on God's wisdom can withstand these attacks ("the gates of hell shall not prevail"). Our purpose, then, is to partner with the Holy Spirit in this building process, allowing Him to shape us into vessels that consistently host His presence and demonstrate His rest to a chaotic world. This is how we become the "light of the world" and display God's manifold wisdom.

Pause and Reflect

1. How connected do you currently feel to God's presence throughout your daily activities? What helps or hinders that connection?
2. What typically steals your inner peace or rest? How can applying heavenly wisdom help you guard it more effectively?
3. Imagine your life as a "house" for God. What steps can you take to make it a more welcoming place for His presence and a place characterized by His rest?

Faith in Action

1. Intentionally practice "abiding" today. Take short, deliberate moments throughout the day to refocus your mind on God's presence with you.
2. When you feel stressed or anxious, pause and identify the source. Instead of reacting immediately, ask the Holy Spirit for wisdom and choose a response that aligns with peace (e.g., prayer, shifting focus, speaking truth).
3. Create a physical or mental space dedicated to seeking God's presence and rest (e.g., a prayer corner, a specific time for quiet reflection). Use it consistently this week.

A Moment With God

Ask God to make your life a true habitation for His presence. Pray for the grace to walk in His supernatural rest, even amidst trials, and for wisdom to guard your heart and mind against anything that would disrupt that peace.

Saturday: Building Blocks for a Life of Blessing

In a Nutshell

This past Sunday, Pastor Reuben outlined the essential building blocks for a godly life: starting with faith working through love, progressing through humility which accesses grace, and embracing the fear of the Lord which is the beginning of the wisdom needed to build a house designed to host God's presence and rest.

Anchor Verse

"Through wisdom a house is built, And by understanding it is established; By knowledge the rooms are filled With all precious and pleasant riches." - Proverbs 24:3-4 (NKJV)

Unpacking the Word

This week, we've journeyed through the foundational principles Pastor Reuben shared for building a life that honors God. It's like constructing a magnificent house, not with literal bricks, but with spiritual character and choices, all under the guidance of the Master Builder.

We began with the non-negotiable foundation: **Faith** that connects us to God and receives His grace, intrinsically linked with **Love**, the practical outworking of that faith in our relationships. Faith without love is ineffective, and love without faith lacks its divine source. This pair forms the concrete slab upon which everything else rests.

Next came **Humility**, the essential posture required to even receive God's grace. Recognizing our dependence on God, seeing ourselves rightly through His eyes, and submitting to Him and others – this humility opens the channels for His favor to flow. It counteracts the pride that God resists.

Closely tied to humility is the **Fear of the Lord**. Not terror, but a deep reverence and awe for God that births obedience and a hatred for evil. This reverence is the "beginning of wisdom," the starting point for accessing God's divine perspective and guidance.

And that leads us to **Wisdom** itself – the principal tool for construction. This isn't mere intellect, but the mind of Christ, expressed through heavenly characteristics like purity, peace, gentleness, and mercy. This wisdom, gained through asking God and walking in obedience (especially through trials), enables us to build discerningly, avoiding costly errors and resisting the "demonic wisdom" of envy and strife.

Finally, we saw the **Purpose** of this meticulously built house: to host God's **Presence** and to be a place of His **Rest**. Like Jacob's Bethel, our lives are meant to be gateways to heaven, places where God dwells, His peace reigns supreme regardless of circumstance, and His glory is manifest. This house, built according to God's blueprint, withstands the enemy's attacks and displays God's manifold wisdom to the world.

These blocks aren't sequential steps we master and move on from; they are interconnected principles we continually cultivate. Faith fuels love, humility opens us to grace, the fear of God grounds us in wisdom, and wisdom builds a dwelling place for His presence and rest, resulting in the promised "riches, honor, and long life." Let's commit to cooperating with the Holy Spirit as He builds these qualities into us day by day.

Pause and Reflect

1. Looking back at the week, which building block (Faith/Love, Humility, Fear of the Lord, Wisdom, Presence/Rest) resonated most with you or felt most needed in your life right now? Why?
2. How do you see these different spiritual qualities working together in your own walk with God? Where do you see connections or perhaps areas needing better integration?
3. Considering your life as a "house" God is building, what is one area you want to intentionally partner with Him to strengthen this coming week?

Faith in Action

1. Review the "Faith in Action" steps from the past five days. Choose one that you didn't fully engage with and commit to doing it today or tomorrow.
2. Share with a trusted friend or family member one insight you gained this week about building your spiritual life and ask them to pray for you in that area.
3. Take a few minutes to thank God for being the Master Builder of your life. Acknowledge His work and reaffirm your desire to cooperate with His plans.

A Moment With God

Pray for integration. Ask the Holy Spirit to weave faith, love, humility, the fear of the Lord, and wisdom together seamlessly in your life, building you into a strong and beautiful dwelling place for His presence and rest.

Sunday: Come, Let Us Worship!

In a Nutshell

Pastor Reuben reminded us this past week that God is building our lives like a house, founded on faith and love, strengthened by humility and the fear of the Lord, constructed with wisdom, all so we can host His presence and walk in His rest. Today, we gather to meet with the Master Builder Himself.

Anchor Verse

"Oh come, let us worship and bow down; Let us kneel before the LORD our Maker." - Psalm 95:6 (NKJV)

Unpacking the Word

Good morning! As we prepare our hearts and minds to gather for corporate worship, let the words of the Psalmist resonate within us: "Oh come, let us worship and bow down; Let us kneel before the LORD our Maker." This isn't just an invitation to attend a service; it's a call to actively engage our entire being in acknowledging the greatness and goodness of our Creator.

The house God is building in each of us finds a special expression when we come together as His family, the Church. Our individual journeys of faith, love, humility, and wisdom converge in this shared space. Here, we collectively turn our focus towards Him, the One who laid the foundation and continues the work. Worship is our response to His majesty, His love, His faithfulness – the very themes Pastor Reuben has been unpacking.

Let's approach this time with expectation. The God who desires to fill our individual lives with His presence and rest longs to meet with us powerfully as we gather in His name. Prepare your heart to encounter Him. This might mean consciously setting aside the distractions of the week, silencing the inner noise, and choosing to focus on Him. It might mean coming with a heart ready to receive His Word, whether it brings comfort, challenge, or correction – remembering that wisdom often comes through humble listening.

Let's come ready to bow down, not just physically perhaps, but certainly in our spirits. This implies surrender – laying down our own agendas, our pride, our worries at His feet. It means acknowledging Him as Lord, the rightful ruler of the house He is building. It involves humility, recognizing our need for Him and His grace.

Let's come ready to worship not just as individuals, but as a unified body. The love we're called to live out finds expression in how we welcome one another, pray for each other, and join our voices together in praise. As we yield to the Holy Spirit, He knits our hearts together, making our collective worship a fragrant offering to the Father. May our gathering today truly be a reflection of the house built by wisdom – a place filled with His presence, His peace, and His glory.

A Moment With God

Take a moment right now to quiet your heart before the Lord. Ask the Holy Spirit to prepare you for worship. Pray for a fresh revelation of God's majesty, a spirit of humility and surrender, an openness to His Word, and a heart ready to connect with both God and His people today. Ask Him to clear away distractions and fill you with expectation for what He wants to do during the service.