

Foundations of a Spiritual Man --- Work, Integrity and Courage

www.aubeacon.com

Introduction: God's word gives us purpose to live in a dark world.

- A. Under the banner of "progress" our world is leading men down an old path to misery and destruction. **(Rom 1:28-29)**
 - 1. We do not have to give in to the peer pressure of the world.
 - 2. The power of a living faith will bring us victory over the world. **(1 Jn 5:4)**
- B. In order to know our purpose in life we need to aggressively examine God's word. **(Rom 12:1-2)**
 - 1. What paths should a man pursue and value?
 - 2. For all the popularity and applause the world gives to the "non-traditional" lifestyles men who seek their own way are miserable.

I. A Man is made to work and provide for his family

- A. God placed a great importance on work from the creation.
 - 1. God described creation as His "work." **(Gen 2:2)**
 - 2. Before the fall man was involved with work that involved both physical labor and mental labor. **(Gen 2:15, 19-20)**
 - 3. Afterwards God showed the necessity of work and its difficulty. **(Gen 3:17-19)**
 - a. One of the consequences of Cain's sin was a fruitless labor. **(Gen 4:12)**
 - b. After the flood the people acknowledged the difficulty of work.
- B. How did God's Son spend the majority of His life? **(Mk 6:3)**
 - 1. He received training from His father and was with him in that work.
 - 2. Jesus was around 30 years old when He began to preach!
- C. Jesus used this background and history in His teaching.
 - 1. He spoke of wise and foolish builders. **(Mt 7:24-27)**
 - 2. He described landowners hiring workers. **(Mt 20:1-7)**
 - 3. He spoke of servants managing their master's money. **(Mt 25:14)**
 - 4. He spoke of farmers planting seed. **(Mk 4:3)**
- D. What should be our attitude towards work?
 - 1. The same as God! This is a matter of faithfulness. **(2 Thess 3:10-12)**
 - 2. We should approach work as God as our boss. **(Col 3:22-24)**
 - 3. A man who is unable to find work bears a difficult burden.

II. A Man finds respect by living a life of integrity

- A. This world expects others to lie when it is to ones advantage. **(Jn 8:44)**
 - 1. This basic love of the truth is what separates the Christian from the world. **(2 Thess 2:10-12)**
 - 2. Without this basic honesty it is not possible to think straight.
- B. In order to see clearly we must have a pure heart! **(James 3:17)**

1. We must have a commitment to that which is true (**Phil 4:8**) (Ex. Daniel)
2. We must have pure motives. (**Heb 4:12**)
- C. We must become a people that place *principle over relationships*. (**Jn 9:20-22**)
- D. The world has no hope of understanding.
 1. Satan blinds them to the gospel. (**2 Cor 4:3-4**)
 2. Satan uses these men like dumb cattle. How many get angry and stop thinking? (**Prov 18:19**)
 3. The Romans had a good law but still failed to give justice. (**Acts 25:16**)

“But when religion loses its voice and the media worship success, when right and wrong become relativised and morality is condemned as “judgmental”, when people lose all sense of honour and shame and there is nothing they won't do if they can get away with it, no regulation will save us. People will outwit the regulators, as they did by the securitisation of risk so no one knew who owed what to whom.” - **Morals: the one thing markets don't make** - No amount of regulation will restore our sense of honour and shame. Economics needs ethics – by Jonathan Sacks

- E. There is a great contentment that comes to the honest man.
 1. His family will respect and praise Him. (**Eph 5:33**)
 2. A NFL team known for success recently added a player that was severely attacked by the press because of his faith and integrity. Why?

“Whenever you can get a competitive, first-grade person to join your team, you never know what happens. But for me personally, having Tim Tebow on this team, he's someone who believes in spirituality, he's very competitive and works hard, and has a great attitude, and he's a winner.”

3. Wise men know who to surround themselves with! (**Prov 22:11**)

III. A Man finds that lasting riches must come as a result of courage

- A. The world relentlessly tries to intimidate the Christian. Will we conform or be transformed? (**Rom 12:1-2**)
 1. **pres·sure** *n. c.* A compelling or constraining influence, such as a moral force, on the mind or will: *pressure to conform; peer-group pressure*. *e.* An oppressive condition of physical, mental, social, or economic distress.
 2. The world pressures us. This is not true of God. We must choose!
 3. The riches of God will long outlast the “riches” of this world. (**Rev 2:9**)
- B. Satan will be relentless and cruel.
 1. The most powerful weapon Satan has is the tongue. (**Jas 3:5**)
 2. Many fear the “punishment” that comes when you do not line up.
 - a. How many are made fun of?
 - b. How many have heard “gossip” when another leaves the room?
 3. The world also gives “rewards.”
 - a. We have a need of praise. (**2 Cor 10:12, 18**)
 - b. We have a need of association. (**Gal 4:17-18**)
 - c. We need acceptance by others. (**2 Cor 2:7-8, 11**)
- C. God's man learns to overcome fear with a living faith. (**Joshua 1:5-7**)
 1. What can man do to you when you have God's promises?
 2. Will you and I “dare to stand like Joshua?”

Conclusion: Pursue being God's man with all of your heart! (**1 Tim 4:12**)