

# 1 Corinthians 3:10-15 - Being a skilled master builder.

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Last week when we were in Mt Gambier with Rudy & Wendy and Liberty Church he asked me if I could take 5-10mins during the meeting to talk about the benefits of apostolic ministry, particularly after they were with us the previous week and had what I personally felt was a substantial and lasting input into our church.

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His reason for asking me to do this is that often he is away from his local church having input into other local churches both in Australia, but also abroad - particularly Indonesia and he wanted an outsiders perspective for those in their church as to what apostolic input means to us.

As I got thinking about that question the one verse that kept coming to the forefront of my mind was the one we are about to read that talks about Paul who was called by Jesus to be an Apostle and how he likened himself to being a skilled master builder.

So let's read that passage.

## 1 Corinthians 3:10a

**According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it.**

It is interesting here that Paul likens himself to a skilled master builder that has laid a foundation, but was referencing God who was the one who gave him the grace, the gift, the ability, the knowledge to be able in the very first place to build.

He also goes onto show that someone else is building upon it. He doesn't say who it is that is building upon it, but that it is someone and no doubt many.

## 1 Corinthians 3:10b

**Let each one take care how he builds upon it. For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.**

Here he addresses his readers, but also he addresses us with this warning.

“Let each one take care how he builds upon it”

The encouragement and warning here is for each of us to take care about HOW we build upon it.

Now what is the IT?

The IT is the cornerstone or the foundation stone from which every other stone - in all directions gets it's bearings for straightness, uprightness and alignment.

That foundation is none other than Jesus himself. Apostolic ministry lays a foundation stone from day one that Jesus is the reason we are here.

Not to make our name great, not to build a nice cozy church, not to build a denomination, not to build something that Tony & Rhonda started.

We have no doubt laid the foundation stone here at City Edge Church - but it was and will always be by the grace given to us from God and ALWAYS and in EVERYWAY referencing back (no matter how far we build and how high we build) to Jesus Christ, the living word, the author and perfecter of our faith, the Chief Cornerstone.

### **1 Corinthians 3:12-14**

**Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw- each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward.**

It is up to us whether we will build or whether we are content to sit by and idly watch others get on with the job of building.

Also we can only ever really build on the foundation of Jesus. All other building that takes place that is not on that foundation will be - as Jesus himself said on sinking sand. You will no doubt work hard but you will be working on something that won't last, won't stand the test of time and will eventually crumble.

### **Matt 7:24-27**

24“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.

25And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.

26And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.

27And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

Jesus is here talking about building our lives upon him instead of building our lives on something other than him.

Are you someone who is content to go it alone and build a life for yourself without Jesus? Can I encourage you from this scripture to avoid this at all costs and make a decision today to not only hear the words of Jesus but to also do them, to build your life on him, the rock, because if you do, then the promise to you is that ALL that you build will remain.

But, even if we still build on the foundation we can do so with materials that will either last or ultimately perish.

### **1 Corinthians 3:15**

**If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.**

It will be the fire of God at the end of the age that will ultimately test what we have built and whether it survives.

Did you notice that if our work is burned up - we won't be? We will still be saved, but we will suffer loss of rewards.

I don't believe that we will be saved by the skin of our teeth as it were, but rather that this verse is saying our loss will be the rewards that Jesus will give us at the end of the age.

This verse brings great security in regard to our salvation in him and we NEED that security in him for our salvation otherwise everything we build will be tainted with the insecurity of us trying to earn this free gift of God's grace.

I personally believe that when we build out of this insecurity - that belief that just maybe God won't save me and I need to make sure that I do good things to help that along, it is with this mindset that good works flow from that I believe will be burned up and we will suffer a loss of rewards - but not a loss of his saving gift.

Secure people in the absolute free gift of God's grace build strong, build well and build things that have lasting influence and leave a legacy.

Let's be those people who build well together and leave a legacy for the next generations.

Now I want to finish off with an illustration and some points of application that I believe will help us to work together and build well together.

A number of months ago I asked Ian Gould if he could help me put a stud wall in our garage to divide the room in two. When I say asked him to help me, what I really meant was can you do it and can I possibly help you.

My background is as a Fitter and Turner by trade and so while I have the ability to work with my hands, my skill set does not include building stud walls.

For me it was a fascinating experience watching Ian do all the planning and preparation leading up to the two full days of work that it took to build.

It sort of just rolls off the tongue “can you knock up a stud wall for us” but to see firsthand all the effort that is required just to put in one wall and make it look as though it was there from the beginning was quite an eye opener.

Now some points of application to finish off.

### 1. **Vision Acts 9:1-16**

First of all to build well we need vision. Vision for our own lives and vision for how God is using our individual lives alongside of the work of those around us.

Before Ian could build the stud wall he needed vision of what was required. He needed to know where it was going, when we needed it in by and from this vision of what was required he was able to plan in advance and along the way the needed steps to complete that vision.

### 2. **Knowledge**

Secondly, in building well I believe we need knowledge. It is one thing to have vision and I certainly had vision of how, where and when the stud wall needed to put into our garage, but I could not have done it without knowledge.

Before Ian could have fulfilled the vision of building the stud wall he also needed knowledge and that knowledge must have taken years learning from others and learning on the job by himself.

To be able to get knowledge we must be taught but more importantly we must first be TEACHABLE.

Are you a person that always judges what is taught to you?

Are you a person who always thinks you could have done it better?

Are you a person who always references the past of what you have done?

If you answered yes to any one of these then maybe you either could be or are becoming unteachable.

The one thing I made sure I did when I was helping out Ian was to ask meaningful

questions and to do as I was asked. Over those two days I learnt a great deal about what it takes to build a stud wall

## **2 Timothy 2:2**

And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

Dudley Daniel calls this the Great Commitment.

For us to build well we must be teachable but also then be able to teach. To pass on our knowledge.

### **3. Faithfulness**

Following on from knowledge I believe is faithfulness. Faithfulness is a wonderful characteristic required for building well together.

Building the stud wall was a two man job. It could be done by one person but it was much easier for two people to do it.

If I didn't show up for whatever reason, Ian could have done it by himself but there would have been times that he needed the second person to help him. My role was to be there faithfully waiting for him to ask for my help.

### **4. Submission**

A related characteristic to faithfulness is submission. To build well we must be a people who can be in submission. That is that we are not always wanting to get our own way, but are willing to lay down our own agendas to take up the vision of another. Often that vision is held by leaders.

## **Heb13:17**

Obey your leaders and submit to them for they are keeping watch over your souls as those who will have to give an account, let them do this with joy and not with groaning as that would be of no advantage to you.

Dudley Daniel has said that the greatest meal eaten on a Sunday is the pastor.

To build well we have to learn to work with those who lead us. This doesn't mean a blind submission all the times as the bible also says that we need to submit to one another, but it does mean that by and large the vision for building the local church will be in the hands of the leaders.

With my limited knowledge of building, I could have questioned Ian over every decision, but this would have been counterproductive and slowed the progress of building the wall down rather than speed it up. It's pride that stops us from being in submission and it is usually based on a false idea that we actually have more knowledge than we in fact do have.

## 5. Patience & Flexibility

And finally patience and flexibility are two characteristics that will allow us to build well and to build long into the future together.

Things are always going to change and no one likes change at the best of times, but being flexible will allow us to get through change with minimum distraction and build well.

Finally to build anything of worth and long standing value requires patience. Patience to see the work through. All too often we want things and we want them now, but I believe we need to be patient, very patient as we build together in God's kingdom.

Now we can become skilled master builders that leave something behind us of worth and significance or we can be skilled master watchers as we sit on the side lines and look as others get on with the things God has called them to, or we can be skilled master destroyers who are always griping and gossiping behind the backs of those who are in the thick of things patiently building away.

Which one are you and which one do you want to be today?

I believe that each of us who has been saved by God's merciful grace needs to aim at and work toward becoming a skilled master builder.

Let's pray.