

A Guide to Spiritual Growth
Lesson 27
Building a Strong Foundation

I read a humorous story by Dr. Tony Evans.

I went to the Leaning Tower of Pisa when I was in Italy. If you're ever in Italy, don't bother going to Pisa. That had to be the biggest disappointment of my trip. You see these newscasts with the Leaning Tower of Pisa imposingly behind the newscaster. You get to Pisa, and it ain't that big. I spent my time and money, my energy, and my effort to watch a building lean. Another reason you ought not to go to Pisa is there ain't nothing in Pisa but that tower. So don't be looking for other stuff to do. There is nothing to do in Pisa but watch a tower lean and watch vendors selling you replicas of towers that lean. Do you know why the tower in Pisa leans? The Leaning Tower of Pisa leans because it's located in Pisa. Pisa means marshy. The tower was built in a marsh, on mud. It did not have the proper foundation. And because it did not have the proper foundation, it was not able to remain stable, and every year it would lean another 1/20th of an inch. When we were there, they had ropes all around it, holding it until they could do something about this ongoing leaning. If it continued, in seven years it would collapse. It was built on the wrong foundation. The only thing the Leaning Tower of Pisa is good for are tourists. All it is is for show, for people to come by and look at it.

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus tells us we are all building our lives on some type of foundation.

Matthew 7:24-27 – “²⁴Therefore, everyone who hears these words of Mine, and acts on 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 slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. ²⁶And everyone who hears these words of Mine, and does not act on 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 slammed against that house; and it fell—and its collapse was great.”

In these verses Jesus is telling each one of us that storms are coming into our lives sometime in the future, we just don't know when. Solomon reminds us in Proverbs 27:

Proverbs 27:1 - “Do not boast about tomorrow, For you do not know what a day may bring.”

So, no one is exempt. The good news is that we can be prepared when they do come.

It is important to know that everyone is building a house with their life. We are constructing a strategy that we believe will best prepare us for the future. Both men in this illustration are erecting a life, a life they both think is worth living, that is significant and is going somewhere.

Philip Yancey says the best way to prepare for the storms of life is to work on a strong, supportive life when all is going well. You cannot suddenly construct a foundation of inner strength. It must be built day by day.

This is such a significant issue because the storms of life or potential storms, are what generate fear in our lives. We fear the uncertainty of the outcome of these storms.

Throughout the Bible we see God telling and instructing us to “Fear not; do not be afraid; Be anxious about nothing; Let your heart not be troubled.”

Isaiah 41:20 – “Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not be afraid, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will also help you, I will also uphold you with My righteous right hand.”

We are told not to fear. This is not what God wants for our lives. He hates what fear does to us.

Think about the harm fear does to human life. It brings stress that can harm your health and keep you from sleeping. Solomon tells us in Proverbs 14:

Proverbs 14:30 - “A heart of peace gives life to the body.”

Fear has a huge impact on us psychologically. It runs wild in our imagination and strangles the minds’ ability to think clearly. Fear can often bring depression into our lives.

Finally, fear and worry impact us spiritually. Jesus tells us in the parable of the sower and the seeds that worry is one of the things that chokes the Word of God and leaves us unfruitful.

In Luke 21:34, Jesus instructs us to be on our guard that our hearts would not be weighed down by the “worries of life.”

Clearly fear and worry can do great harm to our lives, and this is why we are instructed to “fear not.”