



One Week Toward

BUILDING A SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION

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Before you begin...

One Week Toward Building a Spiritual Foundation is a simple seven-day guide to help you identify what is needed to build a solid spiritual foundation in your life. Don't think for a minute that a spiritual foundation can be built in a week; it takes much longer than that. But you can identify some of the key components and begin building that foundation in just seven days!

This booklet was designed for use as a daily study for an entire week; however, you can make the course fit your own schedule and lifestyle. A daily dose of these scriptures and lessons is a valuable way to use this tool, but you may also choose to go through this book with a small group, using each lesson as a weekly study. The questions for discussion will help you apply the principles in a group context.

The biblical principles and disciplines covered in this booklet are ones that you will continue to work on and think about for your entire lifetime. You may even find that going through this book one week every year will help keep you focused on growing in your walk with Christ. I would suggest re-reading this book during the first month of every year.

I would also encourage you to share this book with others. You could use this book as a discipleship or teaching tool to help someone else build his or her own spiritual foundation. Covering one lesson a week would be a great way to help someone else grow while you grow!

Being and Building Disciples,



Ken Adams

Birth — A Necessity

Just as a physical life requires a physical birth, a spiritual life requires a spiritual birth. In fact, Jesus said in John 3:3, *“I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.”* Jesus goes on to say in John 3:6-7, *“Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’”* Jesus makes it incredibly clear that spiritual birth is a necessity if we want to have spiritual life.

I don't remember my physical birth, (my mom certainly does), but I do know the day I was born. I have a birthday that I have celebrated every year that I have been alive. In much the same way, we all need to know the day we had a spiritual birth. It isn't necessary to know the exact date, time, place, etc. You simply need to know that there was a day when you placed your faith in Jesus Christ to be your savior and take you from death to life! How does Jesus describe this in John 5:24?

Take just a moment and write down the time in your life when you heard Christ's words, believed in Him, and crossed over from death to life.

If you struggled with that previous question, you may find it helpful to see how easy it is to experience this spiritual birth. If you answered that question easily these steps will be a great reminder for you of what Christ has done for you. It's as easy as A, B, C!

A: Admit your need for Christ! The first step in having a spiritual birth begins with admitting that you need Christ's forgiveness of sin. What does Romans 3:23 say about who has sinned against God? _____

How does Isaiah 59:2 explain the effects of sin against God?

B: Believe that Jesus can restore your broken relationship to God!

Faith in Jesus Christ is the solution to your sin. What did Paul say in Romans 6:23? _____

What did Jesus do according to 1 Corinthians 15:3-4? _____

C: Choose to invite Christ into your life! Once you understand that Christ died and rose from the dead, you must take the step of faith and trust Him to save you personally. Romans 10:9 says it very clearly. What does this verse say? _____

When you admit your need for a savior, believe Jesus is the One who saves, and personally trust Him, you will experience spiritual birth!

**Questions for Personal Reflection
or Small Group Discussion:**

- Is this idea of a spiritual birth new to you or something you've known for a while?
- Have you ever experienced the truth of Isaiah 59:2? How so?
- What are some things that stand in the way of a person trusting Christ to be their savior?
- Write out, or share with the group, how you experienced spiritual birth in your own life.

Your Birth Certificate

I have a metal box in my home that contains a very important document. That document is my birth certificate. I've had it for a while! Actually, my parents kept it for many years, and then eventually it was placed in my possession permanently. I guess at some point they figured I was responsible enough to keep up with it myself. So far, so good!

Not having or losing my birth certificate wouldn't mean I was never born, it would simply mean there was no outward sign or official recognition of when and how my birth happened. My birth certificate is an important part of being able to verify to others the day of my birth as well as who my parents are.

Your spiritual birth also needs an outward sign of identification. This sign is called "baptism." Baptism is the outward sign of the inward change that occurs when a person experiences spiritual birth. What did the early Christians in the Book of Acts do according to Acts 2:41? _____

The earliest members of Christ's church were baptized because Jesus had instructed this outward sign before He ascended back to heaven. What did Jesus tell His disciples to do in Matthew 28:19? _____

Jesus not only instructed us to make disciples by baptizing people, He modeled it Himself. What took place in Matthew 3:16? _____

What did God the Father say according to verse 17? _____

Jesus modeled and instructed the practice of baptism because it publicly identified a person as His follower and a part of His family. It was a sign of spiritual life and a sign of belonging to a spiritual family.

Has the sign of baptism ever been demonstrated in your own life?

When did it happen? _____

As you consider the step of baptism in your own life, here are some important points to keep in mind.

First, baptism should always occur after conversion to Christ, never before. Since baptism is a sign of spiritual life, it would not make sense to practice it until that event happens. If you have been baptized, was it before or after coming to faith in Christ? _____

Second, baptism by immersion is the biblical pattern. Every example of baptism in Scripture was performed by immersion. The act of immersing is the best picture of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Have you been baptized by immersion? _____

Finally, baptism is an act of obedience, not a part of salvation. Salvation is by faith in Christ alone. Baptism is simply the sign that one has taken that step. Have you? _____

**Questions for Personal Reflection
or Small Group Discussion:**

- Describe any type of baptism experience you have had. Does it match the explanation given in this lesson?
- How was baptism in New Testament days similar, and how was it different, from today?
- Why do some people have a difficult time taking the step of baptism? What could help make that step easier?
- Who is someone you'd like to see take the step of baptism?

Connecting for Life

I know the analogy I am about to share will seem strange at first, but as you think about it, I believe it will make perfect sense. When you think about a baby developing in a mother's womb, consider the physical connection between a mother and her child. The umbilical cord is the life-giving connection between them. As a child of God, I believe worship is in many ways a life-giving connection with our Father in heaven.

As a believer worships God, there is a connection that creates an important level of fellowship between the child of God and his or her heavenly Father. Worship is, without question, a lifestyle of giving God worth. Worship, however, can be expressed in our lives in two specific ways. Worship can be expressed privately and publically.

The private expression of worship is when a person connects with God individually. This private expression can be a time of praise, prayer, Bible reading, or Bible meditation. The goal is to make a private connection with God a priority in your life. A private connection can be to your spiritual well-being what eating a meal can be to your physical well-being. Even Jesus made a private connection with the Father a priority. How does Luke 5:16 describe this priority? _____

When it comes to making a private connection with God, Jesus gives us some great guidelines to consider. **First, have your private connection in a secluded location.** What does Mark 1:35 tell us about the location of the private connection for Jesus? _____

Secondly, have your private connection at a time that fits your schedule. When did Jesus have His private connection according to Mark 1:35? _____

Finally, have a set plan for your private connection with God. What

did Jesus do when meeting with the Father according to Mark 1:35?

Building a solid spiritual foundation requires a private connection with God, but it also requires a public connection with God. How does Paul describe this public connection in Ephesians 5:19? _____

How was this public connection described in Acts 2:47? _____

What does Psalm 34:3 say about this public connection? _____

Making a public connection to God with other believers should be done consistently, relevantly, and in a Christ-honoring way!

Consistently simply means that public worship should be a regular part of your life. Connecting weekly in public worship is a great way to stay consistent. *Relevant* means that this public connection should be done in a way that relates to everyday life. Worship can be done in an environment that is culturally relevant without being biblically compromised! Finally, a public connection in worship should *exalt and magnify Jesus!*

**Questions for Personal Reflection
or Small Group Discussion:**

- How does the umbilical cord analogy convey the importance of being connected to God through worship?
- How would you describe the priority of private connection and public connection with God in your life?
- What are the obstacles that stand in the way of having a consistent private and public connection with God?

DAY FOUR:

A Life-Giving Family

Everybody is born into a family! Even if the family is broken, everyone is born into a family. We all have a father and we all have a mother. Life is to be lived out in the context of a family.

Just like human life, spiritual life is to be lived out in the context of family. A spiritual family! This spiritual family is the “family of God.” It is also called the Church of Jesus Christ!

The Church of Jesus Christ exists in two different forms. First, is the “**Universal Church**,” which is made up of all believers from all different periods of time. The second is the “**Local Church**,” which is made up of believers in a set location during a set period of time. Becoming a part of the Universal Church happens the moment a person places their faith in Jesus. Becoming a part of a Local Church happens when a person makes a commitment to be part of a local assembly of Christ followers.

Building a solid spiritual foundation involves making a commitment to participate in a local church family. We see this type of commitment expressed in the church in the city of Jerusalem. How is it described in Acts 2:42-47? _____

It is clear that the very first church was committed to Christ and to each other. They learned together, worshipped with each other, cared for and gave to each other, and spread the message of Christ together. They were a family of faith!

If you go back and look at Acts 2:42-47 again you will notice that the

church met as a family in two very different ways. They met together in homes as a small group, and they met together in the temple courts as a large group. These two formats of meeting allowed them to meet different family needs. As you think about the church meeting together as a family, how does it look in your life? Are you committed to a local church? Do you regularly meet with other believers in a small group and in a large group?

The family is the ideal place to love and be loved. It is the ideal place to learn, to grow, to be cared for, and even to be disciplined and corrected. The family is God's ideal environment in which growth happens. Try to imagine life without a family. It is not a good thing!

The family is also a place for lasting relationships. You don't leave your family every time you disagree. You work through your problems. You work together, not against each other! The spiritual family operates the same way. We need lasting spiritual relationships. Leaving one church for another short-circuits the spiritual growth that God desires to produce in your life.

Find a spiritual family and stay put! God has good things in store for family members!

**Questions for Personal Reflection
or Small Group Discussion:**

- How would you describe your physical, or biological, family as you were growing up?
- Describe your journey into God's family. Are you a committed member of a local church?
- How similar or how different do you think today's church is from the first church in Jerusalem?
- What will it take to make Christ's church all that He wants her to be?

A Plan for Growth

From the moment life is conceived, growth is the goal. No one wants life without growth! In fact, every time a parent takes a child to the doctor, they measure the growth of the child because everybody wants to see growth. Measuring growth is a priority in children because growth is an indication of health. When a child stops growing, they are usually not healthy.

In the same way physical life leads to physical growth, spiritual life should lead to spiritual growth. Every child of God has been born again to grow! How does Paul express this truth in Colossians 2:6-7? _____

Once a person comes to faith in Christ, the goal is to grow in Christ.

Spiritual growth happens best in the context of an environment called discipleship. Discipleship is the training process Jesus used to develop a handful of men for ministry. He invited them to join Him in a small group where He taught them how to grow spiritually. This same small group environment was used in the early church in Jerusalem. The believers met in homes as an environment for spiritual growth. What does Acts 5:42 say? _____

In both the original disciples of Jesus and the disciples of the early church, certain key elements made up the discipleship environment. **First, the Word of God was central to the growth process.** Notice what Jesus said in John 8:31: _____

Second, was the Spirit of God! What did Jesus say in John 16:13?

The last key element in the discipleship environment was other disciples! How do we help each other grow according to Hebrews 10:24?

When a person is in an environment where the Word of God is taught, the Spirit of God is moving, and the people of God are encouraging one another, growth will happen!

Have you placed yourself in that type of small group?

Most churches have some type of small group environment for spiritual growth. Hopefully you are in a church where you can learn the basics of the Christian faith. Every believer needs to grow in what they believe, how to live the Christian life, what the Bible is about, and how the Church operates. These four subjects will give you a great foundation in faith!

(Check the resources in the back of this booklet to order a series of courses on the basics of faith.)

**Questions for Personal Reflection
or Small Group Discussion:**

- If you are a Christian, describe your spiritual growth journey.
- Who has had the greatest influence on your spiritual journey?
- Are you willing to join a small discipleship group for spiritual growth? What reservations do you have?
- How well do you know what you believe, what the Bible is about, how to live the Christian life, and what the church is to do?

Growth Through Serving

I once heard someone say, "A non-serving Christian is a contradiction in terms." I think in light of what the bible says about Jesus, that statement is true. Write out Mark 10:45: _____

In the same way that Jesus came to serve, His followers are to serve. Serving does not *make* one a Christian; it is a response to *being* a Christian. How does Paul state this in Ephesians 2:10? _____

Serving is a response to being a Christian, and it is also an important element of spiritual growth. It has been said that serving is to the spiritual man what exercise is to the physical man. Serving will make you more like Jesus, and that alone makes it an important element for building a spiritual foundation.

When it comes to serving, there are some things you might want to consider. **First, serving can be random or designed.** In other words, you can have a servant spirit in your everyday activities and look for people to help as you journey through life. Serving can also be by design. One example of serving by design would be helping others by being on a ministry team in a church or community organization.

A second thing to consider is serving in your area of giftedness.

Every believer has been given one or more spiritual gifts to be used for meeting people's needs. What are these gifts according to Romans 12:6-8? _____

When you serve in the area of your giftedness, you will experience greater fulfillment and fruitfulness than when you are serving out of your area of giftedness.

One last thing to consider about serving is to serve where you are most passionate. Everyone has something they are passionate about, and serving in that area will keep you energized and effective. If you are passionate about children, serve kids. If you are passionate about students, serve students. If you are passionate about a certain cause, find a way to serve that cause. You will be amazed at how God can use you if you are simply willing to be used.

Obviously, serving alongside other believers is one way to maximize your efforts. This is one of the reasons God created the church. We can do more by serving together than any of us can do by serving alone. How does Paul describe this concept in Romans 12:4-5? _____

As the Body of Christ, we are His hands, His feet, His arms, and His legs.

When a part of your body is missing or not working properly, you are considered “disabled.” When a believer is not serving and using their gifts and talents in the Body of Christ, the Church is disabled! Do not let the Body of Christ suffer because you are not willing to be a servant.

Someone once described the church as being like a football stadium on Sunday afternoon. There are fifty thousand people in the stands who are desperately in need of exercise watching twenty-two people on the field who are desperately in need of rest. How true that is!

**Questions for Personal Reflection
or Small Group Discussion:**

- In what ways have you served in Christ’s church before?
- What would you say your gifts, talents, and passion are when it comes to finding a place of service in the church?
- What would be the condition of the church if everyone were serving at the level you are currently serving?

Growing Through Giving

It has been said, "You are never more like God than when you are giving." Wow! There is a lot of truth to that statement.

God is a giver, and when you give you are becoming more like God!
What does John 3:16 tell us about God? _____

When you think about the way in which God gave, it is important to remember that He gave out of love and that He gave sacrificially. When God gave His son, He was giving sacrificially. When God gave His son, He was giving because He "so loved the world."

When you give to God and to others in the name of God, you will grow spiritually. You will become more like God when you give the way God gives. In fact, even Jesus tells us in Acts 20:35, "*...It is more blessed to give than to receive.*"

Jesus gives us an example of how we should give in Mark 12:41-44.
What was Jesus doing in this passage? _____

Why would Jesus say this woman gave more than all the others? _____

It is clear that the amount we give is not nearly as important as the heart from which we give. I believe this woman gave sacrificially and she gave out of love. She was giving the way God gives, and Jesus used her as the example for His disciples on how to give.

Giving is an important element in building a spiritual foundation because it is connected to the condition of one's heart. Notice how Jesus states it in Matthew 6:21. _____

Christ's words make it clear that what you do with what you have is an indicator of who or what you truly love. When you love God your possessions will reveal it!

How is your level of giving these days? Are you growing in your giving and becoming more like God? Are you making the mission of Christ a priority and supporting the work of Christ's church with your tithe and offering?

Remember the words of Paul in 2 Corinthians 9:6, "*...Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.*"

**Questions for Personal Reflection
or Small Group Discussion:**

- Which best describes the growth in your giving?
(baby food, kid's meals, fast food, gourmet meals)
- Why do you think so many people struggle when it comes to the priority of giving?
- Explain this statement, "You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving."
- What could happen if a church full of people were all committed to giving like Jesus gave?

Impact Discipleship Resources

IMPACT BASICS SERIES



The lesson here is simple: Constructing a spiritual life follows the same principle for a foundation as that of building a home. It pays to lay a solid spiritual foundation in order to build a spiritual life.

Laying a solid spiritual foundation means being equipped with four essential building blocks of biblical knowledge. It means knowing what you believe (Doctrine), knowing the Bible (Scripture Survey), knowing how to live the Christian Life (Spiritual Disciplines), and knowing how the church operates (Church Structure). These four building blocks are the keys to laying a strong foundation. The Impact Basic Series is designed to do just that!

IMPACT GROWTH SERIES



Being a disciple of Jesus means walking as Jesus did (1 John 2:6). In the Impact Growth series, you will learn more of what it means to walk as Jesus did. In eight different studies, you will discover some of the key elements of Christ's life.

Every disciple needs to build his or her life on Jesus Christ! He is our example, our model, and our pattern. The apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 11:1, *"Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ."*

The Impact Growth series is uniquely designed to teach you how to follow the example of Christ. As you learn to follow Jesus, others will be able to follow you!

For more information about these or any of our other Impact Discipleship Resources, please check out our website impactdisciples.com.