

Focus On God's House, Not Yours

Joe Slater

Good stewards take care of whatever has been entrusted to them. If God has entrusted you with home ownership, you certainly ought to maintain that home sensibly and reasonably. But what about God's house? (No, not the physical structure in which we assemble, but the Lord's church!)

Unlike today when God's house is a spiritual edifice, the prophet Haggai wrote during the Mosaic age when God's house was a physical temple in Jerusalem. Haggai's people had begun to rebuild the temple shortly after their return from captivity, but political and religious enemies had conned the Persian king into forcing them to halt construction. Through the years they had become content to leave the project on the back burner.

Meanwhile the people built their own fine homes and went about their business as usual. Through His prophet the Lord asked them, *"Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this temple to lie in ruins?"* (Haggai 1:4).

The problem wasn't that the Jews' homes were too ornate. It was that their zeal for God's house had cooled to the point of total disinterest. *"This people says, 'The time has not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built'"* (1:2).

How often do we use similar excuses to justify our neglect of God's work while we focus on ourselves? "It just isn't a good time!" (Really? When will the time be right?)

God has entrusted us with the spread of Christ's gospel and the building up of the church. Are we being good stewards?

[Seed thought via Joseph Lewis (Flower Mound)]

Under Pressure

Here's an interesting fact about being under pressure: One person might crumble under the stress of the situation while another might excel, rise to the occasion, and conquer the adversity. This contrast seems to hold true across the spectrum of human experiences – family life, career, or sports. When it comes to our Christianity, this rule of human nature certainly applies.

Nothing can put our spiritual well-being to the test more than social pressure. We are social beings and most of us need the company and support of "our tribe" or circle of family and friends. Unfortunately, not everyone in our circle will be faithful Christians; some will be less faithful or even unbelievers. Satan will tap into these groups and use them to put us under pressure to do and participate in activities displeasing to God. The easiest example can be seen in attendance to the worship service. Family and friends will pressure us to join them in weekend activities that pull us away from the church and her worship to the Lord. When we give in to the pressure, we become bad examples to our unbelieving friends. How will they ever be brought to Christ by watching our own unfaithfulness? And boy, does the devil ever enjoy it!

This principle can be applied to all aspects of our spiritual lives. Instead of giving into social pressures, we must rise to the challenge and remain steadfast, setting the best of examples to those outside the body of Christ, *"that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing"* (1 Thessalonians 4:12).

--Jay Launius (Maud, TX) adapted

RED SEA RULES

1. Realize that God means for you to be where you are.
2. Be more concerned for God's glory than for your relief.
3. Acknowledge your enemy, but keep your eyes on the Lord.
4. Pray!
5. Stay calm and confident, and give God time to work.
6. When unsure, just take the next step by faith.
7. Envision God's enveloping presence.
8. Trust God to deliver in His own unique way.
9. View your current crisis as a faith builder for the future.
10. Remember to praise Him.

Denise Sanchez-Havvarro Bagby (via Facebook)

Watergate Proves Jesus' Resurrection!

I know the resurrection is a fact, and Watergate proved it to me. How? Because 12 men testified they had seen Jesus raised from the dead, then they proclaimed that truth 40 years, never once denying it. Every one of them was beaten, tortured, stoned, and put in prison. They would not have endured that if it weren't true. Watergate embroiled 12 of the most powerful men in the world – and they couldn't keep a lie for three weeks. You're telling me that 12 apostles could keep a lie for 40 years? Absolutely impossible!

--Charles Colson (via Facebook)

Human History

Human history is the long terrible story of man trying to find something other than God which will make him happy.

--C. S. Lewis