



# Strong Foundations For A Glorious Future

**"If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Psalms 11:3).**

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A university Vice Chancellor once noted that some people want to eat the omelette without breaking the egg. This, highlights the necessity of sacrifice (to build strong foundation) for success. Foundations are important determinants to the height of the superstructure. To build high, one must inevitably dig deep. It is not only in the field of Civil Engineering that foundations are important. Indeed the principle applies to every other area of life, which is why the Psalmist asked the pertinent question that highlights the importance of foundations - "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?"

When a family is broken and the government thinks that the parents cannot take care of their children, they take those children away from them and put them in care (e.g. with social workers, adoption, etc). Before placing such children, the assesses the "foundations" of the new carers for their capability to take care of the new child, on a number of factors including physical facilities, health, emotional stability, financial support, etc. As no Government will knowingly place a child in an unsafe home, similarly God cannot give spiritual children to spiritual parents who have not developed the minimum spiritual maturity and capability to bring them up properly in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Employers do the same with their staff before job assignment or promotion. Just as employers will train their employees (i.e. strengthen their foundations) and look for evidences of relevant qualities before promoting to them greater positions of responsibilities, in the same way, God, In these end times of increased wickedness (Daniel 11:32) is looking for those who know Him, whom He can trust to do exploits, as He always does:

**"And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward" (Isaiah 37:31).**



- 1) At 40, Moses felt he was ready to deliver Israel, but God trained him for another 40 years before confirming his readiness. We may think we are ready when we are not. It is the confirmation of God that matters.
- 2) While a teenager, David was anointed king, and killed Goliath, but God knew that he was not yet ready for the responsibilities of the throne, so he had to undergo training till aged 30 years before ascending the throne.
- 3) Joseph received dreams of his future dominion whilst a teenager, but had to undergo training till he was 30 years of age before he was enthroned.
- 4) At his salvation in Acts 9, Paul was chosen by God to be a vessel to bear the gospel to the gentiles; but it took an estimated 14 years of training and spiritual maturity before he received the commission alert from the Holy Spirit **"Separate me Paul and Barnabas for the work whereunto I have called them"** (Acts 13:2).
- 5) Many others both in Bible days and in contemporary times went through years of preparation after initial call before experiencing their season of breakthroughs.

It is the years of preparation that determines the degree of victory. Refusal to make necessary adjustments to cope with the rigours of the required preparation condemns one to the state of a perpetual baby (Hebrews 5:11-6:1). Breakthroughs come in measures that correspond to how successfully we handle our rela-

tionships with God and respond to divine lessons during the years of preparation, which are usually "silent years". In this fast age of 'instant' everything, it does us good to remember that our God of patience is not in a hurry but is looking for qualities of:

- 1) Stability "And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem" (Acts 9:28).
- 2) Faithfulness and Diligence in character (Proverbs 22:29), not despising days of small things (Zechariah 4:10) and faithfulness in very little things (Luke 19:17).
- 3) Persistence and steadfastness (I Corinthians 15:58). It is reported that a diary is discovered where David Livingstone, in his pioneering missionary work, wrote of the frustrations of not seeing many souls saved in Africa as it was happening elsewhere in the world. Prophetically, he wrote that in future, missionaries will see multitudes saved in single meetings. He then added that when such times come, may such missionaries not forget the labours of the pioneers who through their sacrifices paid the price that laid the foundations for their bountiful harvests (John 4:38).

Laying a solid foundation for growth can be illustrated by the growth of Chinese bamboo. Like any plant, growth of the Chinese Bamboo tree requires nurturing - water, fertile soil, sunshine. In its first year, we do not see visible signs of growth. In the second, third and fourth year, there is still no growth above the soil. The farmer's patience is tested and he possibly begin to wonder if his efforts (caring, watering, etc.) will ever be rewarded. Finally in the fifth year - what appears to be a miracle happens as the bamboo grows to 80 feet in just six weeks! A Pertinent question is does the bamboo really grow 80 feet in six weeks? Or does it actually take five years for this sudden burst of activity? A farmer who gives up nurturing his bamboo in a couple of years, can be sorry when he looks back during its fifth year.

The growth of the Chinese Bamboo tree is a perfect analogy human experience with personal growth and change whether of ourselves or those we are responsible for - it can be very slow and frustrating to show meaningful progress, and sometimes our efforts seems unrewarding. But the worth is realised with patience and persistence. The ability to stay focused, persistent and continue to believe when we are unable to see immediate results or any growth

on the surface are the critical variables in attaining breakthroughs, new skills or developing ourselves and others. And this is the biggest challenge in this age of indulgence and instant gratification.

It is easy to tell others to "Keep trying! and NEVER give up!" This prescription is equally good for its giver. Calvin Coolidge captured the importance of keeping faith in whatever important work we are engaged in this poem:

***"Press on: nothing in the world can take the place of perseverance. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts".***

This poem conveys the message that persistence and determination alone are omnipotent! But unfortunately, many are trying to live a fast paced lifestyle in what is naturally a slow paced world. We live in a quick-fix society, and get frustrated if we have to wait a few moments for service or for a stop light to change. We want instant solutions to every complex problem (i.e. we want it all now!) It will do us good to reflect on a poem by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow that is as true today as it was when he wrote it over 100 years ago:

***"The heights by great men reached and kept, Were not attained by sudden flight, But they, while their companions slept, Toiled ever upward through the night."***

This principle holds true today. People, who patiently toil towards worthwhile dreams and goals, building strong character while overcoming adversity and challenge, grow the strong foundation to handle success, while the get-rich quick / lottery winners are usually unable to sustain sudden wealth. ***It takes the Chinese bamboo five years to lay a solid foundation of root systems that sustains the weight of 80 feet growth in six weeks.*** A caterpillar is doomed to a life on the ground if it is freed from its struggle inside a cocoon prematurely. The struggle in the cocoon is what gives the future butterfly the wing power to fly, just as tension against muscles as we exercise strengthens them, while muscles left alone will soon atrophy. The problem is that we don't get instantly stronger after each cycle of exercise - a salient reminder of the need for more patience every day of exercise to get the end results. We all need that patience, perseverance and persistence right now!