

Peter Lord's
Simple Devotion to Christ for Leaders
by
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Gen. 11:1-9 God Halted the Building of a City

God likes cities. The last two chapters of the Bible describe a city. "He really likes cities, and He really likes unity." In this passage, the sons of men united with one mind and one purpose to build "a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven," in order to make for themselves a name. "There is a tremendous strength in unity that even God recognizes. Notice that the men said three times 'come let us' and God is going to say, 'come let Us,' and guess who won?... Why did God bust this thing up?... Many times we give the devil credit for what God is doing. If this were happening today we would say, 'the devil did it.' "There are many things in Christianity that are being busted up by God, including pastors and groups. The sons of men made three mistakes that relate to us today.

First, "**they had the wrong materials: You do not build a city with bricks--you build a city with people.** In my denomination, I fear one of the biggest mistakes we have made is that we thought we built churches with bricks. So our concentration has been on buildings rather than on people... Sums of money have been spent on building and there are not enough shepherds to go around."

Second, "**there was a wrong motive: They said 'let us make a name for ourselves.'** This is a very subtle thing. We all know the right answer that He should get all the glory and the honor. But sometimes, I think, all of us are trying to make sure we get our share of it and get a good hunk of it. It is a very subtle thing."

Third, "**the worst mistake they made was a wrong method of reaching God: They were trying to build a tower that reached up to heaven.** Religion is building a tower that reaches up to heaven but **Christianity is receiving what God has sent down from heaven.** This is a very subtle thing... Much of our confidence in God hearing us is based on what good we do [as if we are building a tower to heaven]... The only reason He hears any of us is because of Jesus Christ and what He has done. And He hears us as much on the days when we have blown it and completely blown it as on the days that we have had our greatest successes. God's good. God is not going to bless anything that is not committed to His purposes and His methods. What Watchmen Nee said has blessed me, '**God will not back and bless anything God did not initiate**'... Some of the churches [I had built] have gone to pieces. I've learned that anything man can build up, man can tear down. And one of the signs that God does a work is that it is permanent."

"**In order to be a successful Christian, you don't have to be an achiever, you need to be a receiver...** The Bible does teach this: If you want to be a success in the Christian life, it does not depend on your ability to achieve, it depends upon your ability to receive. 'Those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness will reign in life through Christ Jesus' (**Rom. 5:17**). All my life I've been taught that success depends upon achieving."

Rev. 3:14-22 The Need for Fellowship with Jesus

The seven letters contained in the second and third chapters of Revelations are not addressed to the churches but to the pastors. "Most of the verbs in the seven letters to the seven churches are second person singular--they are not second person plural." Jesus is addressing each letter to the "angel of the church," or the leader. "The Bible, to a great degree, is a book of leaders. In Kings and Chronicles, the way the king was, the way the country went... The book of Acts is a story about leaders... In every group, the key person in that group is the leader. A group can never rise above its leadership. An individual in that group might rise above its leadership, but the group will never rise above its leadership."

Rev. 3:14-22 is addressed to the leader of the church in Laodicea. The Lord is correcting the pastor. "**God is correcting you to bring you to Himself, always.** We fear correction, but when it comes from God, it is not to condemn us, it is to draw us to Himself. He always does. We need to be open to it. **The only person that does not need to be corrected is the first perfect person.** Most of us are saying, 'Lord, I want to be all that You want me to be.' So, sometimes He moves in with correction. It might be through a brother or a sister or it might be direct. But when He corrects it's because He wants to bring us to Himself." The Lord says in verses 19-20:

Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; be zealous therefore, and repent.
Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door; I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me.

"The church was successful. They said they were successful. They were doing well, and our Lord evaluates them and he says, 'You guys are lacking something that you can only get from Me.' It is for the pastor first and then the Lord addresses it to all individuals." Jesus is addressing a Christian church and a Christian group leader. He is telling them that He is on the outside and **He wants to come in and have fellowship with them.** "The greatest danger that I face in the Christian life, is this, that **I can become so involved in the things of God that I miss having fellowship with Him.** Jesus is saying 'I want to come in and I want to have fellowship with you.'"

"Do you have the same quality of praise in the closet that you have in the auditorium [with others]? When you get alone with Jesus, do you have an exciting, wonderful, glorious, marvelous time? When you get in your closet do you dance unto the Lord and praise the Lord and love the Lord. You know, the best love-making is always in private. You can always go further in private than you can in public." We need to have individual fellowship with Jesus where we enter His presence loving Him, thanking Him, and rejoicing in Him. **"Are you insuring that your people have that? Are you finding out if they indeed have fellowship with Him?"** First John is written so that the people would have fellowship with Him. **1 Cor 1:9** says we are "called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." "I honestly believe that the devil tries to cut off a personal fellowship with Jesus Christ in every persons' life more than anything else, and he is quite content to let all forms of religious activity go on if he can cut that nerve or that relationship." When a pastor does not have his intimate fellowship with Jesus, the problem will usually be reigning in the congregation as well.

Luke 10:38-42 One Thing is Needed--Fellowship

In this passage Mary is listening to the Lord while Martha is busy with preparations and serving. Jesus told Martha that she was "worried and bothered about so many things"-- about setting a nice meal for Jesus. Jesus said in verse 42, "**only a few things are necessary, really only one, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.**" "I'm constantly distracted by many things, not a one of them bad things. I'm distracted with much service. There's a lot to be done--isn't there? **I'm distracted sometimes with much learning.** Have you ever seen so many books and tapes. I believe that one of **our greatest temptation today is we are going back to the tree of knowledge to eat rather than the tree of life.**" **2 Cor 11:3** warns us not to allow our minds' to be led astray as Eve was, but to engage in "the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ."

"The Lord Jesus Christ refused to be committed to the pressing needs of His own day and generation... He was neither unmindful nor unmoved by these other issues. He thought about them and was moved by them; But as the perfect man, He was committed to the Father for that only to which His Father was committed in Him exclusively... **You should not be committed to the will of God, you should be committed to God...** Abraham got committed to the will of God which was to have forbearers and he decided to help God and produced an Ishmael. He was committed. He believed the will of God. But you see, he wasn't willing to work with God in God's time and in His way, and he ran ahead and blew it and created an Ishmael. Jesus was committed to the Father. Do you know what the Father told Jesus to do for 30 years? 'Stay in Nazareth and plane boards.' Do you know what God the Father's first words to Jesus were after those 30 years? 'There is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.'" If Jesus was committed to helping all the people with needs, then He may not have stayed in Nazareth for 30 years.

"Jesus was in such perfect contact with the Father that He never had to yield to the pressures. He stayed there doing nothing (as you and I would term it in religious work) for 30 years because **He was committed to one thing: a relationship with the Father--never to move till the Father moved,** never to do anything until the Father did it. He was not committed to needs... I do not believe that it is possible to maintain this degree of commitment in the religious world in which we live **unless we are willing to have constant regular fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ where we can look Him in the face and hear from Him and listen to Him and do what He wants us to do.** I do not believe it is possible because the pressures are exerted on us continually."

"Do you have a living vibrant first-hand fellowship with Jesus?... I want to ask you a question. Suppose I started studying my wife. I'd get books and go to psychologists and he'd help me understand all their peculiarities. Then I went to a doctor and found out how she was put together and I studied her in detail. **If I didn't have time to love her, how do you think she'd feel?**" Jesus said, **fellowship is the one thing that is needful.** "The constant attack on my life is to be distracted so that I lose that intimate personal fellowship with Jesus where I know things first hand because He told me so."

2 Cor. 11:2-3 Have Simple Devotion to Christ

The passage tells of Paul's desire to present us as pure virgins, not defiled by the world's system, to Christ:

For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin. But I am afraid, **lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.**

"The way that we are led astray, 99% of the time, is through religious things... I just want to challenge you tonight to keep your fellowship with Jesus at top level." "Second-hand religion may keep a preacher in business and make him indispensable to his congregation, but it cannot produce discipleship. There will be no spontaneity of action, nor any other evidence of that divine initiative in man that springs only from man's total availability to God."

"I believe **love grows in direct proportion to our knowledge of Jesus.** That word knowledge in the Bible is often used for sexual intercourse." **Fellowship with God will "keep faith alive and vibrant and exciting."** "'This one thing is needful', Jesus said, 'what Mary is doing is needful; She's taking the time to sit at My feet. What I need is not a meal. I want you to sit down and have some fellowship with Me, and she is doing that, and that's what I really want.' **Beware, lest anybody corrupt you from the simplicity of devotion to our Lord Jesus Christ.**