
C O N T E N T S

A Personal Walk with Jesus Christ

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**SESSION 3****The Leadership Crunch**

Several years ago, a new youth minister began building relationships with some adults in his church. From those relationships, he started meeting with four young men weekly. His goal was to help them strengthen their relationships to Jesus Christ and to encourage them to become spiritual leaders. Those men continued to meet with the leader, and all four began to get involved in different areas of the church's youth ministry.

Of those four men, one became a pastor, another a lawyer who works with students in his church, and one, Matt Brinkley, started a ministry called the Fellowship of Christian Students (FCS). This ministry committed themselves to help students grow to maturity in Christ through the local church and then to mobilize those students to reach their friends for Jesus Christ. Ministering to students on six campuses, FCS was the result of a vision God gave Matt to involve the local church in reaching out to students.

Matt believes that he benefited from being a part of a Leadership Team. In that group God gave him the vision of FCS. Each time he learned a new concept of ministry in the Leadership Team he was encouraged to put it into practice in his church. Matt summarized how the Leadership Team helped his ministry: "The leadership principles I learned left two visible results in my church: (1) adult leaders who are mature in Jesus Christ and who gave leadership to the youth ministry, and (2) spiritual depth and maturity in the students involved in the youth ministry through the adults who discipled them." "My participation in a Leadership Team built a solid foundation in Jesus Christ for my life and ministry," says Matt. Matt is now a youth pastor of one of America's largest churches and he equips youth leaders across the country.

CHECK YOUR FOUNDATION

Does your life and ministry have the same solid foundation in Jesus Christ? By using a parable, Jesus taught an important lesson on building foundations. Each of two builders wanted to build a house. Each had his blueprint. Each worked hard to complete his job. But there was one difference: one built his house on a rock and the other built his on the sand.

Look at Jesus' comparison of these two people. One was "a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock" (Matthew 7:24-25). Can't you see this man slowly, methodically mixing the concrete that was necessary to anchor his new home to that rock? Pouring the foundation, waiting for it to dry and making sure his work would last?

But the other person was "a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash" (Matthew 7: 26-27). Imagine his thinking: "Winter is coming, so I really need to get this house built as quickly as possible." So he settled for sinking the walls of his house a few inches into the sand.

For a while, the second man might have sat on his porch, construction complete, contently watching the waves roll in and out from the shore. Possibly he watched the other man build his house on the rock because it took longer.

When both houses are finished, each one is picture perfect from the outside and exquisite in every detail. But suddenly a winter storm blows in from the ocean. Imagine the utter despair of the second man as the walls of his new home topple in the sand. His investment of time and money is erased – totally wasted – in one moment of crisis.

Many times Christian leaders take the same foolish approach toward building their lives and ministries. They live in such a fast-paced world that they don't take adequate time to build their foundations on Jesus Christ. They see the overwhelming needs of people around them and quickly throw together a program filled with sports, activities, entertainment and projects. Yet all of those well-intentioned activities are only the walls of a structure. Many people and ministries look good on the outside, but they fold when difficulties come. Unfortunately, many youth ministries are like the house on the sand – they don't stand very long. Your life and ministry must be built on the solid foundation of Jesus Christ if you and your ministry are to endure.

WHAT'S IMPORTANT?

One opportunity to build that strong foundation in Jesus Christ is through participation in a Leadership Team. While the principles and practices in this book work on an individual basis, a Leadership Team provides for intensified spiritual development of adult youth leaders through small-group discipleship. As adult youth leaders

meet together and become committed to grow toward maturity in Jesus Christ, a solid foundation for their individual lives and for the church's youth ministry begin to be built.

The greatest difference between the two builders in Jesus' parable was not their vision for their work, their ability to carry it through or their motivation to get the job done. *The greatest difference was their perspective of what was important.* One felt pressured from the immediate needs. His perspective was, "I need to get this house finished as soon as possible." The other was building for something that would last. He wanted his investment to stand firm through any storm.

What kind of builder will you be?



ACTION POINT > SESSION 3

1. Alan Redpath said, "It takes but a moment to make a convert; it takes a lifetime to manufacture a saint" (*The Making of A Man of God*, Revell, p. 68). What changes would you like to see in your own life as a result of participating in this Leadership Team?

