TOPIC: Love Series IV
BUILD ON THE LOVE FOUNDATION II

It is of the highest importance that we build our lives upon the foundation of God's love.

KEY POINTS

- In 1173, people of Pisa, Italy, built the Campo Dei Miracoli (Field of Miracles—a cathedral, baptistery, bell tower and cemetery). Five years into the construction of the tower, they realized they had picked a very bad spot for the tower, having laid its foundation stones on soft earth. As they built, the foundation began to shift. They stopped construction for over 100 years until the ground firmed up enough for them to continue.
- They tried any number of strategies to straighten the building—to no avail. At completion, it was 5.5° off-centre, and through a concerted effort in the late 19th and early 20th century, engineers have been able to straighten it out to around 4° off-centre. But thanks to a bad foundation, it's just not right.
- Building strong, lasting structures demands a solid foundation. Jesus, speaking of Himself, said: "…on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18).
- In addition to being the unmovable bedrock upon which our foundation must be built, He becomes the key element (the cornerstone) of the foundation.
- Jesus is God and God is love. The bedrock and foundation of the church of Jesus Christ is love. The foundation of my Christian life must be love!
- The big question is: " 'Am I in the Church (the earthly body of Christ)?' If so, everything I say and do will be based upon the love foundation on which I am built (Ephesians 2:19-22). If this is not the case, I am building my life on the wrong foundation."
- Jesus is the substratum *and* the cornerstone of the foundation, *and* also the "head" into which we build and grow (Ephesians 4:15-16).
- We must grow personally and edify the body of Christ corporately—in love.
- We can ask ourselves a few simple test questions to see if we have been infested by parasites that are rapidly eating through our love foundation.
  - Am I treating *all* of my brothers and sisters the way I wish to be treated?
  - Do I go *directly* to a brother or sister *in private* if I have a dispute with them, or do I shame them publicly?
  - Do I ever say things like: "I can't worship in the same church as Sister so and so?" Or, "I can't sit beside Brother so and so."
  - Do I ever speak to others against the leaders of our church without first speaking to them?
  - Do I ever feel superior to a brother or sister in our church?
  - Is there anyone in our church I cannot go and speak to because I can't stand them?
  - Can I work with my leaders, or do I only get involved if I am leading?
  - Am I unable to apologize when I know I have wronged a brother or sister?
- There are many similar questions we can ask ourselves to get a good personal assessment of where we are in the Love department. The corrective measures are the same for all of our failings: repentance, confession to God and each other and asking for forgiveness from God and each other.
- It is of the highest importance that we build our lives upon the foundation of God's love.

Key Scriptures:
Mark 12:28-31; Matthew 7:1-20 (*12);
John 13:34-35; Matthew 18:1-35 (*15-17);
2 Peter 1:12-15

Discussion Tools

1. What is the purpose of the "substratum" as opposed to the "foundation"? What about the cornerstone?
2. Why is it so important for the substratum to be "rock steady"?
3. Discuss how Jesus is the substratum of our faith, how He is the foundation, and how He is the cornerstone.
4. The Bible in various places tells us that God is our strength, our praise, our peace, etc., but that God *is love*. Discuss how "is our" is different from *"is"*, period.
5. Look at the test questions that are given in the lesson. Are there questions you find difficult to answer? Have parasites eaten through your love foundation? Whether the answer is yes or no, pray for one another that we may grow in love and edify the body of Christ.

Discipleship Project Family Connection

In a family devotion/prayer time, discuss:

1. Who is called to evangelism (see Matthew 28:19, Acts 1:8 and other scriptures)?
2. How do you as individuals/as a family feel about the call to evangelism (excited… frightened… indifferent…)?
3. Pray together that God would use and help you as a family and as individuals to be witnesses, according to His commands and His promises.

Notes

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Prayer Time

Lord, I thank You that You are Love and that Your love endures forever. Thank You for allowing me to build my life upon You.

Life Group ice-breaker: Spring is (technically) here! Do you have any past or present family/personal traditions for spring (e.g. cleaning, events, etc.)?

WEEK OF SUNDAY, APRIL 3, 2016
PRAYER NEEDS/THANKSGIVINGS/COMMENTS:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____