

Daily Reading  
Monday May 10,

## God the Builder

*"For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything."*

[Hebrews 3:4 \(NIV\)](#)

### Devotion:

Anything my nine year-old son sets his mind to, he can build. Whether he is working with Legos, K'nex, or hammer and nails, you can count on him to build a masterpiece. When he was only seven he informed me he planned to build a clubhouse from scrap wood the "workermen" from the construction site down the road had given him.

I gave him a list of logical reasons why he could not build a clubhouse. My little guy listened, and then proceeded to tell me his logical reasons for how he *could* build a clubhouse. I knew in my mind I was right, but there was no convincing my "workerman."

It turns out I was wrong. He built that clubhouse: a floor, four walls (including cut outs for doors and windows) and a roof. This was proof positive he was born to build.

There was another young man who was born to build: Jesus. Jesus' earthly father Joseph was a carpenter by trade and customary to the times, taught his son carpentry skills. I picture Jesus as a young child carrying His tools of the trade, honing His skills. He probably hammered a nail or two in places His mother preferred He not. Perhaps He built benches for their humble home. Maybe Jesus even entertained thoughts of building a clubhouse! Yes, Jesus was born to build.

Jesus was born to build, but His primary building project was not buildings, furniture, or other wood items. Jesus was born to construct the majestic splendor of a living temple of God - His church. He does this through the lives of God's children. Jesus is our builder, fashioning us to reflect the image of God.

The Greek rendering for the words "built" and "builder" in our key scripture is the same. The definition for these words is quite interesting: to furnish, equip, prepare, make ready; of one who makes ready for a person or thing; of builders, to construct, erect, with the included idea of adorning and equipping with all things necessary. Commentaries further explain the "house built" in our key verse is not a literal house, but a spiritual house.

God our Builder wants to erect, furnish, and prepare us to be ready to reflect His image. His desire is to adorn and equip us, His "living temples," with all things necessary to fulfill the purpose for which we were born. So many times we deny God access to our lives, giving Him logical reasons why we *could not* possibly be built into His image. He stands ready to give you reasons why you *can* be built into the image of God.

Daily Reading  
Tuesday May 11

## Other Mothers

*"I thank my God every time I remember you." Philipians 1:3 (NIV)*

### Devotion:

Syrupy, sentimental greeting cards carefully chosen the night before. A hand-made art project fashioned to be a practical, pretty potholder. Soft, pastel tissue-paper flowers twisted into a creative corsage, sure to be the envy of all the church ladies. A simple bottle of over-powering perfume purchased from the local dollar store. All delights designed to impress one very special lady.

Yep, Mother's Day is upon us again.

While many use this time to thank the mothers and grandmothers in their lives, each May I like to also remember my "other mothers." Women who touched my life, imparted their wisdom and shaped my character.

My Aunt Patty holds a treasured place in my childhood memories. Though our states sat side-by-side in the Mid-west, we had to travel an entire day down and around Lake Michigan in order to reach her home. As a result, we only saw each other about once a year. When we did, she never seemed to be in a hurry but always had plenty of time to talk or read to me. She would gently brush the snarly tangles off of my waist-length blond hair when I'd been oh-so-lax in fending the snarly tangles off. She'd ask me to sing for her or perform the cheer I'd created for team tryouts. Though we still see each other no more than once a year, if I close my eyes, I can smell her sweet perfume; White Shoulders. Her very presence made this rough and tumble tomboy long to be just like her when I grew up; pretty, sweet and gentle.

I thank my God every time I remember my Aunt Patty.

Dee was my youth pastor's wife. Her cheerful smile made this awkward teenager feel completely confident and right at home. Her house smelled of apple-cinnamon tea and her door, like her heart, was always open. Miss Dee's fridge never seemed to lack the needed ingredients for an impromptu teenage bash. In no time flat, she'd whip up a huge batch of taco salad, pull some cookies hot out of the oven and pour our favorite flavors of soda in glasses. Her family room transformed into a haven where we could ask questions, discover answers and just be ourselves. Being around Dee made me want to be a woman whose very life, like hers, says, "Welcome."

I thank my God every time I remember sweet Miss Dee.

Mrs. Esch lived across the street. Some in our neighborhood wrote me off, seeing only a latch-key kid from a broken home, desperate for attention. Not Mrs. Esch. She looked deeper. She purposefully discovered my interests, and learned all she could about them, even going so far as to join a softball team with me. She talked to me about what I wanted to do with my life some day. Most of all, she sensed in me an innate need to be introduced to the God who promises to be a Father to the fatherless. It was through this young mother of two that I became a follower of Christ. Soon after, she began to talk to me about "my calling," excitedly insisting she just *knew* God was going to use me in ministry one day. Thirty-one years later, she is now on my prayer team; the team that prays for me as I write and travel to speak.

Daily Reading  
Wednesday May 12

### Words of Life or Death

*"The tongue can bring death or life; those who love to talk will reap the consequences." Proverbs 18:21 (NLT)*

#### Devotion:

I often hear my husband Scott say something to my sons that brings a smile to my face. "Have you told your mom you love her today? Don't ever forget you have the best mom in the world." When I hear him praise me to our sons, I feel encouraged and appreciated. From my husband's example, I've learned to be careful about the words I say not only *to* my husband but also *about* my husband.

Today's key verse tells us our words can bring "death or life." In our marriages, this means our words can either tear down our spouses or build them up. I've been noticing lately whether I'm more likely to say words such as, "I'm married to the greatest man," or words like, "I told you so," or "You don't even try to understand me."

What about you and your words to your husband? When you speak to your husband, do you fill him up with praise, or make him feel like he's not measuring up?

Let's also consider the words we say about our husbands to others. What kind of things do you say about your husband to your children? Your best friend? Your sister or mother?

I tend to be a "venter" when I am angry or frustrated with my husband. Sometimes I turn to others because I'm seeking validation for my angry feelings. Often I vent when I haven't taken the time first to deal with the situation with God. I'm learning that if I go to the Lord first in prayer, pouring out my heart to Him, He changes my heart and brings me to a place of repentance and calmness. Then I'm able to let go of my anger and move on, or talk to my husband about it in a loving manner.

Scripture gives plenty of evidence that God's words have the power of life. In Genesis we're told God created every inch of the world with His spoken words. John 1:1 tells us that Jesus is the Word. Throughout the Gospels, Jesus heals countless people with the power of His words. In a similar manner, our words have accomplishing power. God wants our words to bring life to our marriages. We can choose what we will sow—words of life or words of death—and we will reap the consequences many times over.

Use today's application steps to fill up your husband with words of life.

Dear Lord, let my words to my spouse and about my spouse draw us closer to one another. Teach me to communicate in ways that build my husband up instead of tearing him down. If pride, stubbornness, selfishness, or any other sin is preventing me from speaking words of life in our marriage, Lord, I confess that right now. Make me aware of any words of death I've spoken in our marriage. And as the Holy Spirit brings those to my mind, help me confess and turn from them, especially any words of divorce. Break any curse on our marriage from hurtful, angry, or destructive words. Guided by Your wisdom and love, may our words to and about one another build a protective wall around our marriage. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Daily Reading  
Thursday May 13

## Undignified Worship

*"...It was before the LORD who chose me rather than your father or anyone from his house when he appointed me ruler over the LORD's people Israel -*

*I will celebrate before the LORD. I will become even more undignified than this... ."*

*2 Samuel 6:21-22a (NIV)*

### Devotion:

I grew up in a traditional church, singing traditional hymns. Being a Christian was very matter-of-fact for me. I was a Christian in the same way I would have told you I was a student.

Nothing much changed in our little church. Every Sunday, faithful men and woman of God taught Sunday school, served on committees and made lemonade, coffee and cookies for after-church fellowship. It was a wonderful experience and I grew up loving God's Word, His church and its people.

When I was a high schooler in the late 70s, I was introduced to Christian "rock and roll." Being in Arizona, we got overflow from the California Jesus movement, and were familiar with many of the bands coming on the scene. I heard songs by Keith Green, Second Chapter of Acts and Phil Keaggy. These songs depicted a faith in God that was passionate and alive. Something stirred within me as I listened to their music over and over.

I can still vividly picture myself in a sold-out symphony hall before a live concert as one half of the room yelled, "We love Jesus, yes we do. We love Jesus how 'bout you?" I was on the other side, and we answered as loudly as we could, repeating the challenge. Joy and celebration vibrated through the hall as we shouted, jumped up and down and waved our arms in the air for love of Jesus.

It was completely undignified and I was completely undone ... never to be the same. I knew I wanted a faith like that. I wanted to be so excited about Jesus that it overflowed, and I didn't care what my worship of Him looked like.

A few years ago, I read the story of King David dancing before the Lord. Now there was someone who didn't worry what others thought. David had overseen the return of the ark of the Lord to Jerusalem, and as it neared, he couldn't contain his joy. He replaced his kingly attire with a simple outfit and danced with all his might.

His wife, Michal, watched from the window and didn't approve of David's behavior. She was disgusted with him, and told him so. David wasn't fazed, and responded with words that encourage me today, "It was before the LORD who chose me rather than your father or anyone from his house when he appointed me ruler over the LORD's people Israel - I will celebrate before the LORD. I will become even more undignified than this ... ." (2 Samuel 6:21-22a).

Daily Reading  
Friday May 14

### Crows Have Landed

"She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come."

Proverbs 31:25 (NIV)

#### Devotion:

I was 45 when it hit me. We were on vacation and the hotel had one of those cool magnifying mirrors in the bathroom. Well, it was cool until it showed the truth. It seems my "laugh lines" were running amuck and creeping out of the sides of my eyelids.

"What in the world!" I shouted. "How long have I had these trenches in my face? And when were you going to tell me?" I yelped. My wise husband knew a death trap when he saw it, "Honey, I love your eyes," he replied.

Now that I've hit the fabulous fifties, they don't wait for a smile to show themselves; no, the crow's feet have firmly landed and are forever etched in my face. I knew it was obvious one day when a client who works for a plastic surgeon told me she could get me a good deal, then she patted my face.

No one escapes the fact that we all age. One day we wake up and realize the spring in our step has a bit of a squeak, gray hairs are sprouting in the most bizarre places (like cascading from your chin), and everything that was once perky has headed south. Of course this is the exact moment I see a twenty-something bounce across the television screen and everything in me wants to burrow beneath a blanket on the couch with a warm chocolate chip cookie and pretend this will all go away.

Then I hear my grandkids squeal and run into the room. It's time for another round of "The Gramminator!" I roll to the floor and put on my best Schwarzenegger voice and proclaim, "No one escapes the Gramminator!" and the pouncing and wrestling begins.

It's at these moments I realize how much I love being 50-something. The road to get here was not easy; in fact, those lines in my face were earned. Every gray hair represents a tough time of losing a loved one, stressing over finances or crying over a wayward child. The main lesson I've learned along the way is everything in life is temporary. Deuteronomy 31:6 says, "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you" (NIV). Whether I'm on the mountaintop or in the valley, neither will last but He will always walk with me.

Today, I choose to laugh and let the lines dig in a little deeper because this is the only day I am guaranteed. We are but dust, here today and gone tomorrow. Besides, my grandson just gripped my face in his sweet little hands and said, "Grandma, you're beautiful." His view is better than the mirror.

Come on, let's embrace this thing called age together and laugh!

Dear Lord, thank You for every gray hair and every wrinkle for they serve as reminders. Each one represents a time of leaning into You for strength. You have provided all I've ever needed. May You always be evident in my life as I laugh at the days to come. In Jesus' Name, Amen.