



"The test of a person's Christianity is what happens in the storm, when the house is battered in the winds of affliction."

—John Murray

**12-Jun-20**

## **Our Way Forward**

As God's instruction manual for His people, the Bible contains the answers and guidance Christians need in times of trouble. Scripture reflects His mind more than any other resource on earth, so it is good that we seek His direction within its pages, especially when we find it difficult to see the way forward through the fog of fast-moving events. [God](#) has guided His people through many similar times of turmoil, and we can be sure He will do the same for us.

David, who spent his early adult life fleeing from one dangerous situation to another, provides the perfect starting point. He writes in [Psalm 11:3](#), "If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?" The *Good News Translation* treats this question as rhetorical, rendering it as a statement of futility: "There is nothing a good person can do when everything falls apart."

However, David does not end his psalm on this note of despair. He answers his "rhetorical" question with an obvious answer: "The LORD is in His holy temple, the LORD's throne is in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men" ([Psalm 11:4](#)). When the underpinnings of society are being pulled out, the first and best thing a Christian can do is to recall that God is

still sovereign over all things, and thus, he can trust Him. That is precisely how this psalm begins: "In the LORD I put my trust" ([Psalm 11:1](#)).

The troubles in our cities, then, should spur us to remember that the solutions to humanity's problems lie with God alone. Man's answers are at best temporary fixes that need constant re-shoring by each generation, and the repairs often ultimately lead to worse things, like war, once enough people become frustrated by the lack of progress or God Himself intervenes (see [Ezekiel 13:8-16](#); [22:28-31](#)). Christians can find God's solutions in His Word and trust Him to keep them safe even in the worst of times as He works out His purposes.

[Jesus Christ](#) gives us another principle to follow in [Luke 6:46-49](#):

But why do you call Me "Lord, Lord," and not do the things which I say? Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock. But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great.

How firm is our foundation? Is it strong enough to face the fierce winds, rain, and floods of the present storm? Will we be able to endure spiritually the false beliefs, opinions, and morals of the times? What can we do to strengthen our foundation so the storm will not shake us?

Our Savior tells us plainly: "Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings *and does them . . .*" (emphasis ours) will have an unshakable foundation. The person who practices the way of life Jesus teaches in His Word will strengthen his character, making it more like His own character. When troubles come, that Christian will both discern the nature of the threat and possess fortitude and perseverance to weather it in [faith](#).

The nominal Christian—the one who professes to believe in Christ and His teachings yet fails to implement them into his life—will buckle and fall

under the onslaught of the trial. He does not have a close relationship with his Savior to depend on, nor does he know what God expects of him or how to live out those expectations because he lacks experience in the Christian walk. His feeble efforts to resist Satan's attacks have little chance of success. He is like a child, toddling into the thick of a battle of knights and men at arms, clad only in a diaper and brandishing a plastic sword.

This image brings to mind Paul's advice in [Ephesians 6:11](#): "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." He repeats his counsel in verse 13: "Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." Upon our election, God makes this spiritual armor available to us. All we need to do is begin to build it, piece by piece. These pieces represent truth, righteousness, the good news of [peace](#), faith, salvation, and the Word of God, all of which we are to accompany with prayer, our instant and constant communication with God.

Jesus encapsulates all these pieces in His phrase, "do the things which I say." He teaches us the truth, models for us the way of righteousness, preaches the good news of peace, encourages our faith, and so forth. If we "follow His steps" ([1 Peter 2:21](#); see [1 John 2:6](#)), we will automatically don God's armor as we move forward in faith, and the roaring of the enemy—and even his attacks—will not dismay us ([1 Peter 5:8-9](#)). We will stand in His might. As Solomon writes, "The righteous are bold as a lion" ([Proverbs 28:1](#)).

Finally, another proverb of Solomon brings us back to God's sovereignty but from a different angle: "My son, fear the LORD and the king; do not associate with those given to change; for their calamity will rise suddenly, and who knows the ruin those two can bring?" ([Proverbs 24:21-22](#)). This proverb deals with joining or encouraging "those given to change," that is, rebels, usurpers, those who plot overthrow and chaos.

Solomon's advice is to stay far away from such people for two reasons:

1. Such movements and the people who join them rarely end well. Most fail in their goals, and many of them pay the ultimate price for their rebellion. The odds are not in their favor at all.

2. God and the king are on their thrones, and they hold more-than-sufficient power to make rebels' lives miserable or to cut them off altogether. It is far better to side with legitimate authority, and God is never on the wrong side.

The basis of his advice is the concept of the fear of the Lord. This fear is a deep reverence for God, His authority, His might, and His [goodness](#). Even so, it also contains a measure of outright terror to find oneself opposed to Him in any way. With a healthy fear of God, we will strive with every thought, word, and deed to please Him and not displease Him. The fear of the Lord, then, becomes a useful tool to keep us on the narrow way that leads to eternal life (see [Matthew 7:13-14](#)). It is a constant reminder of God's sovereignty, comforting the faithful.

Though the future of our society stands in doubt, our way forward does not. It is a straight line to the [Kingdom of God](#), well-trodden by our Savior and those whom He has led upon it down through the turbulent centuries to our day. Those given to change are chanting their slogans and many among them have turned to violence and destruction, supercharging the atmosphere with hatred and tension. Christians must face these conditions squarely, saying with Joshua, "But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" ([Joshua 24:15](#)).

- Richard T. Ritenbaugh

---

## From the Archives: Featured Sermon

### [Building on the Foundation](#)

by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

Considerable effort must be expended to find suitable bedrock for use as a foundation. Until this bedrock is found, no progress can be made. As Christians, we must build on the proper foundation—the bedrock symbolized by Jesus Christ. Christ constitutes the keystone, supporting the two sides of the foundation (the prophets and the apostles). As living stones of a spiritual Temple, we contribute to the overall structure of this building. Building upon

bedrock consists of 1) accepting Christ as Lord, 2) hearing what He says, and most importantly, 3) putting these words into practice—doing as well as hearing, applying godly wisdom to daily behavior. We need to be extremely careful how we build on this sure foundation, using quality construction materials—having beauty, value, and durability—and increasing in value as heat and pressure are applied.

---

## **From the Archives: Featured Article**

### **[Building With Integrity](#)**

by Mike Ford

People seem to talk a lot about character and values, but finding a person or a company with integrity is a tall order. Using the example of baseball legend Ted Williams, Mike Ford describes what integrity is all about and how vital it is both for our own character growth and the growth of the church.

---

If you would like to subscribe to the C.G.G. Weekly newsletter, please visit our [Email Subscriptions page](#).

---