



Meeting Notes: Wearing Our Belt of Truth (May 22, 2013)

These notes capture our May 22, 2013 meeting. We opened our meeting in prayer and then began our evening. Topic notes may not be in the order discussed during group, and they are not intended to cover everything discussed. They are intended as highlights to capture the essence of our study. General notes follow each topic that was discussed. Documents used or created during this meeting are attached.

TOPICS DISCUSSED:

Closing the Loop:

- **Understanding the belt's responsibility.** We discussed the physical aspects of trying to hold up our pants even after we've put on a belt, and correlated this to a spiritual perspective. Even in the physical, if your hands are busy holding your pants up, you can't do anything else. In the spiritual, trying to hold up the rest of the armor rather than connecting it to the belt of truth ties up our hands. With our hands tied, we can't wield our Sword of the Spirit, and if we fall, we can't break that fall. We also noted sometimes the fall is what encourages us to get in right relationship with God. Therefore, the falling isn't as much of an issue as not being able to reduce the damage from the fall! **Takeaway:** Our job is to put on the belt through the truth of God's Word; the belt's job is to hold us up spiritually!
- **Constructing the prayer.** The structure of my prayer has resulted in God challenging me with specific things contained in said prayer. While sharing some revelation God has been teaching me through my daily prayer, we noted the heart has to be ready to receive before we can "get it." **Takeaway:** don't get frustrated when it seems like someone isn't getting it; God will bring the increase when He knows they're ready!
- **Renewing Our Mind Exercise.** We've closed the loop during group on the exercise. If you've not been able to participate, but would like to, please let me know, so we can figure out how to make that happen. **Takeaway:** We have definitely learned this exercise can look different based on each person's need.

Memory Verse:

- **Challenges with our memory verse.** The NIV translation was of particular interest: "Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb; you taught me wisdom in that secret place." We couldn't fathom how God taught us wisdom in the womb. In addition, we had some difficulty with understanding the meaning of some of the original words. After much discussion and several revelations (that I did not capture), what we did learn is our wisdom comes from our experience

with God during our "prayer closet" time. When our prayer time "ceases to happen" (i.e. we leave our prayer closet), what we've gained spending time with Him will give us the wisdom we need while we're going about our day. For example, each morning I spend time with my daily prayer. When that time ends, I go about my day seeking to walk out what is in my prayer. What I have learned during my prayer time is how God makes me to know wisdom when faced with the situations I prayed about. **Takeaway:** God desires truth in our innermost thoughts, and it is He (through His Word) that makes us to know wisdom (what to do) when faced with a situation.

- **James 1:5-8:** These verses discuss not doubting God when we ask for wisdom. Since one of the definitions of "truth" in Psalm 51:6 is stability, we examined how when we're not walking in truth, we're unstable in ALL our ways. **Takeaway:** Truth brings stability; doubt creates instability!

Discussion Topic: Wearing our Belt of Truth:

- **Our Path to Ministry Newsletter.** I've attached the newsletter for everyone's convenience; however, we didn't get a chance to read it as a group, because I forgot. So, if you've not yet read it, please do, because when we resume our studies, we'll discuss how the newsletter highlights certain aspects of what we go through in the four soils (wayside, rocky, thorny, and good ground). This discussion will close the loop on the belt and prepare us for connecting the breastplate of righteousness. **Takeaway:** The Word of God sets us on a specific course outlined in the parable of the sower and the seed; revelations that can help us navigate that course are discussed in the newsletter. For example, a particular point of interest is understanding the ten reasons for the wilderness can make those times go faster and feel less painful.
- **Additional discussion on the belt of truth.** In seeking the truth in God's Word, we are trying to not allow the enemy to deceive us. We also discussed the difference in standing and fighting back. When standing, stand long enough to monitor our actions so we can stay in line with God's Word. We'll learn how to fight with our spiritual weapon once we get to the Sword of the Spirit. However, without divine revelation from the Lord when "fighting back," we can easily be led down the wrong path! **Takeaway:** The devil has been at this much longer than we have, so don't try to outsmart him; stand on God's Word and let His Holy Spirit give us divine strategies for dealing with the devil! In addition, we also talked about learning to give up our life to save it. In this process, we stop looking at our natural vision and start relying on our spiritual vision. **Takeaway:** If we want to truly live in Christ, we have to die to self so we can see as God's sees and not as the world has taught us to see.
- **Overall takeaway from our discussion on the belt of truth.** Someone asked what specific things would I want everyone to take away from our discussion on the belt of truth, and my answer is to know how to apply the belt, to fasten the belt, and to keep the belt on. These three topics are discussed in the attached

Teaching Notes; however, rely upon the Holy Spirit to teach you what He knows you need to learn for your next steps forward. **Takeaway:** We've covered a lot of information, so ask the Holy Spirit to teach us what He wants us to know so we can apply, fasten, and wear our belt of truth with confidence.

Upcoming Events:

- **Reminder about our next social.** The RGW ladies will be joining us as we congratulate one of our young sister's graduating and pray over our mother/daughter sisters for their upcoming move. This will be our normal potluck social, so for those who are able, please sign up to bring something. The sign up list has been distributed.
- **Following weeks.** Following our social will be a Night of Prayer (NOP) and then three weeks of Raising Godly Women (RGW).

Next Week's Assignments:

- **Memory Verse.** Continue memorizing **Psalm 51:6** in the version you read or can understand.
- **Review.** Since we have several weeks before our next study, please take some time to go back over what we've learned so far.
- **Read.** Please read the **Our Path to Ministry Newsletter**. Reviewing past notes and reading the newsletter will help us better understand the truth God wants us to know and revelations associated with the path that truth sets before us.

Closing:

- We closed our meeting in prayer with a time of need-specific prayer for the challenges that were lifted up, for the group overall, and as the Holy Spirit led.

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ATTACHMENT: TEACHING NOTES FOR MAY 22, 2013

Closing the Loop:

- **Revelations About the Renewing Our Mind Exercise:**
 - **Understand the why.** As I've been praying over myself and helping others with their prayers, I've come to understand, you first have to realize why what you are doing is not pleasing to God. As we have learned in the past, repentance precedes change, so we need to know what Scripture governs our behavior, because it is that Scripture the Lord will use to change our heart about the behavior!
 - **Constructing the prayer.** Our prayer should clearly indicate what we want to do differently, because as we pray each day, this new way of thinking will be embedded into our mind and heart to construct a new thought that will result in new behavior. I've actually had to modify my prayer, because it did not include being judgmental towards my husband!
 - **Understanding the belt's responsibility.** I received a great analogy from a friend this week: When we put on a belt, all we do is put it on. It's the belt's responsibility to hold the pants up. But what we do is hold up the pants instead of letting the belt do what it's supposed to do. In our case, our belt is part of the armor. We're trying to hold up the other pieces of the armor rather than having them attached to the belt of truth – loose quote from Yolanda Washington. Gives a whole new meaning to let God and let God!
 - **Understanding where people are.** Everyone may be able to complete her prayer on her own, so if you're having a hard time finishing and would like help, please let me know. On the flip side, not everyone is being called to complete this exercise, so if that's you, and you've not completed the exercise, please don't stress! God has different plans for you!

Memory Verse:

- **Psalm 51:6.** “Behold, thou desireth truth in the inward parts, And in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom” (KJV).
 - **Literal translation.** Behold You (incline to) (stability) in the (inmost thought): and in the (stop up—[cease to happen, toward the sky or a higher position], or repair, or keep secret) you shall make me to (know) (wisdom [the quality of having experience, knowledge, and good judgment]).

- **Possible interpretation.** God wants me to incline to being stable in my thoughts: and when my time with God ceases to happen, because of the repair that has happened in the secret place of my mind, He will have given me the wisdom I need based on the experience I have had with Him.

Discussion Topic: **Wearing our Belt of Truth**

- **Application of the belt of truth:**

- **Revelation and Reflections Newsletter: Our Path to Ministry.** While this newsletter addresses our path to ministry, it has a far wider application. Whenever God's Word goes forth, that Word puts on a certain path for spiritual growth (i.e. the parable of the sower and the seed). Once we receive the Word, everything we go is rooted and grounded in some spiritual principle so God can test our faith in Him! Regardless of what that path leads to, there are three specific tests we will encounter that will help us fasten on our belt of truth:
 - **We must wait on God's timing.** We cannot get ahead of what God is doing in our lives. Sometimes, it's easy to get discouraged when things aren't happening as fast as we think they should, but even Jesus had to wait 12 years before He was released into His calling. Similarly, there may be times when we have to wait for a breakthrough, because it's taking the Word time to "make us to know wisdom."
 - **We must be prepared.** In this season of preparation, we receive God's approval, deal with our past to understand who we are, and go through a wilderness season.
 - **We must know our purpose.** Absolutely every Christian has the ministry of reconciliation. It can occur in our homes, in the workplace, from the pulpit, or in any other way God chooses. Therefore, let being an expression of Christ become our main purpose no matter where we are or what we are doing!

- **Fastening on our belt:**

- **Stand.** Stand on the Word of God and His Word alone, for the word of the Lord is right and all His Work is done in truth (Psalm 334).
- **Girt about with Truth.** We girt about our loins by spending time in God's written Word (Ephesians 6:14).
- **Our part and God's part.** Our part is to study to show ourselves approved (2 Timothy 2:15 AMP). The Holy Spirit's part is to be our Teacher (John 14:26). And, in order for the Holy Spirit to bring to remembrance what He has told us, we must have connected with Jesus,

who is the written Word of God made flesh (John 1:1-5,14). Through our connection to Jesus we will receive the grace (power) to change and the truth (the new direction in which we are to go)!

- **The loin belt and the loincloth.** The more time we spend in the written Word, the studier our belt and the more creative power we give the Holy Spirit to make that Word come alive in our hearts. In other words, the more truth we have “in the hidden part,” the more the Holy Spirit has to work with so we can move from having a flap for a covering to having a full loin cloth!

- **Scripture references:**

- **Psalm 33:4.** “For the word of the LORD is right, And all His work is done in truth” (NKJV).
- **Ephesians 6;14.** “Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth” (KJV).
- **John 1:1-3,14.** “¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. ¹⁴And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as the of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth” (NKJV).
- **John 14:26.** “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you” (NKJV).
- **2 Timothy 2: 15.** “Study *and* be eager *and* do your utmost to present yourself to God approved (tested by trial), a workman who has no cause to be ashamed, correctly analyzing *and* accurately dividing [rightly handling and skillfully teaching] the Word of Truth” (AMP).

- **Keeping on our belt:**

- **Prayer.** The renewing our mind exercise teaches us prayer is one way to keep on the belt. We’ll learn more later when we discuss prayer, but our current exercise of praying God’s truth over us in 21-day increments helps to get the truth into our inward parts so God can make us to know His wisdom!

- **Stay connected to God's love:**
 - **Receive God's love.** Allow 1 John 4:7-9 and John 3:16 to settle once and for all the question of God's love for us. God proved His love at Calvary ... there is no more proof needed! Let that truth become a yes and an amen in our hearts!
 - **Stand in God's love.** After receiving God's love, determine in our heart that we will not allow ANYTHING to separate us from His love (Romans 8:31-39), so others will know we are born of God by the love we show them.

- **Scripture references:**
 - **1 John 4:7-9.** ⁷Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. ⁹In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him" (NKJV)
 - **John 3:16.** "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (NKJV).
 - **Romans 8:31-39.** ³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us? ³² He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? ³³ Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? *It is* God who justifies. ³⁴ Who *is* he who condemns? *It is* Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love (G26) of Christ? *Shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." ³⁷ Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved (G25) us. ³⁸ For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love (G26) of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (NKJV) (emphasis added).



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ATTACHMENT: OUR PATH TO MINISTRY

I wanted to take a moment to share insights from this past Wednesday with each of you. It was a phenomenal time where God really spoke to our hearts. As began I documenting this, God did some further teaching, so there are some corrections, clarifications, and additions to what we discussed last week. Buckle up, because this is not a short ride.

The insights began with us asking, "What made a difference in our lives to come out of the wilderness season we have been in?" There were three things that came up: confidence, the influence of others, and purpose. We realize that every thing we go through is rooted and grounded in some spiritual principle where the Word of God is testing our faith. So, the question became, "What have we studied thus far in Luke [Chapters 1-10] that helped us to achieve our confidence?" because that seemed to be the main factor that made a difference. So, we looked back, and what a wonderful journey it was. Here is the bullet version:

- At 12 we see Jesus in the temple (about His Father's business), but it wasn't His season yet (Luke 2:42-52)
- Years later, John the Baptist baptizes people into repentance, preparing the way for Jesus (3:1-18)
- John the Baptist then baptizes Jesus when He was around 30 years old (Luke 3:21)
- The Holy Spirit descends upon Jesus, and He receives approval from His Father (God) (Luke 3:22)
- Jesus' genealogy is given. (Answers the question, "Who am I?") (Luke 3:23-38)
- The Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness (Luke 4:1-13) where He
 - Undergoes three specific tests in relationship to the things of the world (1 John 1:16):
 - Satisfying his hunger for food (lust of the flesh)
 - Worshipping Satan to gain what He sees (lust of the eye)
 - Tempting God (pride of life)
 - Passes each test by standing on the Word of God (obedience)

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- He came out of the wilderness "in the power of the Spirit" (Luke 4:14)
- Did some teaching and received praise from man (man's influence without falling prey to man's praise) (Luke 4:15)
- Stated His purpose in the Temple (Luke 4:17-21) when He declared the Spirit of the Lord was upon Him to:
 - Preach good news to the poor
 - Proclaim freedom to the prisoners
 - Receive sight for the blind
 - Release the oppressed
 - Proclaim the year of the Lord's favor
- His ministry began in earnest

To be honest, I like the King James Version of verses 17-21 better. It just seems to paint a clearer picture for me. So, here are the same points from that version:

- To preach the Gospel to the poor
- To heal the brokenhearted
- To preach deliverance to the captives
- Recovering of sight to the blind
- Set at liberty them that are bruised (crushed)
- To preach the acceptable year of the Lord

As we discussed the outline of Jesus' life, we could see how our own lives have played out in similar fashion. **Before we can move forward in ministry there are three specific tests we go through.** This review helped us to clearly see them. **First, we must wait for God's timing and not ours.** Just as Jesus season was not when He was 12, but He knew His calling, our season is not always when we first know our calling. Like Jesus, we must also be patient and wait on God's time. **Second, there is always a season of preparation before we can begin ministry.** *In that season, we must do three things: receive God's approval, deal with our past to understand who we are, and go through the wilderness.*

One, how do we receive God's approval? Strictly going by our current model in scripture and without getting too theological, we

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- Repent to prepare the way for the Lord
- Enter into relationship with the Lord Jesus (Romans 10:9) which grants us access to the Father (John 14:6)
- Get baptized
- Receive the Holy Spirit

Two, how do we deal with our past? Everyone's experience is unique, so I can only share mine. It culminated recently when I went through a seminar called "Ancient Paths." It dealt with the blessings and curses that occurred in my life. The scriptures that really came alive for me were Luke 3:4-6:

4 "A voice of one calling in the desert,

Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.

5 Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low.

The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth.

6 And all mankind will see God's salvation."

By the time the seminar was over, every detail of my life made sense, and I understood exactly why, over the years, different things had happened. I reconciled my past to my present and my future. The things that happened to me had long since stopped being a tragedy, but now they fully opened my eyes to the schemes of the enemy and what he was trying to do. How each person reaches this point will be unique. This is just my example. I pray it will help those who read this understand theirs, because until we overcome our past, we cannot truly move forward in what God has for us to do, which leads us to our wilderness experience.

Three, what is the purpose for the wilderness? We learned that in a previous study (it is found in Deuteronomy 8:2-4), but for convenience sake, I will recap it here:

1. To humble us
2. To test us to know what is in our hearts
3. To know if we will keep His commands
4. To cause us to hunger
5. To reveal something new to us
6. To teach us to rely on the Word of God

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7. To provide for us
8. To discipline us.
9. To teach us to obey Him
10. To teach us to revere (fear) Him

Now, if we break these ten reasons down to their most basic components, we discover what we really need to learn is fear of the Lord and how to be obedient. The other eight reasons all seem to flow from those two. Think about that for a moment. If we fear the Lord and we are obedient, what in this list will we not do? And, and if we achieve all ten of these reasons, will we not also come out of the wilderness "in the power of the Spirit?" We must take note of two concepts here. First, we must understand what that power is for. It is not just for us, but to also help others. Second, we must understand we cannot survive the wilderness without God's Spirit. God's Spirit rested upon Jesus when He entered the wilderness (Luke 3:22), and it must also rest upon us. From a personal perspective, I know my life did not really begin to change until I was baptized in the Holy Spirit, with the biggest changes occurring when my focus was no longer self, but how to help others.

Understanding the ten reasons for the wilderness helps us to identify why we are there, determine where we are in the process, realize we influence the length of our stay, and narrow down the scope of our testing. Just as Jesus had to overcome specific tests, we must as well. There are only three key areas we can be tested in since the things of the world consist of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. So, if we ask ourselves in which of these areas is God testing us, we will be better equipped to search our hearts and find the answer. My personal experience has been I will wander around the desert (or as I like to say, go around the mountain) until I find the right answer that lines up with God's Word. I have also found there are often recurring themes that accompany my wilderness experiences. This time has been no different, which we discovered as we continued our discussion. We noticed two specific ones: purpose and preparedness. My main theme was preparedness. "Prepare ye the way of the Lord" has been echoing in my spirit for months, and I really sense God doing something different in my life. This, however, did not occur until I understood the last test we go through.

Third, we must know our purpose to move forward and be effective in ministry. Look at it this way. Absolutely every Christian has the ministry of reconciliation. It can occur at home, in the workplace, from the pulpit, or in any other way God so chooses. But, make no mistake, this ministry exists, and it is every Christian's starting point. Reconnecting with that helped me stop struggling with my purpose. Since then, my life has had more meaning. But, for me to fully walk in how God will fulfill this ministry in my life, there is something He has to do first. Let's examine that.

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Since every Christian is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16), a good analogy is that of building a house. In order to build this house, we must have proper preparation, proper tools, quality materials, a sound blueprint, and the proper steps to follow. How does proper preparation occur? Initially, we grade the land to ensure the foundation won't crumble. Once the land is properly graded, we lay a foundation deep enough to support the house we are going to build. So, how do we grade the land? True repentance. How do we lay our foundation? Relationship with the Lord Jesus! Now, how do we ensure our foundation is deep enough? Water baptism and being baptized in the Holy Spirit. One is an act of obedience, which is one of our purposes in the wilderness. The other empowers us to fulfill our purpose. This is so fascinating to me, because it all goes back to our initial season of preparation!! When either of these elements is missing from our preparation, our ministry flounders. Now, how do we finish building our house?

What tools do we use? Simple. What we learned to rely on in the wilderness - the Word of God. Our next question then becomes, "What materials do we use?" Well, there is one material we must have to hold the house together, and that's nails. So, what is our spiritual nail? Faith. Faith is to our spiritual house what nails are to a physical one. We cannot build a physical house without nails of some kind, nor can we build a spiritual house without faith. So, I have attached something God shared with me years ago describing "The House that Faith Built." It was part of a series of writings, so there are references to things said not contained therein; however, it will still make sense. Now, that we have nails (faith), the question becomes, "What other materials do we use?" We discovered that as we continued along in our discussion.

We have now graded the land (repented), and poured the foundation (accepted Jesus as Lord). We've ensured our foundation was deep enough by getting water baptized and being baptized in the Holy Spirit, so we know our house will stand. But, we do not have walls. If we are going to build a physical house, we use lumber. So, what is our spiritual lumber? The bible tells us each Christian has spiritual gifts to benefit the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12). These gifts are the lumber God uses to build our ministry. You don't start building a physical house until you know what kind of lumber you're going to use and how much you will need. So, you really can't start building an effective ministry until you know what gifts you have and how they will interact with each other to fulfill your particular ministry. You also cannot start building a physical house until you have a blueprint!

I surmise there is one gift that speaks to us more than the others. It's the one you discover when you ask, "How do I see myself helping other people?" It is a deep desire, a hope within us, for something we've always wanted to do. This gift, born from desire, is where we get our blueprint. Our blueprint tells us what specific ministry God has for us; it gives us vision; and it provides the hope of our calling. We now know what our house (ministry) will look like! One thing that is becoming abundantly clear to me is how important hope is to vision and vision is to hope. It's like they are inseparable, one feeding the other and both working to move us into our calling. What is also abundantly clear is without hope and a vision, we lack a blueprint, which is a critical component to

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our building process. Without a blueprint, we can't make sure we obtain the right amount of materials, nor do we have a plan to follow, which takes us to the proper steps.

God tells us to "let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Corinthians 14:40). For example, in a physical house, we don't put the sheetrock in until everything that goes behind it is in place. Otherwise, we end up cutting out holes, pulling out whole panels, or tearing down entire walls to fix the mistake! It's the same with our spiritual house. If we try to build our ministry without following the proper steps, I guarantee you it will fail! I have walked that road, and it was not fun. Even now, I am careful as I continue my building process to ensure I am following God's plan and His timing, and I do find myself with more confidence. I can see the same process that occurred in Jesus' life occurring in mine. I now realize the things I must do to ensure I have everything I need and the right steps to follow. I have confidence, because for the first time in my life, I really believe I can achieve my goal to become who God created me to be!

I believe He has spent these last seven years framing my house with its four walls, which is what happens after we lay our foundation. I surmise each of these walls represents one of our spiritual gifts, which would explain why God has been developing different gifts within me. I didn't understand it before, because none of them really seemed to be what I was meant to do. These gifts were the frame for my house. That deep desire within me is much like the support walls to a physical house. Once the frame is in place, the support walls (our "dominant" spiritual gift) can go into place, and God can begin creating individual rooms - areas of ministry He has called us to. Last, but definitely not least, to keep the elements out and protect what is inside our house, we must have a roof. Our spiritual roof is the anointing of God! When we are covered by His Spirit and flow in His anointing, our ministry will flourish. And, one thing we learned in Luke 7:9, understanding authority helps us have great faith. I would hazard to guess, great faith helps us stay connected to God's anointing!

We have now built our house - our ministry - for the Lord to live in as He works through us. But, if we go through this process missing anything (proper preparation, proper tools, quality materials, a sound blueprint, and the proper steps to follow), our house (ministry) becomes likened to wood, hay, or stubble (1 Corinthians 3:18), and falls apart. If we lack nothing in our process, our house (ministry) is likened to gold, silver, and precious stones. It will last, not only throughout our lifetime, but into eternity! Would we build the house we live in without the proper preparation, proper tools, quality materials, a sound blueprint, and the proper steps to follow? NO! Then, why build the house God lives in without them?

Father, we thank You for all You have spoken through Your Word. We ask that You would bring all the pieces of the puzzle together that each of us will see the picture You are painting. Father, we pray for ears to hear, eyes to see, hearts to receive, and patience to bring forth a harvest on the Word of God You are planting. We give You all the glory, all the honor, and all the praise. In Jesus' name. Amen!

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