



**APOSTOLIC ASSEMBLY
OF THE FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS**

HOMES *Saving* **LIVES**



52 LESSONS FOR FRIENDSHIP GROUPS 2021

HOMES SAVING LIVES

52 lessons for Friendship Groups

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Asamblea Apostólica
de la Fe en Cristo Jesús

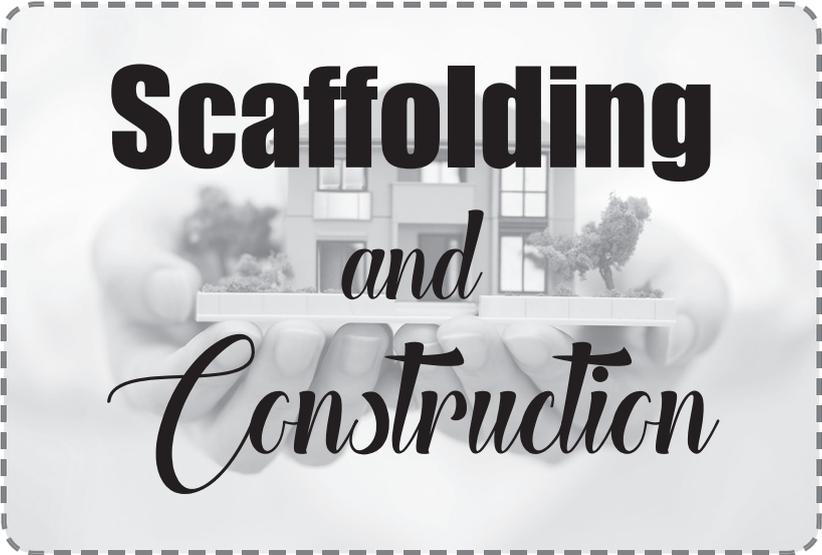
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LESSON I



Scaffolding and Construction

How can we be useful in building other lives?

I Peter 2:4–5

“Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” NKJV

INTRODUCTION

Next to the house where I live a building is emerging. For almost a year, a team of brave workers has worked day by day, until dusk. The building rises little by little, inch by inch, meter by meter.

I had never noticed, up close, the complex and slow ritual of a large building under construction from its initial base.

SCAFFOLDING

Lately I have noticed a detail: the scaffolding of the building that is being erected. Scaffolding goes up as the building goes up. Modern scaffolding, with all safety conditions in mind.

Piling bricks, installing windows and building walls 20, 40 or 60 meters high has its risks, its dizziness, its constant dangers. Those workers on great heights are brave!

The building that I have seen rise from its foundations is almost finished — fifteen floors — and the scaffolding is gradually disappearing. They were useful, but they are no longer needed; they accomplished their task. The external part of the building has already been completed.

In the internal finishing, where the workers work now, scaffolding is not needed.

CONSTRUCTION

Closely accompanying the birth of that great fifteen-story building, the spiritual relationship sprang up spontaneously... God is the true architect of the universe, the great engineer of the world and of the life in it. And God invites us to collaborate in the construction of His kingdom on this earth.

By His mercy, I can see thousands of brothers seriously engaged in the task that God has assigned us; serious people, committed to this work from head to toe.

THE IMPORTANT THING

I think of myself. I feel like a scaffold... an assisting scaffold, a service scaffold.

The building of life, of the Church, of the Kingdom... it is God who basically builds it. As the Principal Architect, as the Chief Engineer. We, men, enter like scaffolding ...

Scaffolding is not essential, but it helps, complements. For this reason, the scaffold is humble, it provides the service, fulfills the task and then it removes itself or it is removed ...

Psalms 115:1: *“Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, But to Your name give glory, Because of Your mercy, Because of Your truth.”*

CONCLUSION

Let us pray like this: Lord, sometimes I want to do it all without you. Other times I think that you do everything alone and you don't need me. Let me learn, Lord, the lesson of the building under construction.

My role here is to be a scaffold, humble, but also necessary for the construction of life, of Your Kingdom, of the Salvation of others. It is so enjoyable to be a scaffold, a simple scaffold and nothing more!

Thank you so much, Lord, for allowing me this role.

LESSON 2



Fragile & Masks

¿Cómo podemos ser creyentes genuinos y auténticos en estos días de tanta falsedad e insinceridad?

2 Corinthians 4:2: *“But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.”*

INTRODUCTION

Juca Chávez, a renowned Brazilian singer and actor, underwent a surgical operation in mid-1974. Already on the operating table, addressing the doctors and nurses around him, he told them, smiling: If you were going to do a good thing, you would not need to wear those masks!

THE GOOD DOES NOT USE MASKS

The good does not need to wear masks. Goodness can walk bare-faced; It has nothing to hide. At the other extreme, the evil that is ashamed of itself resorts to the usual expedient: hiding behind a mask. It simulates goodness to save face.

Wasn't that the way Adam and Eve proceeded after being deceived by the serpent? They took hold of some fig leaves and hid behind some trees. But God found them. The mask is always a fragile thing.

THE FRAGILITY OF THE PRETEXT

There is no perfect crime or flawless simulation. Cain, dying of envy and jealousy for his brother Abel, planned to end his life. Using a "mask", he invited his brother for a walk in the countryside, pretending to be innocent of any devious intent. Then, taking off his mask, he perpetrated the cruel homicide.

Again, God entered the scene, subjecting the first murderer in the annals of history to an investigation. Cain, afraid, his conscience stained by the blood of his brother, wanted to hide behind the mask of the pretext: "Am I my brother's watchman?" But there are no excuses that are valid before the one who knows it all.

THE LOOK OF GOD

I've been thinking about the masks that we use sometimes, in some cases. I have reflected on the childish fragility of our masks and on the divine arm of Justice, much longer than is believed.

Although on many occasions human justice fails, although the human gaze does not discover what the mask hides, there is always someone who sees beyond; One whose gaze penetrates the most intimately in people. It's that 'someone' who searches the mind and tests the hearts, as the Holy Scriptures mention:

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; Who can know it? I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.”

Jeremiah 17:9-10

GOD'S FORGIVENESS

Evil always comes from within. The exterior is its extension. And even the best-fitting mask always leaves slits through which the light of God's gaze penetrates. Although it is night, although we are alone; the Lord sees everything.

Is there anyone on the face of the Earth who has never used a mask, adult or minor, with much or some malice? Without a doubt, no.

But we have one consolation. For our inconsistencies, childishness, selfishness and sins, there is divine mercy and forgiveness. Woe to us if it were not so!

CONCLUSION

May God help us to be transparent people; that we can honestly acknowledge our mistakes and confess them to obtain

mercy. May we be people of integrity even in these times of masks that are generally untruthful. And yes, we can!

“But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.” **2 Cor. 4:2** NKJV.

LESSON 3



Is Prayer a Waste of Time?

Do we give the right value to prayer? What do you think?

Psalms 18:6: *“In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried out to my God; He heard my voice from His temple, and my cry came before Him, even to His ears.”*

INTRODUCTION

In the anti-religious museum in Bucara, Russia, there are a series of photographs of believers prostrate in prayer. They are, for the most part, followers of the Islamic religion. Under the museum photos, you can read inscriptions like these:

“All the hours spent in useless prayers are hours wasted for productive work.” “Remember that prayer is the worst

of drugs!” “The search for a higher being is reserved for weak minds.” And the defenders of communist pragmatism sign the inscriptions.

LOSS OR GAIN?

Enthusiasts in the pagan world clap their hands at concepts such as the antireligious museum. Activists who do not understand faith, who do not know the spiritual dimension of the human being and of life, enthusiastically subscribe to such ideas.

For the supporters of Marx, Engels and Lenin, religion is the opium of the people. And me, how do I consider and how do I place prayer in my life? Loss or gain? Poverty or wealth? Wasted time or precious time?

PRAYER IS A BLESSING

In reality praying is a blessing, a protection, a benefit for our spiritual, family and material life.

The word of God tells us: “*Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints...*” **Ephesians 6:18.** NKJV

Scripture also tells us: “*Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*” **Matthew 26:41.** NKJV

And he teaches us that: “*For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.*” **1 Peter 3:12** NKJV.

The Lord left us prayer as the fundamental means to be in constant communication with Him. It is not a waste of time; on the contrary, it is a profitable time by which to have a blessed life and to be able to live an eternity with Jesus.

ITS BENEFITS

I would spend hours and hours writing about the many benefits of prayer. Here are just a few:

There is no time limit or agenda required to pray to God. He is always available. We can pray at all times: “*Pray without ceasing.*” **1 Thessalonians 5:17** NKJV

In prayer we find hope: “*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.*” **Philippians 4:6.**

Praying guarantees us the best company: “*The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth.*” **Psalms 145:18** NKJV

CONCLUSION

Let’s quote one more promise from Jesus: “*Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.*” **Matthew 18:19-20** NKJV

So, let’s pray to the Lord right now, and ask Him to fill us with faith and confidence, with assurance and perseverance, and with a burning desire to seek His face every day, in prayer. Amen.

LESSON 4

People rush more and more each time, but seem to obtain each time less and less; on the way to nowhere. Why does this happen?

Daniel 12:4b: *“Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.”*

INTRODUCTION

A world of high and dizzying speeds is ours. The International Formula 1 pilots clock in at more than 300 kilometers per hour in their major competitions. Every man for himself!

Also impressive is the statement of a group of psychologists who discovered that most of these driving champions feed a secret suicidal instinct.

Very significant and eloquent is this medical report on the protagonists of Formula 1; undoubtedly, one of the most dangerous sports in the world. But it's not the only one...

AT FULL SPEED

We literally live in a century of speeds. High speeds on the streets, at work, in relationships. Everyone is in a hurry! Even in our prayers to God, we are getting faster and reckless.

Millions of faithful in the world complain bitterly because worship or service takes too long; because too much is sung; because the preacher or conference speaker is longwinded in his presentation.

We have so many things to do! We look at the clock all the time. And just as food is heated in the microwave oven; as well as with the speed of an e-mail or a search in Google; we also want to carry the important things in our life — at full speed.

We have little time for family, for loved ones, for friends, for God... and all because we are racing through life. The banal or mundane work and occupations are “more important.”

WHERE ARE WE GOING

Let's give generous applause to that Christian minister from Los Angeles, California, who advises drivers in his congregation to sing Christian hymns as they race down the freeway.

These are some of his recommendations:

Those who walk at a speed of 100 km per hour, should sing: “The world is not my home, I’m just a passing through.”

Those who reach 120 km per hour, would do well with that hymn that says: “Close to you I want to live.”

And those who like to run at 140 km should chant: “In the clouds I will see His face when I finish my walk.”

Is it a lunacy what this Pastor recommends? It doesn’t look like it, according to how we run today. And what does God recommend for us?

THE COUNSEL OF GOD

Our car is just an extension or representation of ourselves, of our feet and hands, of our way of thinking.

The car is just a means that can transport us well ... or lead us to an abrupt end; depending on how we drive it. With our life it is the same. For that reason...

“Thus says the Lord: Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; then you will find rest for your souls...”

Jeremiah 6:16.

CONCLUSION

Beloved brother, how do you conduct your life? Where are you taking it? Where do you want to go? Are you certain that you will get what you desire?

Let us pray now and say to the Lord the words of David:
“*My times are in Your hand.*” **Psalms 31:15a.**

Lord Jesus, my days, my time, my projects and my future are in your hands. Help me today so that I can make a stop along the way; so that in my life I can fulfill Your will and not mine.

Allow me from this point forward to value more the things that I really need. Remove from me all foolishness, vain efforts, anxiety, and that continuous urge to run from one place to another.

I ask that you give me patience and calm, oh God, and guide me along the peaceful path that leads to eternal life. You are the Lord of my time. I place it in your hands now! Amen.

LESSON 5

Prayer is the key that opens the door in the morning and closes it at night. What do you think about that?

Psalms 42:5-8

“Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him For the help of His countenance. O my God, my soul is cast down within me; Therefore I will remember You from the land of the Jordan, and from the heights of Hermon, from the Hill Mizar. Deep calls unto deep at the noise of Your waterfalls; all Your waves and billows have gone over me. The Lord will command His lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night His song shall be with me—a prayer to the God of my life.”

INTRODUCTION

In the past, I thought that praying was the great internal and external sign of my love for God. The years passed, and I discovered that prayer is, above all, a deep awareness of God's love for me.

Over time, my faith in God has increased and the desire to pray has become irresistible. Praying, dialoguing with God, humbling myself in his presence, I express my love to him.

PRAYER AND LOVE

Prayer is then that moment when I love God, and pay him homage, glory, gratitude, and praise. As I pray, I practice an exercise of love for God.

There is another angle, moreover, that I cannot and should not forget: Prayer is the moment in which I become aware that God exists and loves me: *"We love Him because He first loved us."*

I John 4:19. NKJV

The love of humanity for God will always be incomplete, imperfect, limited, partial. While God's love for us is infinite, unlimited, free and eternal. God does not need of us, but we how very much are, in need of Him!

PRAYER AND STRENGTH

Prayer simply springs from our need and dependence on God. Without prayer there can be no awareness of one's own weakness.

Prayer is the key that opens the door in the morning and closes it at night. And only from God, through prayer, do we derive our strength.

To live among men, we need this effective and tremendous force of prayer. The human body can live temporarily without food but ends up dying without it.

So it is with the soul; without prayer, one dies. There is no such thing as a fast from prayer - although many insist on practicing it.

CONCLUSION

Prayer puts in my life the comforting certainty that there is someone who loves me selflessly. Someone who loves me even though I am not worthy of that love. Someone who loves me although I am the most prodigal of the prodigal children of this world.

Lord, guide us, lead us, draw us back to You; towards the power of Your love. We now seek Your face, because we need You, O God, more than our food, more than water, more than air, more than everything and more than ever.

We plead that you renew our strength now, to be able to seek you more; in the name of Jesus. Amen.

LESSON 6

Humility, a seal of Wisdom

Things don't make sense if we don't make sense of things. What do you think about that?

Psalms 139:14 NKJV: *“I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well.”*

INTRODUCTION

It was a spectacular test in my teaching ministry. Prevented from giving a leadership class due to an unforeseen trip, I spoke with one of my collaborators:

“Hey brother, do you want to teach the class in my place tonight?”

“I have no problem,” he replied. “I’ll give a culture show to those guys who know nothing.”

Uncomfortable, I made the same request to a brother with great experience in the subject, and he said:

“Look; Well, at the last minute, I can’t agree to it. If you had warned me a few days before, fine. I’m not one of those who improvise things ...”

What contrasts! The first, judging himself to be very prepared, enthusiastic, willing to make an “exhibition” before the students.

The specialist, the old sailor of the deep sea of teaching, asked for several days to prepare.

THE MARK OF A SAGE

The mark of the wise is humility. Also, that of the saint.

The true sage knows how much he does not know, even though he is very cultured, and erudite.

The pedant or book worm exudes pride because he ignores how much he does not know. He read two books superficially, maybe viewed a documentary on the subject on film or television ... and self classifies himself a doctor. The world revolves around him!

The pretension is weakly undergirded. He lays the foundation on the roof and vice versa, per se. Builds without using the plumb line and finds everything perfect, out of the ordinary, great, because it is his finished work.

Humility is calm, prudent, silent, a twin sister of balance and good sense.

The souls with depth are humbly silent, because the mystery envelops us everywhere. There are unfathomable recesses that no one understands. Enigmas that are not deciphered. The small things of this life and of the life to come that escape all understanding.

THE SENSE OF THE INTIMATE

In the intimate or singular details of certain things, there is something of our own intimate being. The most valuable pearl is hidden in the depths of the sea; ignored, subtle, simple, marginalized by the ways of man. A rarity of great value.

In the depths of each one of us ... such singularity. In the intimate, so many intangible things. Covertly, how much we protect some things! They are of no value to others, but they represent a great treasure to you or me. They are pearls in a locket.

They may not be particular or special, but they are intimate; they are ours, and not only ours, that you can believe. They would look insignificant if they stood on the common pathway all take, if they showed themselves to strangers. But for each of us, these things make perfect sense.

A VALUABLE SEAL

The simplicity, the plainness, the gift of analyzing and meditating, respect for others, silence in the face of dissenting thought. May we not lose these things, brothers!

That the strange world of machines and touch screens not kill the spirit. That the revered science, technological ad-

vancement and “progress” not cancel out the value that is in each one:

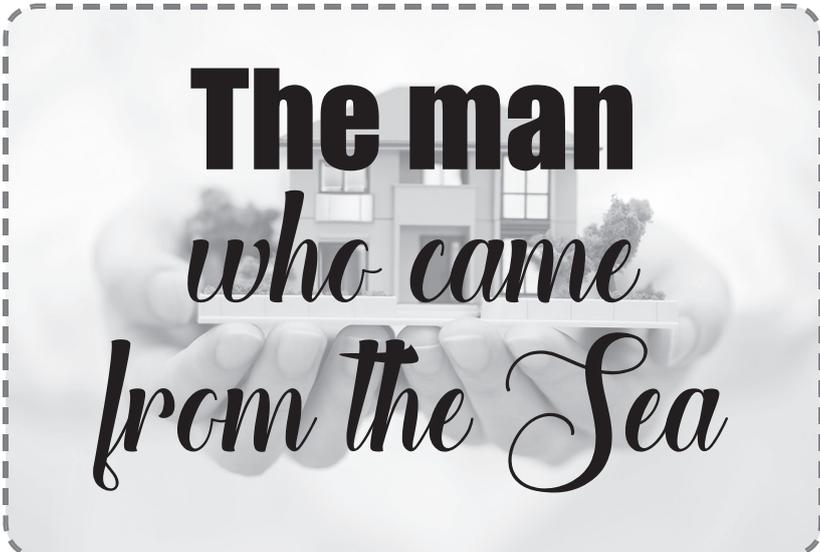
“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.” **2 Corinthians 4:7**. This makes it crystal clear that our great power comes from God, not from ourselves. Amen.

CONCLUSION

Dear God, may we never lose our simplicity. Lord, may I be humble, silent, holy and wise, without ever losing my child like heart and the ability to value the smallest details of life.

Because in your kingdom, oh God, the greatest man is the one on his knees. In your kingdom, Lord, and on the catwalks of humanity, the great man is the wise and holy one who has a child’s soul.

Help us to be humble every day. Amen.

LESSON 7

The man who came from the Sea

Where does the secret of the believer's strength reside?

Ephesians 3:20-21 NKJV: “Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”

INTRODUCTION

Dad would tell us an ancient story. One day, many years ago, a famous singer came to town, one of the best voices in the world - according to many accounts. Those were the times of opera, before television, movies and the Internet swept away everything or practically everything.

THE SECRET OF A VOICE

Everyone ran, literally filling the city theater. That one show was big business, the biggest show up to that day.

The people were left electrified by that voice that shook the mayor's office on one side and the chief magistrates on the other side; applauding the singer and standing for more than 15 minutes, asking for an encore.

After having sung another two or three songs from his international repertoire, the mayor of the city had the courage:

“If I may ... who gave you that extraordinary and remarkable voice?”

“The sea, where I come from!” Was the answer. No one understood at first. The singer explained:

“It was by the sea where I spent years and years doing exercises, tuning my vocal cords. Other times I walked silently on the sand, traveling for miles and miles, in the morning and in the afternoon. Hearing the murmur of the ocean helped me a lot.

Watching the ebb and flow of tireless waves, I learned to be persistent. Trying to superimpose my voice over the noise of the waves, I strengthened the resistance of my lungs.

From that dialogue with the sea, from that daily coexistence with the nature of God, my love for music, my vocation as a singer, my resistant and resonating voice was born. That is my secret.”

Up until now the fascinating story that Dad told us, the waves of years gone by have not erased from my memory.

OUR SECRET

Today we are very grateful to the Lord that he has allowed us to launch ourselves early on into this infinite ocean of our life with Him, of our walk in His presence.

That singer had a secret, a special magnetism, an excellent communication prowess to convey his messages — according to Dad.

And me? What will give my tasks as a Christian the strength of conquest, the power of radiance and the all-important touch of perseverance? If you will allow me, here are some thoughts:

Willpower, lucidity of objectives, optimism; and above all, intimate contact with God; a limitless ocean of grace, mercy, goodness and above all, love.

The “inner man’s” life — the life of the spirit — is the soul of every ministry, of every mission; and prayer, the food of each day. The secret of our strength is in the strength that we obtain in secret.

CONCLUSION

A committed and deep prayer life confers on us the certainty that it is worth putting ourselves at the service of the Lord, at the service of the Church and at the service of souls.

Let us each do this, for the Kingdom. Let’s do it most of all for God’s approval on our life and for God’s blessing on those around us. Lord, give us more of Your strength and power!

LESSON 8



The Blessing of the Fruit

The chorus of a well-remembered apostolic hymn says: “But do not permit it, but do not allow me, that I arrive in Heaven empty-handed.” What do those words mean to you?

Jeremiah 17:7-8: *“Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, and whose hope is the Lord. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river, and will not fear when heat comes; But its leaf will be green, and will not be anxious in the year of drought, nor will cease from yielding fruit.”*

INTRODUCTION

There is a paragraph by the poet Kalil Gibran in which a blank page speaks like this:

“Pure I was created and pure I will remain forever. I prefer to be burned and turned into white ashes than to endure that blackness touches me or that dirt comes next to me.”

The inkwell heard what the sheet of paper said and laughed in the shadowy recesses of his heart; but did not dare to approach her.

The colored pencils heard her too and never came close.

The sheet of paper, white as snow, remained pure and chaste forever. Pure, chaste ... and empty!

EGOTISTICAL STERILITY

That text by Gibran came to mind when I was meditating on the episode of the barren fig tree, narrated by Christ:

A man owned a fig tree planted in his vineyard. A barren fig tree for three long years. He thought about cutting it, given its uselessness. The vintner or caretaker asked for a little more time, promising to give it special treatment:

“But he answered and said to him, ‘Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it. And if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down’” (Luke 13:6-9).

The barren fig tree has its eloquence. God, who is our Father, fills us with benefits, gives us His grace; He gives us opportunities to grow in virtue and do good, storing up treasures in Heaven.

But we, egoists, complacent, how many times do we despise divine goodness by wasting His favors, wasting our tal-

ents; sailing in the waters of sterility, of dissipation, of emptiness, of nothingness.

With a fear of risking it, we stop doing good. Fearing criticism or personal failure, we absent ourselves from building the kingdom of Christ.

CONCLUSION

But You, Lord, since from all eternity, have a plan with me. You gave me birth to grow, to serve, to fulfill Your will.

The birds sing, the waters run; the stars rotate in space being useful, fulfilling their destiny, the mission you gave them.

May I not omit mine, Lord; may I not disappoint by folding my arms, fleeing from commitments, betraying the imperatives of my baptism in Your precious name.

How sad it would be, Lord, to arrive at the shore of eternity empty-handed! Having had all this life spent in my hands, only to repeat the story of the sterile fig tree and the pure, chaste sheet of paper ... and terribly empty!

My God, don't tire of me. Give me another opportunity today, to be able to give you the fruits of my conversion. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

LESSON 9

Life and its Opportunities

We serve a God of opportunity.
What do you think?

Nehemiah 2:2-5

Therefore the king said to me, "Why is your face sad, since you are not sick? This is nothing but sorrow of heart." So I became dreadfully afraid, and said to the king, "May the king live forever! Why should my face not be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' tombs, lies waste, and its gates are burned with fire?" Then the king said to me, "What do you request?" So I prayed to the God of heaven. And I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, I ask that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' tombs, that I may rebuild it."

INTRODUCTION

To unite the threads of life is to link its adversities. Loving others is synthesizing differences. Living well is recognizing, appreciating and taking advantage of the opportunities that God offers.

RECOGNIZE OPPORTUNITIES

Richard, 18 years old. Like all young people, he dreamed of a bright, delightful future: moving forward, occupying a prominent post, succeeding in life, being someone.

His father, a prosperous industrialist, poor at the beginning of his career, rich and esteemed years later. Richard asked him one day:

“Dad, what is the secret?”

“There is no secret, my son. It is not simple or easy. The important thing is to be alert to the small things, to jump without fear when opportunities arise.”

“How can I recognize the favorable opportunity?”

“They cannot be identified, my son. The fact is that you always have to jump in, trusting, believing. The strong and brave are those who dare in life, and not those who do not feel fear!

“Does the horoscope help, Dad?”

“Nonsense, my son. The horoscope is foolishness, a refuge for the superstitious, ignorant and weak. Never put your feet on that fragile and deceitful ground!”

Today Richard is doing very well. Married, with four children, a competent professional, a healthy, calm, gentle man, a friend of all. He is reaping what he sowed. He is humble, and not vain. Because he lucidly assimilated his father's advice.

VALUE THE OPPORTUNITIES

The long mantle of life is woven with the thread of opportunity. Is it life that plays the tailor or are we the ones who sew, good or bad, the opportunities of each day?

Dislarei, a psychologist and writer, put it this way: "The secret of success is to be prepared so as not to waste the opportunity when it presents itself."

I have carefully opened the package of life, and in there I have found tons of opportunities, thousands of occasions of all sizes, styles and classes.

Life is a Trojan Horse in whose belly armies of occasions and opportunities smile. We should never complain about this one thing: a lack of opportunities to advance, fight, build, fulfill and progress.

If I ruled the world, I would put in schools and universities, as a compulsory subject: The art of valuing life's opportunities.

SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITIES

There are people who do precisely the opposite, underestimating opportunities, wasting them, mistreating them without responsibility or remorse.

It's a shame. Opportunities knock on our door and we hit them in the face, or we pretend not to be home. Our heart is far away, attentive to other interests, anchored in other ports.

With total sincerity! I pity the sleepers, the lazy, the defeatists, the installed, the insecure, the “blind,” those who spend their nights and days with their windows closed.

Opportunities hover nearby asking to be welcomed, offering joy, peace, hope, clearer horizons, better guarantees, new jobs, compensatory tasks, nobler goals, entrance tickets to eternity ...

But legions of the unwary and complacent pay them not the slightest bit of attention. I have taken, from a recent survey among university students in the United States, these three responses:

“An ideal in my life?” That’s all I need. It would be very uncomfortable!

My reason to live? Squeeze the lemon of life to the core and then throw the lemon rind away. Life is a bitter fruit to the heart!

If I am happy? I’m nothing. I live letting myself be carried away, dragged away by the waves of my instinct and the whims of the moment!

CONCLUSION

Nehemiah was afraid of the king — of course — but nevertheless he took advantage of the opportunity he received, and thus accomplished the all-important mission of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem.

My friend, you have in your hand the gift package of life. Open it as soon as possible, as it is full of opportunities, big and small, sacred and trivial. Don't let them pass.

Joys and satisfaction in life abound around you right now. Don't make the mistake of throwing away so many opportunities that God offers you today; of being, doing and having everything that He prepared beforehand for you. Let us pray for all of this.

LESSON 10A grayscale image of a hand holding a house, symbolizing opportunity. The house is a two-story structure with a gabled roof and a central door. The hand is cupped around the house, with fingers visible. The entire scene is enclosed in a dashed rectangular border.

A unique Opportunity

Seizing opportunities can be considered a duty?
What do you think?

2 Corinthians 6:2

“Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”

INTRODUCTION

There is a well-known Arab proverb that recalls four things that do not come back: the spoken word, the shot arrow, the life changing lesson in life that was had and the wasted opportunity.

MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

If we had to pile the opportunities we lost in life inside the house, there would really be a lack of space in our home.

For those who are vigilant and responsible, those who take things seriously, perhaps a small room will suffice.

The sloppy, the idle, the lazy who say “let it go” would need to get huge buildings, because their specialty, with diploma and all, is wasting opportunities!

When I miss a precious opportunity, in any field, activity or situation, it is not only I who is harmed.

Everything is so social interactive, so broad, so collective and global in life, in society, in the world, in the Church ... The slightest gesture or word, any attitude, behavior or omission, reminds us of the stone that we throw into the lake.

The stone touches the water, sinks to the bottom; but it leaves its mark on the surface, where it forms the classic concentric circles that children (and some adults) like to see.

When I do good, many people benefit. When I do wrong or cross my arms in omission or negligence, everything around me suffers, is harmed or resented in some way.

No one is irreplaceable, but we are all useful, necessary. God will one day ask us to account for the right or wrong decisions of our existence, well or badly lived; of what we did or left undone; of the seeds that we sowed or neglected to sow; of the opportunities that we could seize or squandered.

NECESSARY QUESTIONS

Here are some questions that seem relevant to me and that we should all answer from time to time:

Am I detached from life, from the world, from the environment where I work, study and live?

- Do I have problems that, although seemingly insignificant today, tomorrow can have unpredictable consequences?
- Am I aware of it at home, at school, in my profession, in church, in my colleague cohort, in my societal surroundings?
- Do I deal with these problems or do I put them aside so as not to “overheat my thinking cap”, and not bother myself?
- Do I have talents, qualities, virtues, aptitudes, tendencies, intelligence, fortitude and heart?
- Do I efficiently and with a collaborative spirit appreciate that rich valise that God gave me freely?
- Do I become aware of big problems around me that challenge me, or do I dismiss them on the simplistic basis of “they don’t interest me, they don’t concern me, they aren’t my business but someone else’s”?
- Do I respond to the tireless searches of others by showing them that the church in particular and so-

ciety in general need people with ideals, talents, and motivation? Or do I waste the opportunity to communicate my vision of things?

- Do I seriously and solidly prepare for the challenges of the future by studying, reflecting, praying, building the edifice of my personality, storing up a cache of data to become an optimal professional, a worthy and honest citizen? Or do I settle for an easy life, letting the ship run unmanned in the hope that miracles will happen when the emergency strikes?

ATHLETES OF GOD

Life is full of opportunities. It is up to me to take advantage of them with rationale and wisdom.

There are always alert individuals who, from each existential opportunity, build another step on the scale of personal growth and that of their brothers. Others hide in the trenches of apathy, rest and indifference.

The choice is always ours.

God is faithful and generous. He wants us to be happy, healthy, fulfilled in the human dimension and in the eternal one; but it is up to us to take the initiative, discovering the pathways, the secrets and the modality of our contribution, unique and necessary in the building up of the Kingdom.

Millions of individuals could take the first step in discovering their latent abilities as bosses, leaders, mentors, counselors, and servants of others, if they took full advantage of the endless opportunities that are offered to them daily.

I like this comparison: The soccer coach instructs, advises and directs the players. He teaches tactical plays, passes and combinations; perfecting the qualities, correcting the defects. But the one who plays and acts, the one who wins the victory, is the player!

God, who gives us the great opportunity to interface in this world, is our coach. He's the tactician, the supervisor. We, the athletes in the field of life. A win, draw, or loss in the game is ultimately up to us. Don't you think so?

CONCLUSION

Lord, help us to take advantage of this unique opportunity that is the life that you lent us for a few years. Give us faith, Lord, and character to be able to hold firmly the profession of our hope in the inheritance that You have guaranteed us in Heaven.

Give us the strength to seize every good opportunity!

Amen.