



**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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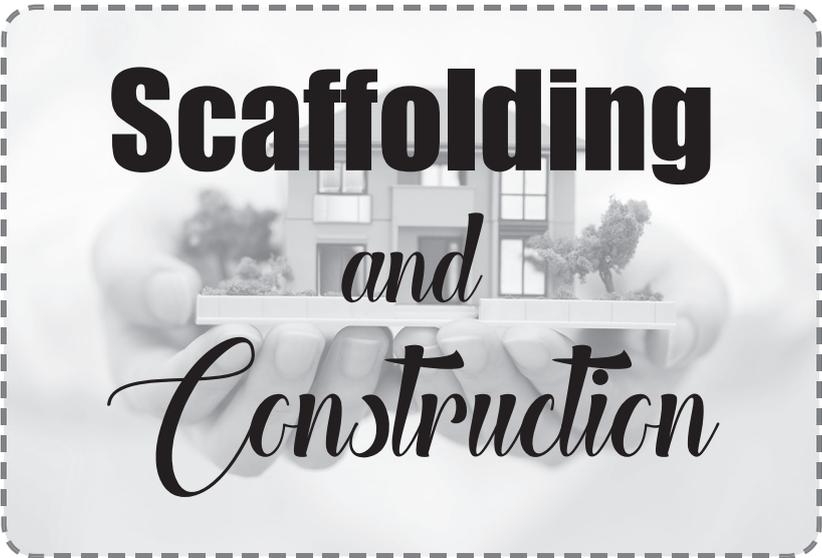


Asamblea Apostólica
de la Fe en Cristo Jesús

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LESSON 1



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

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.