

**PASTOR DALE'S LEADERSHIP BLOG**  
**HOW TO STRENGTHEN AND GROW YOUR MINISTRY FOUNDATION**

*"By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care." (1 Corinthians 3:10 NIV)*

It was a landmark, a part of the landscape of this small midwestern city. A huge Oak Tree was in the middle of the town square. One evening during a thunderstorm, it suddenly came crashing down. People were shocked since the storm wasn't that severe. Why did it suddenly fall? It turned out, that unbeknownst to the citizens of the community, the tree's inner core had been eaten away by termites. It was a gradual process on the inside but the outer results came suddenly and brutally.

All of us, on a spiritual level, have seen something like this. It seems out of nowhere a great minister or ministry suddenly falls apart. I want to propose that it is likely the fall didn't suddenly happen, but had been happening for a long time and finally became exposed.

The Bible has a lot to say about the importance of our inside world, our foundation and core. Paul was effective in reaching the world because he helped churches build on the right foundation. He urged the church to take good care of that foundation and to continue to strengthen and build on it wisely. I would like to encourage all of us today, whether it is family, ministry, or any other kind of organization that we have been entrusted, to make it a top priority to watch, strengthen, and build your foundation. Be someone who is constantly taking the vital signs to be sure things are healthy underneath the surface.

Rick Warren said, "We are responsible for the depth of our ministry and God is responsible for the breadth of our ministry." In other words, if we are committed to staying faithful and healthy in our inner world, God will take care of helping us be successful in our outer world.

A huge part of taking care of our foundation is staying committed to doing those things that helped us become strong and effective in our relationship with God and the fulfillment of our calling. It is always a temptation to begin to focus on enjoying or taking for granted the perks of our present success and become lax in pressing forward in what created the present fruit in the first place. It is like a husband who worked so hard to win his wife's heart before marriage, then after marriage becomes selfishly focused on other things, presuming on his wife's affections.

This is the kind of thing that happened with at least five of the seven churches mentioned in the first three chapters of the Book of Revelation. It is sad to note that they all started with such great revival, but in one generation that revival had been replaced with different forms of "lukewarmness". Jesus warned these churches to remember where they have drifted from and to go back to their first love, and do the things they did at first, that made them strong.

## Let me mention five “P’s” for strengthening and repairing your spiritual foundation

### 1. Purpose

Remember your purpose! Your purpose is the “why” behind what you are doing. It is more than our career, our programs or success. It has to do with loving God and showing His love to people. It is an awareness of the very best “yes” we can make. It is about knowing God and making His heart known. It is about serving as an act of worship. It is about giving yourself in those ways that you feel God’s smile.

### 2. Passion

Passion has to do with the call deep inside of us. It comes because we stay humble and hungry for God. Passion is letting our hearts be moved by things that matter to Him. Passion, I believe, continues to grow when we truly are living out our mission for Christ, reaching people who haven’t heard or had the chance to meet Him. Do you remember what you have done for God that excited you? Return to that zeal to make Jesus famous in the world.

### 3. Purity

Purity begins with our motives and flows from purpose and passion. It is being willing to be very honest about the “termites” that we are allowing to secretly dwell in our hearts. I believe most foundations become weak because we don’t do regular examinations. We don’t let people ask us hard questions and really help us look under the hood of our hearts. Below are some termites I would urge people to search out:

- a. **Entitlement:** When I begin to have a “you owe me” attitude towards God or people.
- b. **Cynicism:** This is very subtle, the “been there-done that” attitude. It is often the beginnings of doubt and unbelief and grows through murmuring and complaining.
- c. **Secret fantasy:** When we allow ourselves to entertain thoughts or habits, that we would not want the public world to know.
- d. **Laziness:** When we aren’t giving our best. To keep a strong foundation, we must be growing and stretching. Someone said you know you are growing because it’s “uphill all the way.” You are refusing to allow yourself or your organization to spiritually plateau.
- e. **Offenses:** The moment offenses towards people, circumstances, or God are allowed to go unaddressed, they inevitably lead to cracks in our foundations.

### 4. Priorities

Healthy lives and foundations are built and based on setting right priorities and staying focused on those things God has truly called us to put first. Most family relationships begin to crumble when things become more important than relationships. Our walk with God weakens because He gets crowded out by secondary things.

Jesus pointed out that a healthy branch is pruned so that it can bring forth better and more fruit. Sometimes our foundation becomes weak because we overcommit to good things that don't allow time to keep strong in doing "first" things. I believe having clearly defined values can help us gauge whether we are keeping priorities right. If we, for example, have a value of exceeding expectations with our excellence but find that we don't have time to do things in an excellent way, it is a sign that we aren't successfully maintaining our top priorities, by pruning our time from things that are less important. I have heard that healthy organizations eliminate 10-25% of what they are doing each year so that they can stay focused on doing the most important things. They replace some of the things they were doing with things that will bring a higher return.

## 5. **Pioneering**

Pioneering refers to listening and moving with God in the new things He is speaking. A strong foundation is always adjusting and being updated to make space for fresh ideas, people, and projects God is wanting to build in our lives. The only guarantee that the future is going to be better than the past is if we are getting better. Meaning, we are growing, exploring, and learning to apply the new things God is teaching us.

I can tell if my foundation is healthy by whether I'm excited to discover the new doors God is opening and new ways to grow. I'm healthy as I'm experiencing His new mercies and new manna for this season.

May I ask you today? How is your foundation? Is it solidly built on Jesus and His priorities? Are you passionately growing and continuing to run hard after the commitments you made that helped you get started in a good way in your relationships and efforts? I challenge all of us to let God keep working on our foundation. Remember: if you will commit to going deeper, God will commit to taking you higher.