

# Bare Minimum or Blessed Maximum?

By Steve & Carol Ryerson

"How can a man be born when he is old?"

"Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

**T**hese and similar questions, all posed in the Bible, have been asked repeatedly throughout history by people concerned about their futures. Certainly the answers are of vital importance, for how we answer these questions is foundational to everything about the rest of our lives.

Matthew 7:24 ~ So, everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a sensible man who built his house on bedrock. (CJB)

I Corinthians 3:11 ~ For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. (KJV)

I Timothy 6:19 ~ Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. (KJV)

There is only one foundation, one bedrock, that will stand ~ Jesus Christ. Bedrock is that solid foundation which is under the loose soil and gravel. It is the very basis of things, which can be counted on to stand. That is the Rock which our Lord Jesus Christ is. We must begin with Him.

Hebrews 6:1 ~ Therefore, leaving behind the initial lessons about the Messiah, let us go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation...(CJB)

However, we can't just stand on the foundation and stop. This is where some people fall short. They want to hear the Word, speak or do a few things, then get back to living their lives as the new improved version of who they were before "accepting Christ."

A number of years ago we had occasion to travel a road frequently that had a very unique residence. The people had dug a large hole in the ground, set a footer in place, then poured the concrete for the basement walls. They put the floor joists in place and the deck on top of them. They covered the deck with a tarp and stopped. There were various construction materials lying around the area giving evidence that they planned to continue building this place of abode. But for some reason they had already moved in! There were vent pipes coming out of this residence and a metal door as an outside entrance for the "basement". But, they were evidently living there, pretty flowers around the "foundation" included.

Events in our lives were such that we no longer needed to travel that road for about ten years. We then had reason to go that direction again and decided to drive by the "basement house" out of curiosity. We watched expectantly as we drove by. How surprised we were to see it was the same

as it had been, except that the shrubbery had grown, and the tarp “roof” was a bit tattered. Had this family come upon hard times so that they were unable to continue building? Or, did they grow comfortable in that underground home so that they just never got around to finishing it? Was it calamity or complacency that halted the project?

We must be careful that we don't relax too much where we are, no matter where we are, in our walk with God. We must keep moving forward.

I Corinthians 3:1-2 ~ As for me, brothers, I couldn't talk to you as spiritual people but as worldly people, as babies, so far as experience with the Messiah is concerned. I gave you milk, not solid food, because you were not yet ready for it. But you aren't ready for it now either! (CJB)

Paul was not pleased that the Corinthian church was still acting like a bunch of babies. Small children are indeed a delight, and they add spark to any gathering. But a thirty-year-old who is still acting like a baby is not a delight; he is a tragedy. So it is in our walk with God. We MUST grow up.

Philippians 3:12-14 ~ It is not that I have already obtained it or already reached the goal ~ no, I keep pursuing it in the hope of taking hold of that for which the Messiah Yeshua took hold of me. Brothers, I, for my part, do not think of myself as having yet gotten hold of it; but one thing I do: forgetting what is behind me and straining forward toward what lies ahead, I keep pursuing the goal in order to win the prize offered by God's upward calling in the Messiah Yeshua. (CJB)

Notice Paul's language to the Philippian church. Paul was not sitting back saying, “Look at my pedigree. Look at everything I have done for Jesus. Look at how much I have suffered for Him. I have it made.” No. He knew that as long as he was in this flesh he had not yet reached the goal. So it is with each one of us.

What did Paul say he was doing? He was pursuing the goal. What goal? Eternal life with our Lord Jesus.

Proverbs 2:1-5 ~ My son, if you will receive my words  
and store my commands inside you,  
paying attention to wisdom  
inclining your mind toward understanding ~  
yes, if you will call for insight  
and raise your voice for discernment,  
If you seek it as you would silver  
and search for it as for hidden treasure ~  
then you will understand the fear of ADONAI  
and find knowledge of God.

Johnny has just been given a map of the field next to his house. It shows the spot where a treasure has been buried. Mom and Dad have told him that he can go look for it the next morning. Johnny is up at the crack of dawn and quickly dons his clothes. He cannot gulp his breakfast down fast enough, and he inwardly wishes the Scripture passage that Dad is expounding upon were not so long and rich with meaning. As soon as possible, Johnny is out the door with a bucket and shovel, heading into the field. He has already diligently studied the map and is sure he knows exactly where

to dig.

Johnny works hard, but after digging a big hole, there is no treasure to be found. Mom yells out and offers him a glass of ice-cold lemonade, refreshment from the blazing hot summer sun. Johnny has no time for such luxuries. He studies the map some more and realizes his mistake. Aha! He was digging in the wrong place and moves to a new location to start digging anew.

The wailing of sirens suddenly shatters the silence of the summer day as fire engines streak down the street. Ordinarily, Johnny would be by the side of the road watching. But not today! There is more important business to attend to. Nothing can be allowed to distract him from his search for the buried treasure.

Solomon spoke in the above passage of searching for the things of God as one would search for a hidden treasure. Just as Johnny did not let things that would normally be exciting him to become distractions, so we should be the same in our desire to draw closer to God.

Solomon wrote to his son that there were some requirements to understanding the fear of ADONAI and finding the knowledge of God. The son needed to receive, store inside him, pay attention, incline his mind, call, raise his voice, seek, and search. Those are not the actions of a person who is lackadaisical about his walk with God. Those are the verbs of one who is straining forward to reach his goal. There is no time to set aside this search for other pleasures of this life.

Philippians 2:5 ~ Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: (KJV)

Romans 8:14 ~ For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. (KJV)

I John 5:14-15 ~ And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him. (KJV)

We are told to allow the mind of Christ Jesus to be in us. That can only happen as we are led by His Spirit, allowing Him to permeate every fiber of our being. As the stamp of His image becomes clearer and clearer, the things of this world become less important. Little Johnny would normally run to his Mom as soon as she offered him lemonade. He would also generally stop his play to watch the fire engines roar past. But when he was so intently searching for the treasure, those normal pleasures did not appeal to him.

So it is in our walk with God. As we draw closer to God, we don't have the desire to take up our time with things that used to excite us.

We see in I John 5:14-15 above that we can know we will have our prayers answered if we ask according to God's will. That can only happen as we are so in tune with Him that we are lost in Him and truly our will is His will---our mind is His mind. That's a tall order. Impossible? NO! It does require focus. It does require our every effort. It does mean casting aside anything which would keep us from becoming more like our Lord and Saviour.

Hebrews 12:1-2 ~ So then, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us, too, put aside every impediment ~ that is, the sin which easily hampers our forward movement ~ and keep running with endurance in the contest set before us, looking away to the Initiator and Completer of that trusting, Yeshua ~ who, in exchange for obtaining the joy set before him, endured execution on a stake as a criminal, scorning the shame, and has sadtdown at the right hand of the throne of God. (CJB)

The runner does not wear his heaviest clothing and carry a heavy backpack. Those are weights that wear him out and cause him to lose the race. Anything that holds him back must be discarded.

Like a faithful construction crew, a determined young boy, or an athlete running a race, we must put aside everything which would hamper our forward movement toward the Joy He sets before us. What is holding you back? Do you want to give God the bare minimum and lose all in the end, or give Him the blessed maximum?