
VISION FORWARD



What will you build in 2023?

by Pastor Jonathan

What will you build in 2023? A healthier marriage? A stronger physical health? A wiser stewardship of your finances? A deeper understanding of Scripture? A greater availability to your family? A richer faith?

In Christ, God has laid down a strong and eternal foundation for our life. To build our life on the life of Christ — Christ Jesus crucified, resurrected, crowned, ascended — is to be grounded upon a foundation that can never be shaken. In Him we have every spiritual blessing found in the heavens. In His Word and by His Spirit we have every available resource needed to live the abundant life of God now. Only the God who made all things can make us a new creation, and only in Jesus, the Word of God, can everything God created be sustained.

And so we are sustained. To hear Christ call out to us, “follow me,” is to also hear Him proclaim, “I am the good shepherd”. This means that as His disciples our life depends upon Him. We build our life on Him through faith, obedience, and love as His life works in us through the power of His Word and indwelling Spirit. As Paul said, “It’s no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me.” (Galatians 2:20)

Building our life on Christ is no easy task. At all. It’s hard work and we should expect we will have to work very hard at it. But, again, we are not alone. The grace poured out upon us in salvation both equips and empowers us to work and to work hard. Dallas Willard reminds us that grace is not opposed to effort, but to earning. Where grace abounds so does the fruit of the Spirit and the work(s) of the Spirit.

So we build. We are encouraged to build. We are eager to build. Yet the question is not only what will we build in 2023, but HOW will we build? How we build is as important, if not more important, than what we build.

Paul encourages us to “be careful how you build” on the foundation of Christ in your life (1 Corinthians 3:10). The materials we use to build our life upon Christ are to be worthy of the foundation that is Christ. That is, the materials we use cannot be according to our own wisdom or strength. The materials we use must be according to the wisdom

and strength of God, summed up in Jesus Christ. In other words, the materials we use are to be imperishable, not perishable. To use the perishable is to build our life sinking sand, but to use the imperishable is to build your life on solid rock.

So, HOW will you build your marriage? Your health? Your finances? Your family? Your faith? Will you turn to God's Word, to the Holy Spirit, to the fellowship of the body of Christ? Or will you lean upon your own understanding?

In 2023 Elim Grace is being called to "be strong and build it". Our **Vision Verse** is, "*Be careful now, for the Lord has chosen you to build a house...**be strong and do it.***" (1 Chronicles 28:10).

God is calling us to strengthen ourselves in Him in order to (1) build our life down deeper upon the foundation of Jesus Christ and (2) build up further the kingdom of God by becoming a resourcing center (for our city, faith-based organizations, and smaller rural churches). No where in Scripture does the work given to God's people prove to be successful or completed over night. It proves to be long, hard, sacrificial work. But it always proves to be joyful and rewarding work. So with that kind of work in mind and at hand, here are our 2023 goals:

FIRST GOALS: Strengthen our small groups, Give away three offerings (Easter, Pentecost, Christmas), Establish growth/discipleship tracks

SECOND GOALS: Run Alpha Marriage, Run The Alpha Course, Run a parenting/family course

THIRD GOALS: Solidify expansion plans, Restart apprenticeship program, Resource small rural churches and faith-based organizations

In addition to our goals we will once more have four rally points that will serve to bring us all together:

#1 "Fellowship with God" — 30 day fast from TD to TD

#2 "Serve the world" — Serve Oswego project

#3 "Fellowship with one another" — Family picnic

#4 "Show the world" — Fall Fest

And, finally, in 2023 we will be introducing Growth Tracks. These will be simple plans we hope will help many build up their faith in Jesus:

#1 EXPLORE — Read the New Testament 2x in a year*, pray daily, attend Sunday services, complete The Alpha Course

#2 DIG — Read the Bible 5 days a week*, pray daily, read 2 assigned books (one every 6 months), join a small group, attend Sunday service**

#3 BUILD — Read the Bible through in a year*, pray daily, attend Bible studies/classes, read 4 assigned books* (one every 3 months), join a small group, attend Sunday service**

** Plans will be provided*

*** DIG books: The Truth of the Cross by R.C. Sproul, Jesus the King by Timothy Keller*

**** BUILD books: Knowing God by J.I. Packer, Holier Than Thou by Jackie Hill Perry, Jesus the King by Timothy Keller, John Newton on the Christian Life by Tony Reinke*

Dear Elim Grace, I end where I began. What will you build in 2023? What will we build in 2023? Will our house be stronger at the end of the year? It certainly can be. If the call of God to us is "be strong and build it," then the promise of God is that surely He will supply our every need. So, then, let us approach daily "the throne of grace" through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. There let us find grace upon grace to help us build with courage, joy, thanksgiving, peace, endurance, hope, faith, and love. May Christ be glorified in us and through us in 2023!