

THE BIG IDEA: When we accept our place, we advance in power.The Take-Off

Alright guys, this one may take a little work, but hang with me as we take the next step in our “Under Construction” series.

Week 1 - we talked about the plan God has for us and how that’s kind of like the blueprint of our lives.

Week 2 - Jason Phibbs did an amazing job showing us from Psalm 119 about the power of God’s word and that obedience to it lays the foundation for what God is building in and through us.

Today, we’re going to tackle walls, and because that word and concept has been so polarizing in our country, let me take a few minutes to explain how I’m using the word so that we don’t read anything into it

Walls are the skeleton of a house - the walls give a house its definition, its boundaries, its layout.

The walls - the structure - of a house make that house distinct.

In fact, if you were ever in the car with our family during a house hunt, you’d hear Wendy say these words: “I hate cookie cutter houses.”

[IMAGES / Cookie Cutter houses]

So, while it is possible for every house to have the exact same look, that isn’t what walls are for in God’s kingdom.

Just as every house has the same purpose - to provide dwelling - and as a result they may all have walls and a roof, the way in which those walls are organized can be very different.

God gives every church the same mission (purpose), but He isn’t after cookie cutter churches.

Walls in that sense can be the things that we value, or the way we live out that mission which could be 100% opposite of how others live out the same mission.

Need an example? I don’t wear ties and rarely even wear dress pants, but I’m preaching the same gospel that other preachers in our city are preaching today who would never wear jeans and a tee shirt.

Our “houses” serve the same mission, but the walls of our houses give us distinction in how we do.

Examples of our walls: children in worship, being downtown, community groups, diversity, realness

So, let me give you the Big Idea, and then we’ll look at some Scripture.

When we accept our place, we advance in power.

Let’s take some time to dive deeper into that:

1. The blueprint includes a footprint

- a. We learned in week 1 that God has a plan for us, and if He has a plan for us, then He has a place for us, and accepting that place is the first step to understanding the power of walls
- b. By accepting our place, I don’t mean be a doormat being told where your place is.
- c. This is accepting that there is a unique place - purpose - for us as a church and for you as members of it.
- d. So often we can get caught up in the details and we get so afraid of making a mistake, going to the wrong place, which house should we buy, etc.
- e. But if we can trust God with the blueprint of our lives, then we can trust Him with the footprint, too!
- f. We have a SPIRITUAL PLACE and a PHYSICAL PLACE
- g. Accepting our spiritual place can give us peace in our physical place
- h. Our spiritual place? NEAR GOD
 - seated with Christ in heavenly places (Ephesians 2:6)
 - with Him before anything or anyone else (Psalm 16:1-3)
- i. A lot of believers can’t find peace in physical places - a city, a job, a relationship, etc - because they haven’t found peace in their spiritual place
- j. EXAMPLE: Wendy and Zillow
- k. It’s one thing to constantly check Zillow because you hate where you are and want to find another place, which only feeds the misery when you can’t find one and have to stay where you hate
- l. All of us know believers like that - they don’t see the purpose in the box God’s placed them
- m. But Wendy checks Zillow not out of frustration, but out of expectation and anticipation - she doesn’t want to miss the place that God may send us next
- n. So we have peace in physical places because we have confidence in our spiritual place
- o. The blueprint includes a footprint, and we trust God that He has us where He wants us to be
- p. That’s what it means to ACCEPT OUR PLACE

2. The footprint leads to foot prints

- a. We have a SPIRITUAL PLACE and a PHYSICAL PLACE, and our SPIRITUAL PLACE is NEAR GOD
- b. Our physical place? NEAR MAN.
- c. God sends us to places in order to get us to people
- d. When we understand that we are near God - seated with Jesus - then we understand that His mission must become our mission
- e. His mission? **Luke 19:10** - to seek and save the lost
- f. **John 4:4** - Now Jesus HAD TO GO through Samaria
- g. Why? Because there was a woman at a well who needed the hope He was carrying
- h. Jesus was a hope dealer, and He wants us to be, too
- i. So, our footprint is downtown Albemarle, and that footprint has led to many foot prints - a coffee shop, 3 store fronts, an old bar, eventually a converted furniture store
- j. The physical place can change, because God is always moving us to get us to people
- k. Families move. Kids go to college. We leave one neighborhood for another.
- l. Why? Because God's got us on a mission, and a mission requires movement.
- m. **Eph. 2:6,10** / We're seated with Christ (spiritual) so we can do the works He's prepared for us (physical)
- n. **Psalms 16:5-6** / Because we're secure (spiritual) we can be pleased with our boundaries (physical)
- o. You can see, then, the truth in the Big Idea: when we accept our place, we can advance in power.
- p. Anywhere God moves us is another opportunity for God to move through us.

The Landing

Let me share a story to illustrate how God uses places to reach people:

Tony Campolo tells about the time he was asked to speak at a Pentecostal college. Before the service, eight men had him kneel so they could place their hands on his head and pray. Tony was glad to have the prayer, but each of them prayed a long time, and the longer they prayed the more they pushed on Tony's head. And then they even seemed to wander in their prayers. One of the men didn't even pray for Tony, he prayed for some guy he was concerned about. He began to pray and said, "Dear Lord, you know Charlie Stoltzfus. He lives in that silver trailer down the road a mile. You know the trailer, Lord, just down the road on the right-hand side."

Tony wanted to interrupt and tell him that God already knew where the guy lived and didn't need directions, but he just knelt there trying to keep his head upright.

The prayer went on: "Lord, Charlie told me this morning that he was going to leave his wife and three kids. Step in and do something, God. Bring that family back together."

With that, the prayer time ended and Tony went on to preach at the college chapel. Things went well and he got in his car and began to drive home. As he drove onto the Pennsylvania Turnpike, he saw a hitchhiker and felt compelled to pick him up.

Campolo said, "We drove a few minutes and I said: 'Hi, my name is Tony Campolo. What's yours?' He said, 'My name is Charlie Stoltzfus.' I couldn't believe it! I got off the turnpike at the next exit and headed back. He got a bit uneasy with that and after a few minutes he said, "Hey mister, where are you taking me?' I said, 'I'm taking you home.' He narrowed his eyes and asked, 'Why?' I said, 'Because you just left your wife and three kids, right?' That blew him away. 'Yeah, yeah, that's right.' With shock written all over his face, he plastered himself against the car door and never took his eyes off me. Then I really did him in as I drove right to his silver trailer. When I pulled up, his eyes seemed to bulge as he asked, 'How did you know that I lived here?' I said, 'God told me.' (I believe God did tell me). When he opened the trailer door his wife exclaimed, 'You're back! You're back!' He whispered in her ear and the more he talked, the bigger her eyes got. I said with real authority, 'The two of you sit down. I'm going to talk and you two are going to listen.' Man, did they listen...that afternoon I led those two young people to Jesus Christ."

Tony's PLACE was in an uncomfortable prayer session and that allowed him to move in POWER to the PERSON (Charlie) whom God wanted to reach.

When we accept our place, we advance in power.

Let's pray.