

Breakers, Takers and Makers

01. Blame and Self-medicate

This is a passionate statement about one of the major issues in our culture right now.

We will be looking specifically at a cause-and-effect sequence. Everybody is talking about the effect, but are attributing it to wrong causes.

The issue is whether or not individuals can build.

I had a youth pastor sit across from me a number of years ago. He was angry and frustrated with his tribe and with his calling and was getting ready to leave the ministry.

He said, "Let me tell you everything you need to know about these kids. It's simple. You get a group of them together and sooner or later, one of them is going to say, 'Wouldn't it be cool if . . . ?'"

"And everybody else says, 'Yeah, man, that would be cool!'"

Then the pastor said, "And that's it! They never **do** anything about their dreams."

The same thing plays out on the golf course. You have a foursome. Guess what one of the businessmen is whining bitterly about? The labor pool. Terrible options and he can't find anybody good. When he hires someone, they don't want to work. Whine, whine, whine.

Now, one of the other businessmen in the foursome is a successful businessman, because he **does** know how to build. He hires from exactly the same labor pool. But he knows how to train his people and how to retain them.

At the therapist's office, you have a middle-class person talking endlessly about their childhood and their woundedness while making no progress at all. They don't know how to build a life. And they certainly don't know how to rebuild a life after a devastating childhood, and after their own mistakes that came from a wrong response to pain.

And neither does the therapist.

So they sit there and go around and around and around the childhood issues without making any progress.



In the ghetto, there is a healthy man sitting on his porch doing nothing at 10 o'clock on Tuesday morning, absolutely convinced that he is powerless to change his life. He is aware he is in a culture rife with injustice for the poor and minorities, and he sees no way to build a life in a construct of injustice and racism.

He is paralyzed and justifies his powerlessness.

The near universal response for those who don't know how to build is first to blame, and then to self-medicate, while still trying to survive.

The youth group largely skips the blame and they go straight to pizza and Coke to self-medicate. Simple.

The businessman blames the politicians and the schools for the lousy labor pool and self-medicates with another round of golf or the 19th hole, as the case may be.

The therapist blames all the people who have hurt their client. The client goes home and self-medicates with social media, their pet or with Netflix.

And the man in the ghetto watches sports endlessly, takes drugs, and blames the government and the business culture for his not being able to build in the context of injustice.

Blaming and self-medicating feels good to a degree, but neither improves your future. They do not teach you how to build. They do not help you dig out of the hole that you are in.

I have a fundamental statement to make to everyone.

Life requires some kind of building skills.

Building skills vary immensely. Depending on where you are in life, you will need different building skills, but everyone needs to build. Everyone.

Building is gender neutral. I know many homes where the mother is a far better builder than the father. Father goes to work and exchanges his hours for dollars. But it is the mother who makes the household work. She builds the schedule, she builds the meals, she builds the vacation, she builds the birthday party. She synchronizes the transportation for all the kids and all their activities. She oversees the homework because she is the builder.

Everyone, male or female, whatever age you are, benefits from some level of building skills. And clearly that is the deficit that is pervasive in our culture right now.



02. The Pivotal Transition

The question on the table that I'm seeking to answer today is, "How did we get here?"

How did we end up with a generation that is so disastrously deficient in basic life building skills that they default to blame and self-medication?

I envision people loosely along a spectrum. **You have breakers, takers and makers.** Makers, if we skip the alliteration, we also call builders. Everyone is somewhere in that sequence.

We begin as takers.

In the womb, you were a parasite. There's no other word for it. You had such dominion over your mother's body that you could strip essential nutrients from her body in order to build yours. You could be born with a healthy body while she suffers with a depleted body.

You are designed by God with pre-installed software, as a taker, to self-medicate with food, warmth and attention. You love it.

Well, that parasite thing ends quickly. You have to learn a skill, and that is how to latch on.

As soon as you have a sibling, you intuitively learn to blame. Blame typically flows downstream, like a river, as the baby of the family knows.

While you naturally learn how to take, and how to blame, you don't necessarily learn how to build. Learning how to build in a broken world does not come naturally.

And one of the reasons is the grand lie that has been told in a million different versions. It is captured well in the classic song "In the Ghetto." I happen to like the version by Reba McEntire and Darius Rucker.

The storyline is a boy born in the ghetto. Due to poverty, he learns to become a taker to survive, because there are not enough assets in the home. Eventually he becomes a breaker. You know what happens? As soon as he becomes a breaker, the culture kills him because we do not like breakers.

And the message of the song is, "If we spend money to fix poverty in the ghetto, people wouldn't be takers and breakers."

That is a lie.

That is a **massive** lie.

It has been proven to be a lie with trillions of dollars that have been given to people around the world in all sorts of contexts. Money was given to people who are not



builders, and when you give money to people who are not builders, they first eat their seed corn. Second, they self-medicate at a higher level. And third, they blame the giver for being a bad person.

Lack of assets is not the sole answer. I understand it DOES take assets to build. I have a lot to say about the issue of assets and building. But giving assets to someone who is **not** a builder does not help them. In fact, most of the time, it hurts them.

03. *The Fatal Flaw*

Why don't our kids learn how to build as naturally as they learn to blame and to self-medicate?

I want you to hear a hard truth.

Loving middle-class parents produce more breakers and takers than the ghetto does.

Why?

Because they misunderstand the **purpose** of mothering.

Mothering is designed to teach kids how to receive wisely and contextually so that eventually they can build.

What do I mean by receiving "wisely?"

How a child receives should change relentlessly through childhood.

Initially the child receives as a parasite. Then he has to work a little bit to latch on. Eventually, that supply of food, comfort and self-medication disappears. Mother shows up with this nasty little plastic sippy cup. There is a battle that goes on over receiving food in this different way. Eventually, he concedes.

And as often as he masters something, **mother moves the goalposts.**

After the sippy cup, he has to learn to drink out of an ordinary glass and not drop it. Then he has to learn to eat with a fork and get peas all the way to his mouth instead of on the floor. Ultimately, she expects him to make his own grilled cheese sandwich. It is natural for the way you receive to change.

There was a classic comic of a kid who went out and mowed the lawn. When he came back, his dad gave him two bucks. He threw up his hands and said, "That's not even minimum wage."



Dad retorted, "Yeah, and you didn't do minimum work."

That cause and effect between receiving and working has to be established in the home. You don't have to pay for your mother's milk, but as time goes on, you do have to pay in a healthy family. You have to take out the trash, you have to make your bed, you have to be a responsible member of the family. Ultimately you have to work to get the pay. It's a mother's job to teach consistently, changing metrics so you arrive at the place where you understand the exchange dynamic of the culture.

Look at that through the life of Jesus.

"He came unto His own, and His own received Him not."

They weren't prepared to receive the greatest gift God ever gave and said instead, "Give us Barabbas."

The problem was not Jesus' stinginess. Jesus gave more than any other human being ever gave. When He was in Capernaum, He gave at a massive level, with more healing and more deliverance than He gave in any other city in Israel.

But they were not transformed.

He gave to His apostles. His apostles were relentless at moving the goalposts. At the Last Supper, they wanted dominion. They want power. They wanted thrones. They could not see the gift of redemption that He was offering them.

Jesus gave footwashing and Peter could not receive it in the way Jesus wanted to give it. It took an arm-wrestling contest to get Peter to just receive for once.

Jesus came to a group of people that wanted, wanted, wanted. They were consumed with the evils of the Romans and how Rome was suppressing them. And because of a wretched understanding of receiving and building, they could not receive what was being offered by Jesus.

A mother teaches a child how to receive. And if a mother is not radically changing the rules of receiving almost every year, she is not preparing a child for the real world.

The real world is about conversion. In some way, adults receive a resource and they change it to a different, hopefully better, resource. On a primitive level, you change hours for dollars, you change athletic ability for a lot of dollars, or you build a career in other ways.

But the bottom line is that the marketplace is not about mothering. The marketplace expects you to have that mothering process out of the way so that you understand exchange and you can build.

Marriage is not about mothering. I knew one woman who was a helicopter mother on steroids. Her son got married. And after a year or two, her daughter-in-law came to her and said, "Thanks a lot for that worthless husband you raised."



Not particularly delicate, but the daughter-in-law was pretty blistered over her husband's desire to be mothered by his wife.

Teaching a child to receive primarily because the child wants, especially when they want comfort, is profoundly destructive. It's destructive to the child. And it's destructive to the culture that the child is going to clash with.

A father teaches a child how to build and in order to build, you **have to have** resources. I get this. There is much truth to the concern about lack of resources in the ghetto. But if you don't know how to build, you will not use the resources you do have. You will eat your seed corn. You will self-medicate. And you will soon be in crisis.

Again.

I see three steps to the building sequence.

First, find the resources. Second, use skill to assemble the resources. Third, find a place in the culture where your skill is needed.

We cannot expect those in acute poverty to build with nothing. Pervasive poverty is a valid discussion in the public square. But it is a far bigger problem for those who have much, but still cannot build.

The middle-class kids who can't build have a massive blame and self-medication game going on, and when we engage in the blame, instead of teaching them to be responsible for their own life, we've already lost the discussion.

Too many homes have two mothers and fathering is outsourced. By the age of 10 or before, the parents should have a sense of who the kids are and what their design is. One is a musician, and another is an athlete. He is a reader and she is a social butterfly. This one is a computer geek, and that one is a gamer.

Typically, in a middle-class home, the parents are going to outsource fathering. They will hire the music teacher and the sports coach to unpack the treasure that is in their kid.

It takes a father, whether it is the biological father in the home, or a rented father, to teach a child how to build from the resources that God has already given them.

And if you don't have a wise father who teaches wise building, the unwise peer culture **will** teach the child how to build a blame system and a self-medication system using social media, drugs or sex.



It WILL happen. The child **will** learn to be a builder. If the father does not teach them how to build well, with right assets and with a right objective, the culture will teach blame and self-medication.

It is the massive message of love and unconditional support that produces massively messed up kids because they believe a lie.

They believe that the future that has been envisioned for them will happen because they are talented, because they are beautiful, or just because.

And THAT is a lie.

They simply do not know how to build skillfully to achieve the future that has been envisioned for them.

Starving artists are legendary, and they breed like rabbits. They are vastly talented, but they have no money because they cannot build an economic engine. They either starve or they hook up with a builder, a manager or agent, or whatever you want to call them.

Many of the artists' managers are epic builders. An awful lot of them also happen to be con artists who are on the take for themselves. And the artist is so clueless about building, they aren't even aware of how much they are being robbed by the builder who is helping develop a career for them.

They did not learn how to build, they just learned how to be talented.

There are endless stories in human history of unrewarded talent. You **have** to have a transmission to go with talent. You **have** to know how to build or your God-given, amazing engine is not going to do you any good.

Building a child's expectation that the culture will reward talent **is cruel beyond words.**

The culture doesn't.

Even a mediocre builder is going to surpass the talented, clueless non-builder 99% of the time, because the culture rewards builders.

There are assembly-line jobs out there that do not require being a builder. Somebody will show you how to screw three bolts into something or another. And you can learn that well and have a ridiculously small life. But highly talented young adults who have been celebrated in the home, who were told they are special, who were told they are amazing, who were told they can do whatever they want in life, are insulted by small jobs.

Their parents' unwise love causes them to believe that they are special, and that they deserve a rapid trajectory to abundance. When they cannot build from the talent



that they believe they have, the marketplace punishes them for not being builders. They fall back to blame and self-medication, because their parents **taught them a lie** that their talent, their beauty, or their personality, would be their ticket to amazing things in life.

But the parents did not teach them to be builders.

Love may build a good self-image, but it does not automatically teach building. In fact, it usually produces highly entitled adults who are offended at the idea of being held responsible to be builders. They have been loved in the home, they expect to be loved in the marketplace, and they feel betrayed. They feel assaulted when the love in the home is not reciprocated in the marketplace when they cannot produce.

And they cannot deliver when their talent doesn't have a transmission to go with it.

04. *A Case Study of Denial*

Let's look at two Biblical case studies to see how this plays out.

The first is the prodigal son or more to the point, the father. The father had assets. The father was a builder. He knew how to build an economy, but he had no clue how to build a community. He was dismal in his building of individuals, especially in his family.

It is a very common problem. Many economically successful builders have no clue how to build their family. They raise their children to have expectations of a certain socio-economic position in the culture, but the kids lack the skill set their father has.

This father deeply wanted an intimate family, but he had no building skills for community. As a result, he produced two awful sons who ached for community but had no skills to build it.

The father loved deeply. He dreamed majestically. He gave generously, but he did not teach his children how to build community because he did not know how.

The younger one took his money and self-medicated with fun and sex. The older one opted to blame his father over lack of community. He learned from his father how to build economically. He was running the farm and apparently doing a good job. But he blamed his father for his own lack of community.

His father was baffled. All of his love and all of his money was not producing good people. What was wrong with this picture? He was deeply loving, and he was massively forgiving. He was committed to restoration, yet he mothered both of his boys horribly.



The younger one was especially pathetic. He could not even make enough money to feed himself while he was feeding hogs. How much skill, technique, or building competence does it take to feed hogs? I don't know. I've never been that low on the economic scale. But the younger son **was** that bad.

And he was so massively mothered that he could not even identify the root cause of his problem. He had no concept of learning to build for himself. So, he decided to go home, planning to self-medicate as a career taker. "How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death?"

Pity, pity, pity. The boy skipped the blame. He decided to go home and grovel in order to receive the self-medication of food. He didn't understand building. He was not trying to learn how to become a builder in order to change his life. He was content to self-medicate with food.

He came home.

His very dumb, very loving father stopped the groveling. He gave him unconditional forgiveness and restoration. And there was not even a discussion of teaching him how to build.

Tragic.

The father was the problem here — a huge problem. The father was a mother and a failed mother at that. He did not teach his children how to receive wisely and he did not teach either of them to build community or the younger son to build economically.

Consider all the cultural jokes about 40-year-olds living in the basement of the parents' home. Yeah, parents are the problem. The parents have failed to teach the children reality. Perhaps they loved them deeply and affirmed them tremendously and gave them a good self-image, but they gave them no transmission to convert that love into building value.

Loving affirmation about how great a child is does not teach them how to build, and loving forgiveness when they have gone out and screwed up their life and come home, also does not teach them how to build.

The older brother knew how to farm but didn't know how to build community. He blamed the dad. He was a chip off the old block. And the father was shocked at the attitude of the older brother. He was shocked at his lack of community and was shocked at his unwillingness to forgive the younger brother.

The father was clueless about how bad off his family was. How could the father, who lived with the older brother, not know the stew pot of pain that was brewing in the kid? The older brother



understood economics. He understood the farm. The older brother was wealthy. But the father was not a community builder, just a wisher — deep, wishful passion with sacrificial love.

Sacrificial dumb love does not teach building. It teaches the dumb kids to be takers for the rest of their lives.

The father's conversation with the older brother about how well he had treated his firstborn economically did nothing to reconcile the brothers. The problem was the dad, not the brats.

More love, more privilege, more forgiveness does not teach a taker how to be a builder.

It just doesn't.

The younger son ached for community and threw his money away. The older son ached for community and blamed dad for lack of permission to have community. All this because apples don't far fall far from the tree.

And here is the kicker. Eventually, daddy died and the younger son was immediately going to become the slave he asked to be — **a slave to his older brother.**

His privilege would end at the edge of his father's grave. And you know what? The older brother still did not know how to build community. He was not able to teach the younger brother — the slave — how to build community.

He was just going to grind the younger brother for the rest of his life.

It is an awful, awful story, and dumb love destroyed both boys.

05. A Case Study of God's Intervention

Now here is another story with a pretty gruesome middle, but a little bit happier ending.

Consider Joseph in the Old Testament. His father was a mother. Jacob loved Joseph without teaching him how to build economically or how to build community.

The unloved sons learned how to build economically. However, they were not particularly impressive at building community if they were willing to murder their younger brother. They learned one out of two building skills.

They learned how to build economically, but Joseph did not.



Rebekah had taught Jacob to be a taker, not a builder. God took Jacob away from Rebekah and sent him to a mega builder by the name of Laban. Laban, the relentless economic builder, very swiftly, skillfully and easily played Jacob's need for mothering from a woman and enslaved him for 14 years.

But one thing was different about Jacob. He observed. He watched during those 14 years. He learned how to build economically. He observed crooked, exploitive, destructive building. And he went far beyond that as he learned how to build with supernatural help. Using assets from God, he did genetic engineering with the sheep and the goats.

He got his MBA and his doctorate in animal husbandry with business savvy, and then added the supernatural intervention from God in an amazing story.

Oh, by the way, he learned nothing about community because he wasn't going to learn community from Laban. And he was not going to learn community from Laban's daughters who didn't know how to do community either. They just knew about sibling rivalry.

Jacob continued confusing being a helicopter mother with being a loving dad. He loved Joseph. So what did he do? He loved him with dumb love. He protected him from learning how to build economically. The unloved kids had to work hard. They had to care for the flocks while Joseph was mollycoddled at home.

But God had designed Joseph to be a builder. God designed him for a great calling, impacting nations with his building skills. Daddy was not unpacking that treasure. Joseph knew he was special. God had communicated that to him and to the family, but he had no transmission. None.

All this because he had a father who was a helicopter mother.

God said, "Fine. I can handle this the same way I handled it in the previous generation." God took Joseph away from his helicopter mother and took him down to Egypt where he went to work for a very successful builder named Potiphar.

And like his daddy, Joseph was kind of smart. He started at the bottom peeling potatoes and then worked his way up to being the number two guy in Potiphar's whole enterprise. Because he watched and observed, he learned how to build and unpacked the treasures within him.

God knew he was a natural builder. God put him with an owner who had a hair trigger temper. And he learned to operate in that environment and to build economically.

Joseph learned how to manage, but he didn't know how to build for legacy. He didn't know how to partner with God. What had been modeled for Joseph was the predatory practices of Potiphar. That business model is what Joseph brought to the office of Prime Minister.



He became an extraordinary predator, building a win/lose construct in Egypt. He had no connection with the God of the supernatural, because Jacob did not teach him how to build economically **with** God. He learned from Potiphar how to build a zero-sum game.

Therefore, in seven years, Joseph turned Egypt from a capitalist nation into an involuntarily socialist nation. He first sucked all the liquid capital out of the nation. Then he transferred all the living capital of cattle and land titles to Pharaoh. Finally, he enslaved the entire nation in his zero-sum game.

Why? Because that is what he learned by watching Potiphar when he should have learned how to partner supernaturally with God, like Jacob learned.

It was a wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong way of building. God did not send Joseph to Egypt to destroy the nation. Because he enslaved Egypt in a model that was used by Potiphar, eventually, the Egyptians enslaved the Hebrews as payback for that cruel time.

The Hebrews in the wilderness hated building. They wanted to self-medicate with food, and they defaulted to blaming Moses over and over and over again.

God tried to teach them.

The first generation had a huge opportunity to build. God positioned them to conquer one of the most prosperous nations around with supernatural help. They could only see the risk, not the benefit. They lost the opportunity because they didn't know that The God Who Breaks is also the God Who Builds.

They saw God break Egypt. Then God modeled for them with the Tabernacle that He would give them assets. He would give them skills. He would give them the ability to build. In that microcosm, the lesson just went right over their head. They failed to appreciate that the God Who Breaks also Builds.

The two and a half tribes knew how to build wealth, but they had little interest in building a nation so they asked for their land on the other side of the Jordan. They made soft choices because they had no vision for spiritual legacy.

Read the rest of Israel's history through that grid of building, or not building — of building through human skills, versus building supernaturally. Study every opportunity that God gave the Hebrews to learn about Him and His fathering. It will radically change your view of Scripture.

In an ideal scenario that expresses the seven levels of parenting, the sixth level is where a father teaches a child how to fight appropriately and how to build. Those skills draw from the previous levels, but an observant person can learn it later in life, even when their father didn't teach them.



We have never had more opportunities than in this culture. You can get the equivalent of an MBA by watching YouTube and listening to the wise people in the culture. There is a staggering amount of information available for free — blogs, articles, YouTube videos. Why pay for an MBA when learning how to build is available? There are so many builders around, and they talk.

Whether you are a parent, an employer, the manager of a department, a pastor, music team leader, or a therapist, the principles of building are portable to a vast number of applications. Everybody who is crafting their own lives needs to learn how to build better and how to pass it on to others.

Pragmatically, I assume that this teaching will be used mostly by individuals who need to learn for themselves. They need an inner world that is resilient and productive. They need to know how to thrive economically, not just survive. They need to do better socially than the older brother and the younger brother. Spiritually, they need to know how to build righteous structures for themselves. They need to know how to build a legacy. It takes more than wishing. It takes skill in building.

And the fulfillment that you experience at the end of life will be based on your skill in building, not on your talent and not on the number of gifts, treasures or anointings that God gives you.

I am passionate about the need of every single individual to build. That is why we are going to do a series of seminars in Shelby, North Carolina on building. The next one is August 12, 2023. It is entitled Passionate Manhood Part 3.

But first, there is a caveat.

06. Justice

I have two fundamental ideological grids that I use to shape this concept of building and they are not commonly held. You need to know where I am coming from.

I am not trying to persuade you about my two grids. I **am** trying to persuade you that you need to learn how to build. But these presuppositions are mine. You can take it or leave it depend on your worldview. I am just sharing my biases because they cut across the grain of the contemporary religious culture and the secular culture.

First, my presupposition is that justice is **optional** for builders.

It is highly desirable, it facilitates building, but it is rarely available. The broad injustices in the culture are not an excuse for not building. Justice is somewhat more available down the road, when



you have built successfully. Injustice is deepest, highest and strongest at the bottom when you're starting out. It's hard to build in the face of injustice, but it IS possible and it is necessary. It is essential.

I believe that injustice is not a basis for not becoming a builder.

There is a huge emotional grid associated with justice. A solid justice system makes us feel secure, and it is a legitimate feeling.

I like security a whole lot more than random craziness. But it is an optional feeling. Security can and should come from knowing the God Who Walks With Us Through Injustice. Even though the deck is stacked against us, building is doable. It's just more expensive. And floating variable rules are maddening. They raise the risk level through the roof, but we can still build, if the will and the wisdom are there.

Here are a couple of realities to consider.

Marriage and parenting prepare you for a world without justice.

That man or woman you married — they are gone. They have changed massively over the life of the marriage — sometimes in the first two days. Long ago you discovered that what you thought was reality is not reality and that they were putting forth their best side during the courtship.

Now you are married, and you have to learn to build within the reality of who your spouse is, not the fantasy of who you believed they were when you were courting.

That child you birthed is guaranteed to change massively over the time of living at home. The toddler who had a favorite food for a year can change his tastes between the time you start fixing breakfast and when you serve it. And they will.

A teen can change absurdly 16 times in a day. There is nothing even remotely like justice related to adolescents. They will play havoc with your imaginary justice system.

But you build a marriage anyway, and you build kids anyway, because it needs to be done. And it **can** be done with the power of God.

Builders know how to assess the risk. They assess the risk of a flawed system, the injustice in the marketplace, the injustice from the referees in the championship game, the injustice from the press when you are a political leader. It **is** going to happen. You have to deal with it wisely. We cannot ignore injustice, but it does not keep us from building.

What does it look like to deal with injustice wisely? A lot of it has to do with timing.



Let's take this picture. You are at DFW airport getting ready for a flight to Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Just before boarding, the attendant announces that the flight has been cancelled for mechanical reasons. They are going to try to rebook people on different flights.

Now there are four passengers who are builders. One of them makes a beeline to the Admirals Club to rebook. Another one calls his executive secretary and tells her to handle it. Another one gets on the Executive Platinum 800 number and gets preferred service. Another one ditches the airport as he heads for the rental car center, planning to drive to Tuscaloosa.

All four of the builders are affected by the injustice. But they solve the immediate problem and put the injustice off for another time.

Then there is Sally Jones. She is in her 50s. She is in the middle of the concourse having an emotional meltdown. She is screaming about the fact that this is her only daughter's wedding, and she has to be there! She has had 29 garage sales to be able to afford this ticket. And she H.A.S. to get there and this is wrong.

And you know what? She is right.

Her complaint is justified. American Airlines ought to do better maintenance. Her passion is understandable. Her loss is immense. Hopefully her daughter is only going to get married once and she really would like to be at **that** wedding. It is a reasonable desire, and it is an unrecoverable loss.

But hear me.

Her pursuit of justice **at that time** will cost her badly. When she gets quite done crying and screaming and gets in line, she is going to be person number 117 for the four seats on another flight to Tuscaloosa that day. She is not going to get there until the kids are back from their honeymoon.

The loss is drastic. But pursuing justice in the moment is usually unproductive.

Let me give another illustration. When I was in California, we had to deal with the Employment Development Department, which is a fancy name for unemployment. Whether somebody quit, or got fired, or laid off, we had to send a notice. And within a few days of our sending the notice of termination, we would get a nastygram from the EDD **demanding** that we give them certain information. We had 10 days to do it.

It didn't matter whether my mother was dying, whether I was in the hospital with cancer, or was on vacation. There was no consideration whatsoever for the dynamics of our company. We **had** to deliver the information within 10 days or we were guilty of criminal behavior.



And in really tiny print at the bottom of the form it said that the EDD would respond to that form within **nine months**. Injustice! I have 10 days; they have nine months to be hideously inefficient in their work.

It is injustice.

Is it fixable?

I believe it was fixable. I think it would probably take about 10 years, and about a half a million dollars. I would have to network with a whole lot of business owners in California and lobby a whole lot of legislators. But we could eventually, if we brought enough time and money and strategy to bear on enough legislators, get a law passed to make the EDD department grow up and function for a change.

Was I willing to invest that time and money?

Absolutely not!

I could. I would not.

So what **WOULD** I do?

The alternative is to do a workaround to the injustice. I knew the seven pieces of information required on the form. When we did a separation, the HR department pulled that information, put it in a Word document, saved it in an exact place on the computer so it was instantly available.

The form came, went to HR, they spent 90 seconds filling it out and put it back in the mail. Closure on the injustice and we got back to work finding a replacement employee.

Did that feel good? No!

I've been gone from California for five years. Can you tell it still aggravates me? The absurdity of 10 days for me, nine months for them is unjust. I don't like it. But I have a bigger and a better company than I used to have. I prioritize building people versus dealing with injustice. I save the scarce resources for productive purposes. I walk in a reality-based functional grid. And I often choose to lay down the pursuit of justice in exchange for progress.

I do due diligence. I weigh the prevalence of injustice at any level. I avoid many situations that are too predatory because the King does not reward me for being stupid or naive. I am commanded to be as wise as a serpent, as well as harmless as a dove. But when I face injustice, I don't let it own me.

Think about football. Every season, there is some gross injustice badly administered penalties. It is injustice. And you know what? A player has 30 seconds to get therapy, get it resolved, get back in the huddle, get the next play, and get on the line of scrimmage. The ball **is** going to be hiked again.



Now, **after** the game, they can whine about the injustice on Twitter for the next four months. But in the game, they have to lay down the injustice and get back that yardage that was lost. They deal with injustice later and focus on building the score, NOW.

Jesus faced colossal injustice. His primary workaround was to leave town. He left Judah a bunch of times. Five times He left all of Israel in order to get away from injustice, and He knew His life would end in a colossal injustice. It would be brutal, but He focused on moving the ball along the way.

Look at the Last Supper. He knew that Simon was going to deny knowing Him. So He said, "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail and when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."

Jesus completely glossed over the injustice. He said "It is going to happen. You are going to be a bonehead, and I prayed for you, so that you would make it all the way back to leadership, and be able to strengthen your brothers." Jesus was strategic.

And think about Resurrection Sunday. Jesus appeared to Mary of Magdala. She came and told them, "Jesus is alive!" Their reaction? "Just a woman. Ignore her."

He appeared to the two on the road to Emmaus. Their hearts were burning within them. They came running back to Jerusalem, met with the rest to say, "Guess what, guess what? Jesus is alive!" And they said, "We know! He met with Peter. Peter said so, therefore it is!"

I'm thinking, "What? Peter was the most discredited of the apostles."

Oh, no, he was not.

Jesus prayed for him that he would be restored to his position of leadership and could strengthen the others. The ten in the room that night believed Peter because Jesus had prayed for him. Jesus skipped the injustice and poured Himself into the rebuilding process.

"Peter, you are the man and I'm praying for you to get back into your manhood and to be able to move the ball on Resurrection Sunday." And he did.

Jesus' resignation letter to His Father in John 17 said, "I've done a good job." He claimed the eleven as His treasure. He had successfully built some builders.

There **was** a minor reference to some injustice but there was no whining, no excuses, no blaming, no saying, "You know, I would have scored better if it hadn't been for the injustice." He understood He was coming to a world of injustice. He came to a very unfair playing field. He suffered endless injustice and He moved the ball because He built, built, built.

So can we.



Justice feels good. Some years ago I went to a New Year's Eve party with my wife. We were on our way home after midnight. As we came up to a green light, a car blasted through the red light in front of us and could have killed us. We saw him go by and breathed a sigh of relief.

Two seconds later, a police car lit him up and pulled him over. And there was an immense, positive emotional reaction from me. It was thrilling to see justice served relentlessly, right then, on the spot.

But you know what? It didn't add any value to my life. I had already slowed down and looked both ways. I knew this was New Year's Eve and there were drunks out there. It just **felt** really good. So good, that 45 years later, I can still pull that file up and remember how good the justice felt.

But the fact that injustice hurts and that justice feels good does not mean it built anything in my life.

We look at justice, acknowledge the significance of it, acknowledge that it makes a difference as to how easy or how hard it is to build, but injustice is not a deal breaker. Injustice abounds. You will have to use your building skills to do workarounds regarding the injustice.

But you usually should not stop building to fight the injustice, but wait for the right time.

07. *Justice and Economic Systems*

Now, having said that, we are going to move from the micro to the macro, and look at economic systems in the context of injustice.

The economic debate going on for a century and a half, beginning with Karl Marx and his first volume of *Das Kapital* has arguments that purport to focus on justice, but they really build a myth and a mirage.

Here is my view of the competing economic philosophies. Take it or leave it. But I want you to see the data.

From my point of view, capitalism builds a platform for extreme exploitation of labor. Every capitalist culture eventually produces robber barons. There are predatory managers, predatory bosses, predatory companies, and because they are great builders, they can exploit a lot of people in a lot of ways.

How about a law in New York City that required wage transparency? Whenever you advertise a job, you **have** to put the pay range for the job in the ad. The day before the law went into effect the businesses had already figured out a workaround.



There was a job for reporter that was between \$50,000 and \$145,000 a year. A technical writer was between \$125,800 and \$211,300 a year. A general counsel was between \$106,000 and \$241,000 a year. The day **before** the law was passed, the builders had already hacked the law and rendered it useless. Today, a year later, there are a lot more ways that the builders have managed to evade the law.

Justice eludes the workers and the predators win again, and this is American capitalism. From labor to vendors, to end users, the economic chain is heavily bent towards exploitation. America has massively wealthy companies, with massively wealthy individuals, and in most cases, it came about through ruthless exploitation.

For the most part, it wasn't done with justice, even though it might be technically legal. It was skill in building that was used to exploit the workers.

In case you are fuzzy on the issue, let's look at the Fortune 500 companies. There have been a lot of studies done showing how much more the CEO makes than the median salary for the rest of the staff. As of a couple of years ago, across the board, the CEOs for all Fortune 500 companies make 324 times more than the median wage in their company.

Amazon, of course, is the bad boy of all. The median wage is \$30,855, according to that study, and the CEO makes 6,474 times more than that. We all know Amazon is predatory.

At Expedia, the median wage is a lot higher at \$102,270. Impressive. The CEO makes just 2,896 times that every year.

How about McDonald's? Median wage is chump change at \$8,897, and the CEO of McDonald's makes 2,251 times the median wage of his company.

How about Christian capitalists? Well, I don't have the exact numbers, but Hobby Lobby is owned by a very high profile, loudmouth Christian. Median wage is \$33,862 a year. That is the median wage, not the entry level wage.

I was not able to find the figures for the CEO's salary, but I know that the press says he is personally worth \$14 billion. He is a Christian entrepreneur who happens to be a very good builder and is exploiting the capitalist system. How many billions do you need to live really well?

And it is getting worse. Four years ago, in 2019, the ratio of median wage to CEO pay was 264 times more. Now, it is 324 times more. The Fortune 500 companies of America increased their exploitation of labor by a factor of an additional 60 times more **during the pandemic**.

In what universe does that represent justice? There is a brutally ugly side to American capitalism and the 1% richest people are usually builders who have mastered the art of at least kind of, sort of, reasonably legal exploitation of somebody, somewhere. Usually, it is a lot of somebodies.



That is the kind of data that the socialists will trot out by the trainload, documenting the exploitive nature of capitalism. It is child's play. The numbers are there and are undeniable.

For the last century, socialism has been touted as the solution to capitalistic greed and exploitation. They have the figures to prove that capitalism is bad. The figures **are** undeniable. The exploitation **is** relentless.

But socialism is not the solution to the greed that drives exploitation and injustice. It merely moves the breakers and the takers from the C suite to the governmental offices.

Socialist governments eventually drift towards predatory practices. The builders who are breakers and takers in government become massively rewarded. The workers suffer. Exploitation abounds. Injustice is widespread.

In America recently, we got a good taste of socialism during COVID. Laws for thee, but not for me. Relentless, flagrant, heavy handed enforcement of laws for the citizens, matched by relentless, blatant opting out of those laws by government officials.

Russia, China, Cuba, Venezuela, North Korea, North Vietnam, and other socialist systems disproportionately reward the top layers of government while ruthlessly, heartlessly exploiting the general population, which socialism was supposed to help and doesn't.

It is hard to find a sustained socialist government that produces shared wealth. There are some brief windows with some level of equity. China had that in the last decade. They are said to have produced more billionaires per year than any other nation in the world. But that was a brief window. And guess what? That window is closing. The billionaires are getting rubbed out.

Their government is changing the rules relentlessly. The exploitation is through the roof and the disparity between the haves in government and the have nots in the marketplace is massive.

Here is my point. Both capitalism and socialism **will**, over time, default to massive exploitation and injustice. The exceptional builders **will** rise to the top. The system **will** be subverted to serve the unlimited greed of corrupt builders. Every time.

It doesn't matter whether it's capitalism, socialism, terrorism, a narco state, or a religion. Builders win and the breakers and takers among the builders tend to move to the top quickly regardless of the system.

They exploit and distort any system so that exploitation and injustice are the norm.

The world is changed by builders.



It is not changed by theoretical ideologies of economies, or governments, or religions or any other thing. Builders in all circles give lip service to ideology. Currently, the Republicans give lip service to democracy and the Democrats give lip service to equity, and it is primarily lip service on both sides.

It is the builders who transcend the ideology and build.

In the last 10 years social media has been significantly taken over by highly skilled builders who are enslaving people and depriving them of justice. A lot of people were shocked. I was not.

Education has been taken over by highly skilled builders who are bringing a huge amount of injustice and exploitation and breaking and taking into the schools. A lot of people were shocked. I saw it coming.

Medicine has become predatory. Part of that is due to the insurance culture, where powerful companies are controlling and shaping the medical culture. They are breakers and takers and injustice abounds. I was not surprised.

Neither religion or socially altruistic organizations are exempt. Save the Whales has morphed into save everything and the government exploitation and injustice of the Green Movement is on full display.

Let me tell you something. The Green Movement is nothing but a watermelon. It has a thin green shell on the outside and inside it is as red as any little communist culture you would ever want to see.

Laws for thee, but not for me. Staggering, indefensible discrepancy between the **words** of the ideological leaders and their lifestyles. The carbon footprint of the top eco warriors is incomprehensibly high, and the proposed restrictions on the average citizen are steadily more outrageous.

They are deeply committed to degrading our lifestyles, while enhancing theirs and not diminishing their comfort one iota. It's a classic watermelon. A thin green rind covers the big, fat, red communist agenda.

The season of altruism in ecology is far gone. This is a predatory practice run by highly effective but lawless builders who are pursuing power at your expense.

Now there **is** an organizational arc from well-intentioned beginnings to the inevitable distortion by corrupt builders. You may be in the early phase of some economic, governmental or religious structure where altruism offers justice for a season. Avail yourself of that. Build wildly in the context of justice while knowing that it is not going to stay that way.

Eventually, the predatory builders who are breakers and takers will intrude.



The HOA that was formed in your neighborhood may have been wonderful the first few years, but 15 years down the road, most HOAs are controlled by petty tyrants. The corrupt builders have taken over, justice is gone, rules are distorted and exploitation is rapid.

Why?

Because builders win in the short run.

God enforces justice in the long run. But sometimes the long run is across centuries, and the most driven builders tend to be the most wicked. Exploitation and injustice flow like a river in almost every sector of every society.

The primary question is only the level of deception or disguise. Vladimir Putin's brand is a breaker and a taker. It is clear. Nobody really frames him as being altruistic. Many other breakers manage to maintain a better brand for a season, especially in religious circles, but they're breakers nonetheless.

And they are in leadership because they are builders, not because they are altruistically in line with the ideology they proclaim.

I strongly suggest that you lay down the fantasy that justice is in a system. Having another church split or another denominational split, or changing the government from this to that might be a temporary fix, but in the new organization, highly skilled builders with a heart of a breaker or a taker will come to power and will almost invariably subvert any system.

I prefer capitalism over socialism for **one reason only**. It is decentralized.

Governmentally controlled socialism has a longer arm and a bigger club, and a stronger penchant for uniform oppression.

Look at China today and the universality of the heavy-handed government.

In capitalism, power is less centralized. If you think Starbucks and Amazon are predatory, quit your job. Go work for a small organization that is earlier in the organizational arc or start your own business. You have choices.

In capitalism, I have more wiggle room within the culture of injustice than I do in socialism. Both will devour ruthlessly, but I can game the system better in a decentralized, unevenly predatory-free market system than any government system.

California became more and more predatory in their governmental regulations, so I moved. And I **could!** I moved to South Carolina. It is not perfect. It is easier in some ways to do business, harder in others, but I had a choice. I have more choices in the US than I would have in China or Venezuela.



I carefully inspected the playing field. It took us a year to decide where to go when we left California, because we were doing due diligence. I pick my battles carefully, but I have no faith in any system staying stable.

The insurance that I bought five years ago was the best in the market. How much slippage has there been in that system? Do I need to look elsewhere? Do I need to review all of the economic packages that we have to see if we can do better?

We do that as part of business because I assume that sometime, somewhere, somehow, injustice will intrude into any part of my building system. But I will build anyway.

This is not a teaching on social justice. I am not asking you to agree with me. I'm simply doing full disclosure. I don't count on justice. My model of being a Christian builder does not depend on a religious, political, banking, or social structure to be honest, legitimate, or to give me justice.

Injustice is just another playing field where I have to learn better skills. Look at Jacob, David and Nehemiah. All of them faced rampant injustice and they built anyway. They learned to depend more on the power of God and less on the wisdom of men.

My first presupposition is that justice is desirable, but not essential, and that we can usually build something, somewhere, without justice. It is not fun, but it **is** doable.

08. Kingdom Grid

Now, why all of this?

Because of my second presupposition, which is that building is **central** to the Kingdom of God.

My perception is that Western Christianity has been perverted into a parody that's broadly blasphemous.

We get fire insurance in exchange for tossing God a bone.

The church is a day spa for the discriminating Christian soul who picks and chooses where they get the most warm fuzzies for their dollar.

And in a worst-case scenario, Christian movements are a Ponzi scheme, where you give money to save souls so they can get more money to save more souls, so they get more money, to save more souls, and God ends up holding the bag.

I loathe that distortion of what God designed the Church to be.



My grid is that there is a sequence from the Church to the Kingdom. The Church is designed to be female, mothering and is supposed to teach people how to receive appropriately from God in a broad spectrum of ways. Very few churches even comprehend that language.

After somebody has been in the Church for a season, and knows how to receive from God in a variety of ways, they move into the Kingdom mode, which is fathering. It is supposed to be a place to build.

Unfortunately, if you are not willing to build within the local church and their structures, most builders get evicted from the church and have to build outside. I'm not sure that's the way God intended it.

But I want you to ponder the Great Commission. How many words are there? It is between two and three dozen, depending on the Greek or the English.

THE Great Commission, given to the 11 apostles, was a mandate to take over the entire world. That was the metric. Go to all the nations and teach them everything I told you.

God gave an objective, and a tiny bit of sequence: Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and then everywhere else.

He gave no plans, no strategy, no operational manual. Nothing.

This is because it was within them. He had raised them to be builders and He expected them to receive, develop their skill set and find an appropriate place to play.

Watch where they went. There are some fascinating stories.

Let's take the guy who went the furthest — Thomas. So far as I can see, he was a Servant redemptive gift. Where did he go? He went to the huge Servant nation of India. He established a bulkhead for Christianity, that lasted all these centuries, because he was a right match. He found the right playing field for his expression of the gospel.

These are amazing, beautiful pictures.

You cannot carry out the Kingdom mandate based on doctrine and theology. You cannot do it based only on receiving in the church. It requires builders, and God deliberately skipped the operations manual because He wanted it to come from **within** his sons in the kingdom.

We cannot do the Kingdom work without being builders.

Jesus initially recruited builders. We know about four entrepreneurs and a tax collector was also an entrepreneur. He modeled how to build spiritual structures, because He built no human structures. Jesus did not build an organization.



He left behind the mandate for everybody to come in through the door of the Church and then to move into Kingdom building. You cannot be a fully mature believer doing what God called you to do without being a builder. Somewhere, somehow there is something you are supposed to build. We are not just to obey, or just be at peace, or receive, or be comfortable, but to build.

It IS mandatory.

That is my presupposition.

And that is why I am passionate about this issue of an entire generation of believers and non-believers who have been loved, who have been told they're extraordinary, who may have been told that God sees them as special, but they can't build a thing and they are useless.

Or they are worse than useless. They are devouring resources with their self-medicating.

The Kingdom requires us to **build**.

09. *A Basic Model*

Let's go back to my basic model of three things.

First, you need assets. That is what the mothering is for. Jesus sent the Twelve and He told them they were to receive assets from the community, not take assets from their American Express card. They were to use their assets of spiritual authority. They were to use their assets from the teachings they had heard.

On the Mount of Olives, He sent them back to Jerusalem. He said wait there until the power comes. They needed more assets from the Spirit.

And when the Spirit came, what did they do? They messed up. They defaulted to Communism, instead of using the assets from God. Some sold their capital assets, which was an absurd long-term strategy, because you consume your seed corn. And they developed predators very quickly in the book of Acts.

It was the injustice of Herod trying to kill Peter that caused them to revert to their spiritual power of intercession to bust him out of prison, and it worked when they went back to the assets that **God gave them**.

There is a joke that has been around for so long it is moldy. The church broadly can no longer say what Peter and John said, "Silver and gold have I none."



And the church also broadly cannot say, "In the Name of Jesus, stand up and walk."

God has designed us to know our assets and to use the assets He gave us.

Second, you need to develop skill. Some is developed by choice — the things that we decided to lean into. Some by a wise mentor, if we actually have one. Mostly by God, as He traps us in places where He knows we need to grow skill.

I remember that with deliverance. I was one of the early people in the deliverance movement, and I was so proud of myself because I could recognize two critters and knew what to do with them. I couldn't understand why those two rarely came along. God kept ambushing me with something that I didn't know.

I was so tweaked at God because I wanted Him to let me to shine with what I knew. Instead, He was unpacking me. He was moving me into hardship, where I **had** to learn things I didn't want to learn.

All of us have a very uneven skill set but to see what we actually **have**, is vital. You cannot play a Scrabble game with the letters turned over.

Some have a sense of calling and started learning skills, most just drift through life with God imposing lessons on them.

Third, you need a playing field. God is responsible to set it up. We are responsible to **see** it and to step into it. And therein lies the challenge.

One of the most remarkable stories that I have heard was of Richard Wurmbbrand, who was a Romanian pastor during the Cold War. He pastored for a while and was finally arrested and put in prison. And then he asked God, "Well, what do I do now?"

God responded somewhat crisply saying, "Well, I called you to be a pastor, so pastor your congregation!"

He learned that he could use the day – if he was not being tortured – to think and to plan his message. He learned that he could use the power of the Holy Spirit to ping the people in his congregation and learn what they were going through so that he could pray for them strategically.

Furthermore, he learned that he could preach from the prison, whispering at night when he was supposed to be asleep. When he came out of prison, his congregation could remember the details, the illustrations, the text, the exact day that he preached **that** sermon. They could hear in the spiritual realm.

He thought his playing field was over when he was taken out of the church and put in prison. God said, "No, the rules of the game changed slightly. You have significantly different assets, but you are still a pastor."



We have to accept the playing field that God has for us, grow into it, and then build where he wants us to build.

Your Christianity would change immensely if you started each day asking three questions.

-What assets do I have?

-What skills can I bring to bear on those assets?

-Where has God positioned me **today** to build with His help, for His kingdom?

The goal is not peace and comfort. The command is to take over the world and transform it. And to do that, we **have** to be builders, not theologians, not hunters, but builders.

10. Seminar Focus

On August 12, 2023, we are going to have a seminar entitled Passionate Manhood Part 3, in Shelby, North Carolina.

That seminar is going to focus on discovering and coming to terms with the assets you have.

Every redemptive gift has a default set of assets. Do you know what yours are?

Each one of us has a particular relationship to the Father, the Son or the Holy Spirit and there are expected assets depending on that relationship. Somebody who is called to community will have different assets than somebody who is called to dominion. Do you know what your assets are based on your relationship with the Trinity?

Each one of us is designed to be primarily fathering or primarily mothering. It has nothing to do with gender. I know a lot of women and a lot of marriages where the woman is doing the fathering and the father is doing the mothering and it is okay. It works because they are walking as they are designed. Do you know what you were designed for?

There are assets from time, land and community. One of the most powerful experiences I ever had was in Amman, Jordan. Back in the day, I used to take a few days off every year in December to go away and be with the Lord. I asked Him where to go one year. He said, "Amman, Jordan."

I began reading about it. I discovered that Amman has the highest medical tourism of any city among the nations of the Middle East and Africa. They were a center point for excellent medicine so people came. I thought, "That's interesting."



I went there. I spent a week or so in a hotel waiting on the Lord and listening. And out of that came a huge shift into the medical research that I have been doing. God drew from that land to dramatically change the trajectory of my life.

You have assets from time, from land, from community. Can you deconstruct God's purposes about your journey and where you've been, and when you've been there, to see what assets you received?

How about your journey and the parable of talents? The guy that kept his talent safe and didn't expand it got blasted. Have you ever made an inventory of all the different assets you have? You are unique, so your treasures, your Scrabble letters are unlike anybody else's. Have you ever listed them?

How about redemption for the bad stuff? God loves to avenge Himself upon His enemy. Where is there an open account in your life where the enemy has done this, this and this, and God has not avenged Himself yet?

There are some assets that will flow into your life in that sector someday, somehow, somewhere. Do you keep a list of which accounts are open between God and the devil?

What are your anchor truths?

Mine is Ephesians 3:10. The new colors of God's wisdom. I know it. I live it.

What is your anchor truth?

Do you know that is where some assets are going to flow to you?

These are some of the topics that we are going to explore in Shelby on August 12. We will be looking at how we identify our assets, how we position ourselves to **see** our Scrabble letters, so that we can play a good game.

My expectation is that in February of 2024, we'll look at the second level, which is how to grow your skill, and then August of 2024, we will look at how to build in the reality of this world.

It is a continuing series that I will be working on for many years, because builders win, not ideologically right people, not righteous people, not sincere people.

Builders win and we are called to be builders.

This is overtly a commercial for the August event, inviting you to come, but I can only touch a few lives there. The audio will be recorded for the rest of the Tribe around the world.

But this passionate message will be my drumbeat until I die.



You are called to be a builder. You are called to build with the power of God and the principles of life. And you are called to raise up another generation of builders.

However you learn, whether you learn from me or someone else, is immaterial to me. But if you're not committed to being the right kind of builder, in congruence with your design, and with your journey, and with your season in history, you'll have to answer some hard questions when you meet the King face to face.

Building is not a specialty, although there are a lot of specialists within the building concept.

Becoming effective builders in life is a bare minimum requirement.

And it is also the most fantastic way you will ever find for growing intimacy with God.

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