

Build for YOURSELF an Ark: Your Life **CAN** Float

Divine Design for the 21st Century

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Here's the Introduction/dedication/thanks and all that kind of stuff:

The flow of this book is about Noah and the Ark. More specifically it deals with the reason that it actually floated. Noah's ark did not float because he was a master ship builder. That boat floated because it was built to God's exact specifications' – that is, *by divine design*.

My purpose in writing this book was to parallel the building of **all** God's structures to the building of the ark. That is, if we build our lives by *divine design*, even the worst of storms will not cause us to capsize.

The title, "*Build for yourself and ark*," comes from the bible. Although the ark had a far reaching purpose, Noah was told that it was for him and his family.

Special thanks to Joel and Melody Helm. Throughout the book, I basically used their home as an example of what *divine design* might look like in this century.

Also thanks to Farris Cox Ministries and his Divine Design Ministries International (where I first saw the concept).

Thanks to Delois Jones for helping guide me in writing itself.

And finally to my wife Regina who stayed on me to complete it.

The book is painted with broad strokes with little to no theology for a purpose. Simply, I wanted those inside and outside the church to see that the reality of *Divine Design* is not limited to religious expression. Rather it s an undeniable and universal principle.

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CHAPTER 1

it's all in the design

Melody, a family friend, drew the house floor plans for the home which the family would reside in for years to come. She is not a builder and has no prior knowledge of housing construction. Yet the ultimate plan was “build for her family – a house”

Melody had many things in mind as she put her “God given” vision on paper. She considered everything from the living area, the four bathrooms, wall colors, the two water heaters, and storage areas for both levels. The design had to answer the family’s growing needs on a day-to day basis and had to be visitor friendly.

Her kitchen would have to support her cake making activities along with the corresponding appliances and strategically positioned electrical outlets. Her husband, Joel, needed an office, a shed, and a place to park the extra car and tractor. Melody would also need a sewing room that would be used often.

The home would have to be set on the land in a manner that would allow a place for the pool and decking area earmarked for the future.

But what about those things that Melody didn’t know? How would she calculate the stress points on the beams and the load bearing walls on both floors? How would she come about the knowledge of plumbing, electrical, carpentry and the masonry skills necessary to see the house through to completion?

What Melody needed was a builder.

It was one thing for her to have vision and ideas. But in reality if the family was to dwell there - in safety – and the home was going to function as planned, it would have to be constructed NOT by what Melody felt or thought, or even by popular opinion. Rather, the home would have to be built in accordance with proper building codes.

So what did I learn from Melody and this building experience?

I gained insight to God's incredible plan to save mankind through the building of an ark. God's specifications were irrefutable, the dimensions planned to perfection.

Unlike Melody, the Lord had full comprehension of the engineering necessary to complete the task to perfection. To the best of my understanding – He did not check with the county and state code enforcers. After all, He created physics.

So what did God need Noah for? Like Melody, He needed a builder - one that would build without variations of His divine plan. God's plan of offering hope to all mankind, beginning with Noah's family – in the form of the ark - had to be built by divine design. Otherwise, the ark would not have floated.

The Lord told Noah exactly how He wanted that boat to end up. He told Noah, (loosely quoted from the bible), "and this is the way you are to make it." God took into consideration how long this enormous project would take, how much it would cost, and what purpose it would serve in the future.

My thesis is therefore this:

If we want to "float" in the middle of a flood, no matter what form it may come, we must build our families, businesses, our civic organizations and yes even our government in accordance with the will of God – that is *by divine design*.

If we use build or lives in accordance with God's divine design, we will sail through the problems of life. No matter what storms may come our way - health, economics, the price of oil or even the state of the environment, our lives will be safe in the middle of it all – like the ark during the flood.

Essentially, this is the concept of, "building for yourself an ark." Since this is the theme of the book, I can promise more on this later.

Divine design is a foreign concept to us that live here in America. Are we not free to do as we please?

Yes and amen! However, if you want to know how to float through the worse of storms, adjustments to our lives are in order. Only God's divine principles will offer hope, peace, and safety through life's struggles.

You may be thinking, "I will use some of those ideas but not all of them." Just imagine if Noah seasoned the ship with a few of his own ideas. Did he really need to water seal all the seams on all three decks? No - when Noah was told to water seal the great ship, he evidentially took no short cuts because you and I are here today.

What if we save a little lumber and reduce the number of compartments? And, if it was going to rain, why in the world would we build a window – near the top? By the way, where was the rudder? There is no mention of one in the design.

Research has shown that the ark's dimensions, the ones supplied by God, were so precise that even a slight change would have challenged the buoyancy of the massive craft. I like the word "buoyancy." By definition the word means, "The tendency of an object to float." May I ask you a question – under tough circumstances, do you normally "sink" to the bottom of despair and fear? Let me continue with the idea of building for *yourself* an ark.

I have a friend, Calvin, who opened a coffee shop just a few blocks from my house.

One of the pre-opening questions he was asked was, "can you compete with the Starbucks stores in the area?"

Another question that was asked of Calvin prior to opening was, "Is it going to be a Christian coffee shop?" This has everything to do with building by divine design.

Calvin has indeed built his business by divine design. He treats others how he wants to be treated; he pays his bills on time and is kind and gentle to his guests.

The coffee shop is always clean and the music non-offensive. Yes – this coffee shop will float because these biblical principles on which his business is built cannot fail.

Do you want your life to float in the worst of storms? If your answer is yes, and I assume it is since you are reading this book, then your ministry, your family, in addition to anything else that you may have under construction must be built by God's standards.

I have never seen a family sink when storms came if the leaders in that family turned to the scriptures to find their answers to the questions.

Never in my ministry have I seen a divorce when the husband truly loved the wife as Christ loved the church. More simply put, *when the husband is applying God's divine design for marriage* - the relationship is normally salvaged. It's not often that a marriage will end if the wife is honoring the husband in his role as head of the relationship. This is another principle of marriage found in God's divine design.

I have seen churches split NOT over the color of carpet or whether the church should permit the speaking in tongues. Rather, churches split because its people do not, as the Bible teaches, *consider others above themselves*. We want what we want - and we want it like we want it. This is not divine design.

Can you imagine a salesman that sold with the same dignity as say Daniel? What did Daniel say in the first chapter of the book named for him? In essence he said, 'look, if you will let us eat and do what is in accordance with the divine design of God, we will be healthy and wise.'

That is exactly what happened. Those who followed the dietary plan of God grew to be noticeably healthier and wiser.

Imagine your sales at an all time high!

How will you respond at the sales meetings when you are asked, “how is that you are outperforming everyone in your area?”

I submit that we can advance the Kingdom of God in any career we are working at, whether we are the worker on the floor of the processing plant or the leader of the free world.

We can shine with enthusiasm knowing that the Lord God is directing our steps because we are building our work ethic on divine design. Yes, labor and leadership principles are in the Bible too.

Wouldn't all of our sociological questions be answered if we allowed the Lord to establish the definition of family and of life? I promise to address this later.

How well we could learn if we, as fathers, didn't provoke our children to become angry people? Jesus said that a wise man builds his house upon a rock.

Friend, as a pastor I have many opportunities to speak into the lives of those who are facing financial, emotional and physical floods. I have yet to see the Bible fail in these and all situations.

King Solomon built a temple so inconceivable that the Queen of Sheba recognized God as great! This temple was built by Solomon, with plans given to him by his father, David – who got them from God. If we build our churches, our families and our business by divine design, people will quickly see that there is something special about our God!

If you read that account, you will find that all the resources the king needed to complete the project was provided. Such was the case in many other accounts in the Bible.

It's an old saying but it bears repeating; “Where God guides, God provides.” Just go read the story of Nehemiah.

If you go no further in this book than right here you will have learned enough to get started. Most of us know right from wrong – just start there.

I am not saying that suddenly your business will prosper and your spouse will stop the divorce proceedings. No – this is not a pill of happiness or the next prosperity book.

It is ridiculous to think we can spend years piling up trash and then with one “amen” that all our problems go away. Even the ark of Noah was subject to the battering of the winds and waves - but it held together.

What I am saying is that if you build His way – you will not only survive the great storms of life, but new opportunities can and probably will open up to you. That’s exactly what happened to Noah. He did things by divine design only to lose everything that He knew. At the same God set him up with a brand new start that you and I are enjoying today.

CHAPTER 2

measure twice – cut once

Here I want to invoke a more practical understanding of the mechanics involved in the process of, “building yourself an ark.”

To better understand this idea of “measure twice – cut once,” it would be helpful to further revisit the pool area that Melody has planned for. I mentioned it in the previous chapter.

When the time had come to begin the building of the decking, Melody solicited the help of friends and family. We soon realized a serious building issue - none of us have ever built a deck before. This particular one, that would have to accommodate the pool, was to be bigger than my first house. With Melody, nothing is half-done.

As we built, we would have to stop, think, plan our resources and check to be sure that everything was aligning correctly. We knew that if we were a little off in the early stages that it would cause problems for us later. When we rushed the process– we would mess up and end up redoing something.

To take this concept even further, we can use for an example those hired by Melody and Joel to build their home. Remember, the general contractor and builder, although capable, would have to build the home to Melody’s specifications in order that the ultimate purpose for its building would be the end result.

Yet even with a licensed builder or contractor in place, each stage would still have to be inspected by local code enforcement, certifying that all things are being done to specific regulations to ensure first and foremost the safety of the home’s residents.

Noah, I'm sure, was careful at each stage. I am convinced that there were no county building inspectors. After all, Noah lived far from the sea. Who really cared if he built a boat at all much less whether or not Noah built it correctly?

So, how do we know if we are building by divine design? Here's an example.

Recently we added a new member to our governing board of elders. Gilbert and I don't agree on everything. He is old enough to be my father. Frankly, I consider some of his ideas old fashion. So why would I want him governing the church with me? Gil can see things that I cannot. Just as God saw things that Noah could not conceive, and had him build the ark accordingly, Gil has years of experience that foresees issues before they happen. By allowing him to "inspect" my efforts, he can help me adjust to those storms that are inevitably coming.

When it comes to building my family and even writing this book I asked for help from those who have been successful in building in these areas. For me, this was like having "inspections." Never be afraid to ask for help. Use others that have accomplished what you are striving for as a plum line for your building. I just want to make sure that I am building to divine design.

This is what I mean when I say measure twice and cut once. Simply, I ask for help and I seek counsel to the degree of importance that the decision I have to make merits. I am a team kind of person. I allow no ministries in the church that are not made up of a team with one team leader. Just for the sake of explanation, we do use terms such as pastor, teacher, director, deacon and elder just to name a few. But regardless of the title the concept of team remains.

Let's take for example my creative team. Their sole job is to help me relate the weekly message in a manner that it creatively compelling. I may bring forth an idea that the team quickly shoots down. Or as I am presenting a certain principle, they will help me find the best way to say it in a manner that the masses can relate to. Measure twice and cut once.

Sunday morning is not the time to figure out if what we are presenting to the crowd is formed well enough to effectively communicate.

This principle is so important in child rearing... (I wish I would have learned this principle much sooner). My wife and I make decisions based upon private discussions that we have. We measure different ways to answer a certain concern. Then, in turn, we produce a polished, firm and well thought out answer. We measure twice and cut once. Businesses are usually pretty good about this kind of thing and builders do it by nature. They discuss potential problems and possible solutions before they move on a project.

Just for sake of balance – you can go so far in planning that you, “analyze until you’re paralyzed.” We all understand that there are times to simply ready-FIRE-aim.

Believe me, the homeless and hungry guy really could care less if your committee is well formed or not. He just wants the hot dog and the blanket.

At the same time, you will find that being as ready or as planned as possible will save you time, resources and aggravation. But there are just those times when you got to go for it!

Caution: Don’t be the person who jumps at the first good idea that comes along. Ask yourself, “Is this a God idea?” It is always better to move out of revelation rather than just a good idea. Is the new idea part of God’s divine design for me, my business or my church? Remember, by building according to God’s plan you are simultaneously building yourself an ark. We in the Christian world often pray that The Lord will direct our steps. This is a sound practice for making sure we are building according to divine design.

How quick do you react to your spouses and your children before you think, measure the facts, and responded according to divine design? Be honest, do you “fly off the handle” as the saying goes? Or do you measure you reactions and responses according to the Word of God (AKA divine design)?

Have you ever made a purchase or a supposed rational decision and then later asked yourself, "What was I thinking?" Then YOU my friend did not measure twice and cut once to make sure that your decision was based on divine design. It is probably safe to assume that you paid for that purchase or decision in one way or another for some time after. And once you did make the purchase, did it challenge the buoyancy of your finances?

Let me go ahead and say this: There is a design for everything in life. Nothing is happening by chance. God has designed a path that is just for you. It is not a matter of Him controlling you in some sort of robotic response system. Think of His design for your life as a loving invitation to join Him on a journey that will bring true comfort, peace and meaning to your life. His invitation is one of hope and destiny.

Years ago, I was listening to an interview by William J. Murray. He is the son of the well known atheist Madalyn Murray O'Hair. Madalyn was famous for the Supreme Court case Murray v. Curlett which led to a landmark ruling ending the practice of daily prayer in American public schools. By the time of the interview, her son William had already converted to Christianity and had written his first book, "My life without God" (Harvest House Publishers, 1982). As the debate between himself and the atheist community continued, "Bill" was asked the question, (the best I can remember it), 'how can God allow the terrible things to happen such as mass starvation.' Mr. Murray's answer was both factual and brilliant. He simply replied, (again – this is me loosely quoting him), 'all those nations (that suffer from mass starvation), are atheist nations.' Wow, I thought. Not only was he correct but that principle is still true today.

It is my dream that this book will be read all over the world. But speaking for the United States of America, we do not measure our decisions based upon the divine design of God. We seldom buy what we can afford, we purchase in accordance with what the bank will finance. We are certainly seeing the results of that in the news at the time of this writing.

Speaking for myself, I hear little to no reference to God in setting public policy....a problem perhaps? Yeah, I think so.

No divine design = no divine guidance.

In Chapter 5, I go even a little deeper into political ideology. As we close this chapter I would just repeat that divine design requires a higher level of measurements. Find those and you find the very heart of God. Find His heart and you are building by divine design. Build by divine design and your ship will float when the waters of life rise and beat against it.

CHAPTER 3

build for yourself an ark

This chapter is the title cut for the book

The more I helped Melody build this deck, the more complicated it became. This "ark" took on a life of its own. With each passing weekend it grew and grew. Now, instead of a simple set of steps from the high part to the low part, we built a geographical wonder that seems to me to serve the same purpose. Getting to the pool level deck of this massive union of boards and screws will now be possible without the feet of those seeking to bathe, either in the sun or in the water, ever touching the ground. A wooden walkway was constructed from the concrete patio area to the aforementioned place. We are building not one but two walkways to the sun and pool deck. By the way, at the time of printing, the building continues.

With divine design comes fulfilled purpose.

Building a massive sailing vessel in Noah's neck of the woods was preposterous. Even the great minds of the theologians have mixed and sometimes very different views of how Noah got the job done and even how God actually flooded the planet. Perhaps even more intriguing is the very word that the assumed writer of the story, Moses, chose to use to describe the ark itself.

The word he chose is a difficult one indeed. Making it difficult is the fact that it is used only twice in the bible. Once here to describe the boat itself and again used by Moses as he recorded the account of his own life; specifically of the basket he was placed in as a child.

According to the smart people, the word is likely of a foreign derivative meaning, "box". A box – well thanks a lot Moses. Why couldn't you use the words you had for ship or for boat. I know if you look at the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) you will find that the translators used the same word for the Ark of the Covenant as they did for the Ark of Noah - but not the basket of Moses...not much help there. In essence, the word means *box* or *coffin*. Well, we know for a fact that Noah's ark was anything but a coffin.

I am going to leave this aspect of the conversation to those who care to debate it. Let me ask you to consider simply that the word chosen by Moses to describe the ark could be as simple as Moses saying that, "in the same way that I was rescued as a baby in the water, Noah and his family was rescued in a likewise amazing manner."

Here's why that matters. You will note that in the New American Standard Version of The Bible (The Lockman Foundation, 1992), The Lord told Noah to make "for yourself" an ark. Make it for Noah? Well, we have been alluding to this but here it is in hard writing. That's right – The Ark was for Noah and his family.

Remember the Lord told Noah that he was going to build something that would rescue him and his family from the total destruction of the world while at the same time he would be fulfilling the purpose of the Lord.

What can we learn here? This is simple. When we do what the Lord says to do according to His plans, not only will you complete the task in a form that serves His divine purpose but it will also keep you afloat under the most difficult situations.

Can you imagine your business prospering during an economic depression? How about your wife or mother being diagnosed with breast cancer, as was the case with my wife Gina, and watching the Lord supply the 10's of thousands of dollars needed for not only the treatments but the \$30,000+ for the reconstruction surgery? It can happen for you as it did for me. How you ask? My wife and I are committed to building our lives by design.

We sought the Lord each and every day to, "guide our steps – and that we wanted His will for our lives." We followed the steps and we were saved from the flood of debt!

An ark made absolutely no sense in the natural mind for such a vessel to be constructed in the middle of nowhere. My studies show that Noah may have lived near rivers that would have made room for much smaller sailing and fishing vessels. We may never for certain due to the massive disturbance of the landscape as a result of the flood.

Noah's ark had no rudder, no sail, and no method of any guiding or propulsion with the exception of the moving waters. I think you can see the correlation.

Our God is not limited to our vision or our budget. I see this more often than not in the ministry. Church leaders will meet together; discuss the budget and then the vision of the Lord for the church. It is my strong belief that, "if God guides-He also provides"

His ways are higher than ours. The Bible discusses God having plans to do great things through us that are more magnificent than our brains can even phantom.

Neither Melody, her husband Joel nor myself have ever done construction work to the extent that Mel, (as we affectionately refer to her), was wanting. However, we all recognized that under the direction of her vision we could see it through and that deck/pool area would serve its purpose.

It was the same for Noah. God in essence was simply saying, 'Noah, if you will build by the pattern I have set before you – you will fulfill My purpose for your life. At the same time, I will see that you and your family are cared for.'

We must build by divine design. I recently asked Melody, "How do you know how to everything from sowing to baking, designing and now building." She replied simply that she did not limit Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who empowers me." She added, "Most people use this when there is trouble but I use it for everything I attempt."

We CAN do all things through Christ and I will not attempt to limit that. To be more specific to the Noah account, remember that he found "grace" in the site of the Lord. Once God graces us or favors us to do something, He sends everything we need to accomplish the task.

He used an Egyptian pharaoh to finance Joseph's dreams, a boy's lunch to feed thousands, and a virgin girl to deliver the Savior of the world! Speaking of Mary, it was she who said that, "For with God nothing is ever impossible and no word from God shall be without power or impossible of fulfillment." (The Amplified Bible The Zondervan Corporation and The Lockman Foundation 1965).

Just imagine God giving you marching orders to start in a church in the middle of an inner city in a town that you are not familiar. Can you envision the Lord leading you to go to an Ivy League school while you are on public assistance? What if – just what if, The Lord directed to preach when you have neither the ability to read nor to write – yet?

We have a young lady in our church that is going to attend a major out-of-state university costing over \$100,000. And yes, you guessed it, it's all paid for. Her education will "float" because she and her parents have always built their lives on Biblical principles. Please note that I did not say that the entire family went to church – because they all don't. By biblical principles I mean being generous, giving, doing their best at every opportunity just to name a few.

The Bible states that it is they the "wait" upon the Lord that mounts up like eagles. Well then, just how does an eagle "mount up?" He waits.

The eagle will wait until the sun's ray's heat the earth enough for the thermal currents to rise up to his elevation. Once the conditions are just right, the eagle will then begin to flap his wings in order to gain some 15 feet of elevation. After that, an eagle may only flap his wings 2 minutes per hour.

One Hebrew definition for the word *wait* is "to be intertwined." There's the secret! Get so intertwined with God that as he moves in the Spirit, you simply and effortlessly get caught up in the currents of his will. It is the chicken and he crows who get up early and flap around just trying to peck out a daily existence. You and I are called to a much higher place.

One last word – never assume that the Lord God of Heaven can't do it through you! Just as Nehemiah overcame impossible odds and opposition to rebuild the walls in Jerusalem you too can overcome all obstacles. God can supply from the cedars of Lebanon and give you favor with kings as he did for Solomon. David defeated the Philistines in more than one method even though he faced the same opponent in the same valley. David simply consulted the Lord and he carried out the war effort by divine design.

God will give you the plans to build your ark - and it will float as long as you are willing to build it by His specs using His materials in His time frame. Build yourself an ark by handling your money, your business, your family and piers, and of course you ministry, in a manner that is by divine design and it will float even if the rest of the world is suffering around you.

CHAPTER 4

good help is hard to find

Let's briefly talk one last time about this infamous backyard project, and the family that is building it, so that you get a good idea where this chapter finds its roots.

The family that I have been speaking of is a normal, middle class couple as far as church folks go. Joel is a retired Gunnery Sergeant from the U.S. Marines and now works for the US Federal Government. Melody works as a paraprofessional in the local school system. By the time you read this chapter, Joel, in his 40's will have finished his Bachelors degree and will have begun his graduate education while Melody decided to halt the pursuit of further education with her associate degree from Rhema Bible Training Center. Joel too has been through Rhema. It is where the couple met. They have a lovely 2 story house as I described to some extent in the first chapter. The home would be considered placed in an upper middle-class neighborhood.

Now, as far as the backyard project is concerned-

We started with hand tools digging a 12" wide by 18" inches deep ditch. This was dug into the hard Georgia clay to make room for the gutter drainage system.

Following that was the steps coming from the second floor to a walkway that, to quote Melody, is "long." The walkway then steps down to a deck that is $\frac{3}{4}$ surrounding the oval shaped above-ground pool. Because of the hard ground – she designed a "floating" deck. To make a very long story short – the deck has a surface area of almost 1000 sq feet.

Now for you builders that may not be anything special. For me, this deck is bigger than some houses and apartments I have lived in. We had to level the sloped ground to accommodate the 18' X 35' foot swimming pool. This too was solid hard clay.

There are 2 things I want us to draw from this.

First we have the labor issue. Most decks cost between 5 and 10 dollars per square ft. in materials alone. I will let you do the math. How was Melody going to see deck come to pass? It would take many hours of labor. I cannot begin to tell you how many times I have seen Melody, along with perhaps one of her children taking on this project. Melody knew that she was going to be the primary laborer, finance and project manager. Frankly, her husband and I were happy to leave those things with her.

At the first part of the project, her husband was working 5 and 1/2 days per week and over 60 hours per week. I was not only the pastor of the church but at that time I was working full time outside the church overseeing 2 Starbucks stores – the latter wasn't all that bad.

We don't know how much help Noah had. I have read behind some who have suggested that Noah, his wife, three sons and their wives couldn't possibly have done this job on their own. I tend to agree but we will never know for sure. We know that if Noah was going to have outside help, he had to find people that were willing to do things exactly like he wanted things done. Having spent many years in management as well as years of ministry experience, I have found that indeed good help is hard to find.

Now I urge you to ask yourself if you are a good worker. Are you one who is willing to do what you are called to do when you are called to do it in a manner that is pleasing to the Lord? This is the price of building by divine design.

If we are not careful we will easily find ourselves filtering the words of the Lord through our own fears and emotions or our best business sense. We tend to make God and his vision for us small enough to fit inside our denominational beliefs or within the guidelines that our reputation can bare.

God always invites us to be a part of something bigger than ourselves. Further, any project that God wants to accomplish will always require his ingenuity, laborers and finances. If you can accomplish it on your own than it's probably not a God sized design.

Let me pose some questions to the Christian reader. What would Christian service look like if we truly allowed Jesus Christ to be the head of the church? How would we react to our spouses, children and bosses as we are unfairly treated? It easy for us to do as God commanded as long as it fits into what we believe is our vision and our calling. David was not called to be a shepherd but rather a king. But he was more than willing to humbly serve as the leader of dumb sheep until God raised him up to be the leader of a people.

Are we Christians divine builders or do we do (as we accuse "the world") that which is right in our own eyes.

Do we move from church to church as we please or do we allow God to set as He pleases? Remember, He planted the garden as well as placed the man.

Are you willing to change occupations, or walk away from unscriptural relationships?

Raise your hand if you are asked to walk to the middle of the wilderness and start a church. When Isaiah saw the condition of His nation through the eyes of God, he became very distressed. Then God asked Him a question that would forever change His life, the life of his countrymen, and would record a book that would forever affect you and I.

This same question I now pose to you. Who will God send? How about you? Will you go? Will you go and do what is required of you. Are you prepared to be a good worker and do what you know is right? If you do, your life will float! Please say, as Isaiah did, "Here am I, send me" if you are willing to conduct yourselves in a manner conducive of ambassadors of Christ in your families as well as your businesses.

It was the Apostle Paul in his writing to the church at Ephesus who wrote that workers are to obey your bosses like your working for Christ and do it in a manner as if you are being watched. I know that I took a lot of liberty in that quote but I think you will find that the meaning has not been compromised.

The second thing I want to bring out in this chapter is the simple issue of money. I told you on the onset that the family that I refer to in this book is not rich.

How can they afford to live in a 5000+ sq ft home and, just a few years later, spend over 20,000 dollars adding this beautiful addition to the home while supporting w/kids. Further, Melody drives a late model, fully Loaded SUV.

The answer is simple. This family runs their household budget by divine design. That's right – we are right back where are started. As pastor of the church, I have complete access to all financial records. However, I do not know who gives what. I just don't want giving to influence my decision making. Having said that, I know for sure these people believe in tithing.

Please don't get all, "New Testament" on me. I too can argue, "to tithe or not to tithe in the New Testament." But certainly there are some things that we can all agree on.

Romans 11:16 speaks of the principle of first fruits – making Jesus FIRST in manners of money is simply of matter of priorities. The bible says that not only is the planet the Lord's but so is everything in it. In other words, it's already all his money. Certainly you would agree that we reap what we sow and that the Lord gives seed TO THE SEWER.

Let me bring this to an end – the reason my friends have the money to do all these wonderful things and more is because God rewards the financial diligence. They have proven to God that they are willing to handle their money in the manner which the bible commands-that is by divine design. Joel and Melody understand what the bible means by the phrase, "it is more blessed to give then to receive."

If we are going to be a good laborer for Kingdom of God, we will have to manage our money. Build everything by divine design. As I state in chapter 5, it's the only logical thing to do.

Abraham was told that he would have a son. Instead of doing things by God's divine design, Abraham made his own design. God commanded that he bless Ishmael – even though God did not approve of him.

My caution here is that just because you see a "blessing" it does not mean that you are walking under the authority of divine design. Authority and true biblical power only flows when indeed the house is built to the spiritual blueprints of divine design.

David and His best friend Uzzah died because leadership did not know God's divine design for handling His presence in the form of the Ark of the Covenant. Soon after, David called all the scholars together and learned God's design for carrying that thing.

We can't just do what we want when we want or how our tradition dictates or even if it makes perfect sense. Uzzah was keeping the ark from falling. The problem is that it should have never been carried in the manner in which it was.

Now that I think of it, there is a third element that I would like to add here – perseverance.

This next thought is really a chapter of its own – but for here let me just say that Noah stayed faithful for 120 years.

Throughout the scriptures and throughout history, story upon story can be told of how those who have endured the ridicule, the hardness, and the challenges, have accomplished the goal.

Without the element of endurance you are open to be drawn away by frustration, emotion, popular opinion.

Ps -and this is for fun...after 120 years in the making, God used the ark for about 9 months. He told Noah after that to “junk it.” Just put that in your pipe and smoke it...that was for free☺

CHAPTER 5

it's logical and biblical

As I stated in the introduction, this book is meant for a broad audience. Yet, I feel some obligation to drive home this basic point:

There is a God and He has a plan and definite standards in which to reach His ultimate purpose.

Don't stop reading quite yet. Please, look around you – just look around you with an open mind. Everything from the cyclic nature of our world and universe to the great complexity of the human being speaks volumes about a divine design. It is only logical.

People from all walks of life, religions and philosophy's know that the world is designed in harmony with itself. "You reap what you sow" is just one example of the timeless and proven doctrines that is biblical in origin.

For the student of The Bible I submit that God will grant visitation at His will - but He will only permanently dwell in that which He designs.

He designed the Garden and dwelled with Adam. He told Moses how to build the church in the wilderness and God moved in. The same holds true for Solomon's temple.

Ps – the church is the same way.

Building yourself an ark is about constructing your life to the building standards set forth in the Scriptures. After all you are the "house of God" – more on this in a few paragraphs. Think of how Daniel was protected from a fate worse than death because his life was built upon the very frame work of God's laws. Consequentially, Daniel's God became the number one God in the nation. And Dan's friends survived a furnace because they would not violate God's 1st commandment. As they came out of this certain death, the Bible says that the three didn't even smell of smoke.

Let me just ask: do you want to get through the storms, the floods, the droughts, and the "fires" of life? Do you want to barley survive or would you rather come out the other end looking as if nothing happened – as in the case of the 3 friends of Daniel? If your answer is yes, you must build by divine design.

Now you are getting the idea why David could write the 23rd Psalm and say that even though he walked through, "the valley of the shadow of death" – he feared no evil.

I would argue, (but not here), that the United States is founded upon the principles of God. Again, I ask you to look around. Is the school system better off now that we have several decades of prayer less places of education? Again – you cannot deny the logic. How many school shootings did we have before we took prayer and bible reading out of school?

If you have ever been falsely accused or have ever truly done your best and found yourself not being believed, accepted or even fired – I urge you especially to read the story of Joseph. This is a guy that built his life by divine design. Even when Joseph could have had “relationships” with his boss’s wife he remained true to his commitment to God, himself and his boss – who happened to be a governor. Yet he chose prison over a one-night-stand. Why? He knew that living with integrity was part of God’s divine design for man. Integrity is all about those things that you choose to do not just in public but in private as well. As a result of Joseph doing the right thing, when the drought came, Joseph not only saved his own life but the life of everyone he loved. To accomplish the latter, Joseph also had to practice another Biblical principle - forgiveness. God worked it all out for good. Joseph built for himself an ark and just like Noah, it saved him and his family.

You see, when we choose to build our lives by divine design, we will survive the floods of health issues, the drought of poor economics, and the disaster of trying to rear children in a Godless society..

Now, as promised, a little more about the, “house of God.” I have labored much to keep theology as far from this book as possible and plan to pursue that same course here. But you must know that God is no longer an external God, but rather an indwelling God – and you’re the place of worship. By divine design, God has chosen to take up residence within the very heart of man – a tabernacle “not made with hands.”

For those that are His by the new birth - made possible through the free gift of salvation brought about by the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ – God “tabernacles” within that person.

Do your own study later. For now, it is your morals, ideas, philosophy’s that must be built upon a solid foundation – Jesus – then upon the principles of scripture.

In the Bible, God has a specific way He wants the church built. Read 1 Corinthians 12. Ministers if you are wondering why your life or your church is lifeless and powerless: you can blame it on the people, theology – or you can build your church by divine design. After all, it is His church to do with what He pleases.

And for the non-believer I say that these universal principles apply regardless. I already mentioned the life principle of reaping and sowing. To that I add, “The Golden Rule” (do unto others as you wish them to do to you). Does anybody really need to tell you not to steal, cheat on your spouse or lie on your taxes? Do you need a sermon to tell you that murder is wrong, cheating on a test is dishonest and not paying your bills is just plain irresponsible?

Back one last time to my friends Joel and Melody - The house and backyard project is, for all practical purposes, complete. All the things that the house and backyard project are designed to do. The family is enjoying the yard and the house is where all the neighborhood kids hang out. Melody makes cakes, Joel has his office, and the storage areas are well used.

We have all observed people that move from relationship to relationship, from church to church and from job to job. These are those who do not understand the principle that God has a design for them.

At the end of it all there is only one logical end. There is a plan. There is a design. That which is built accordingly will survive the worse of conditions. Those who do not - will not float but end up in divorce, unhappiness and poverty. Even those who I know that are financially wealthy find the need to accumulate more and more. Oh yes – they applied the stewardship principles of the bible. They indeed used the sound ideas found in the bible about investing, gaining interest, and using different streams of income. So why would these be in misery? Why the need to work all day and night to protect their investments and gain even more?

No divine design. They don't understand or practice the counter-balance that it is more blessed to give than to receive. These people have little to know understanding that Jesus is the real treasure.

In the New Testament, we see many that came to understand this principle. Once they did, they began to sell everything and give it to the poor and those among them who lacked. Others paid back 4 times what they sold – the stories continued. I repeat – There is a God and He has a Plan.

What now? You are at a place of decision. Will you yield to The Greater Authority? You may walk away from this book and worse His plan to prosper and not to harm you. God wants to be your Heavenly Father.

It is His desire to enter into a personal relationship with you to help you, guide you and invite you on a journey together with Him.

I hope I have made it abundantly clear that life's storms are coming. Surely by now you know you have weathered some. The bad news is that more are on the way as you pass through this thing we call life. Some will be of less intensity while others will desire to crush you. Why do you think that suicide is the number killer of people in their teens second only to accidents? There is no hope. They are taught in the schools from a very early age that there is no God and that they are simply a piece in an evolutionary trail of life and death. Unless they are taught at home, young people will never know that you are wanted, welcomed and a blessing individual creation from God. As long as they see mother murdering their babies, how will they ever understand the value of human life. Please don't even talk to me about the cultural phenomena known as dating.

I make no apology for reminding that the so-called political issues of our country (the U.S.) are more than just a banner to stand beneath. Rather they are warning signs that the country is moving away from its divine design. There is no nation that has stood to the fullness of what it once was when social preferences and civil rights weighed heavier on the hearts and minds of the people and the leaders of a nation.

There can only be one standard. When we built the deck we all used different rulers but they all measured the same. My yard stick was 36" and so was everyone else's who was measuring.

“Can’t we all just get along?” Yes but only if we all agree on the same things or at least those things that are essential. Methodology is not one of them. However, belief that there is only one true God with a divine plan for man is essential. You are that Christians know that you were saved because of a divinely designed plan to save you from your sins. I urge you to consider that salvation was only the start of the journey of His divine plan for you and not an end.

Your final challenge is this: Will I acknowledge God as The Supreme authority? If you will, you will find a place of safety, peace, and comfort in the worst of times.