

12 Foundation Stones

Class 0

Introducing the *12 Foundation Stones*

Introduction

Today we want to give you a little glimpse into the Activated *12 Foundation Stones* course. We'll go over what the course contains, as well as show you how you can benefit from these classes.

Going through this course is similar to launching out on a journey of discovery! When embarking on such a journey, the goal is to reach a destination and to explore fascinating and exotic places and discover things of wondrous value. Similarly, the goal here is to explore and discover the wonders of God and His Word that will make you spiritually rich beyond anything of value in this world.

When embarking on a journey, you don't go in a straight line from the starting point to your destination; you have to travel various roads that twist and turn. Yet you know you are pointed in the right direction and the end result will be worth the effort it took to get there.—And if at times you lose sight of the goal, the compass in your hand points you in the proper direction.

Likewise, in taking this course, you have in your hand the compass of the Word of God that is always pointing "true North" to lead you to your destination!

➤ **Four qualities for your journey of exploration**

Here are the four most important qualities for anyone who is going to launch out on a journey of exploration. Likewise, these same qualities are ones that you as an individual can make use of in embarking on this course.

1. Vision—Vision to see what others can't see. You say, "Hey, there's a destination over there and I want to get there, even though others don't want to or aren't willing to make the journey. I want to get there and see what I find!" That same kind of vision will help you to work through this material and integrate it and make it a part of your life. And not only live it in your own life, but also pass it on to others and really change the world. That's a big vision!

2. Faith—Faith to believe what others don't believe. In today's world, having faith in God's Word is not such a common thing. So just by being here in this class, by partaking of these things, you're participating in something that is unique and different. Just like someone who starts on a journey of discovery—it's not your everyday person who sets off to uncharted lands.

3. Initiative—Initiative to be willing to start the journey, to put your faith into action! As the proverb says: "A journey of 1000 miles begins with the first step!" It is often easy for people to talk about things, but actually getting out and doing them is a different story.

4. Courage—To see it through to the end. This is where failure most often occurs in a journey of discovery—for "well begun is only half done!" But with a bit of "stick-to-itiveness" you can make that commitment to tackle those pathways and know that with God's help you will succeed if you keep at it and don't give up.

➤ **You can do it!**

Perhaps the idea of launching out onto a journey of discovery, or taking this course, seems a bit overwhelming or too much for you—but for all of us our "secret to success" lies in claiming the verse:

Philippians 4:13—I can do all things through Christ Who strengthens me.

You may feel incapable, but God is capable in you!

When embarking on a journey, travelers often have guides who are more experienced. They've been down that road before and are somewhat familiar with the paths and where to place your feet to avoid the pitfalls.—And that is what we are here for, to help guide you along the way.

If you want to teach others, then this course will give you the information to be able to!

2 Timothy 2:2—And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

➤ **Foundation Stones**

This course is not about making you or your life perfect! It is about making your life happier and fuller. It is about finding answers to your questions, and it is about how to help those in your sphere of influence also experience these positive changes.

The classes in this course are like foundation stones. Each foundation stone describes an area of faith or practical knowledge that you can build the house of your life upon. Each foundation stone deals with you primarily, for if you can change yourself, then you can bring changes to others. Yet this is not just about your own faith and yourself. Remember always that these foundation stones are to help you build a life that reaches out to others.

Are you ready to take a peek at these *12 Foundation Stones*? You don't have to understand or remember everything we talk about today, as you'll learn about each one as we proceed through the course. If anything seems a bit mysterious now, don't worry about it! Things will become clearer as we progress through the classes.

Introducing the *12 Foundation Stones*

➤ **1. Becoming a Person of Faith (Classes 1a and 1b—"The Word of God")**

If you want to become a person of faith, someone who has a solid relationship with God, then you'll need to know what to read in the Bible, how to get the most from the time you have for reading, and how to develop good study habits. You need to have regular spiritual feeding, just like you regularly eat physical food. We will be devoting several classes to this important subject.

If you don't already have a Bible, please obtain one, as it is the main "textbook" for our course and we'll be helping you get to know it better.

■ **One way we know the Bible is true is that it works!**

The Word of God has the power to change lives, and we'd like to tell you a few testimonies of this.

Testimony: When all seemed lost, a new beginning

From John, Chile

When we met Joanna a couple of months ago, she was in a state of severe depression. Over the last few years she had lost everything: her marriage, her home, her second house, her business, and her health. She prayed with us to receive the Lord, and began reading the Bible and praying daily. She also phoned us every day—sometimes several times a day—to ask us for prayer, mostly against depression. She had nothing else to hold on to.

Before long, we began to witness one wonderful answer to prayer after another. Joanna needed to find a new apartment, as the one she was living in was dark and dismal. She also needed a job. She was attractive and had a university degree in chemistry and a diploma as an English interpreter, but because she was 40, nobody would hire her.

The Lord first helped her find a new apartment for less rent—one that is much nicer and receives sun all day long. Her new landlord turned out to be a minister in the national government, and through him she found a good job in the government. Joanna's 20-year-old son was at first quite sarcastic about her Bible reading and praying, but after seeing how the Lord was working in his mother's life, he started praying also. Now the two are closer than ever.

It has been thrilling to see the life of this dear friend turn around!

Testimony: The Power of the Word!

The true story of the mutiny on the HMS Bounty has often been retold. One part that deserves retelling was the transformation wrought by one book. Nine mutineers with six Tahitian men and twelve women put ashore on Pitcairn Island in 1790. One sailor soon began distilling alcohol, and the little colony was plunged into debauchery and vice.

Ten years later, only one white man survived, surrounded by native women and their children. In an old chest from the Bounty, this sailor one day found a Bible. He began to read it and then to teach it to the others. The result was that his own life and ultimately the lives of all those in the colony were changed. Discovered in 1808 by the USS Topas, Pitcairn had become a prosperous community with no jail, no whisky, no crime, and no laziness.

➤ **2. The Wonderful Gift of the Holy Spirit! (Classes 2a and 2b—"The Holy Spirit")**

Do you want the same power that transformed a motley band of fishermen, tax collectors, and others in the far away dusty land of Palestine into fiery men and women of faith who changed the world? Do you want to know how that same power can work in your life too? God's got a lot in store for you! In our classes on the Holy Spirit,

we'll learn more about what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit and how to experience the gifts and blessings that are promised!

➤ **3. Effective Prayer (Classes 3a and 3b—"Prayer")**

In the two-part classes on prayer, we'll be exploring how to communicate with Jesus, how to pray effectively, and how to receive answers to prayer. The key to remember is that prayer works! When we pray, things will happen and things will be different. God will answer prayer. He says,

Jeremiah 33:3—Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.

■ **Examples of answered prayer**

There are so many examples of how God answers prayer, in ways little and big, but all are important. Let's look at a few.

Testimony: Three miracles

From Esteban, Venezuela

We witnessed three more miracles in the course of our prayer and counseling ministry at a local hospital.

The first involved a four-year-old boy with leukemia, whom the doctors had given no chance of recovery. The child's mother was very saddened by the news, and asked us to come regularly to the room where he was isolated, to pray for him. The boy's parents and a few other relatives who were visiting him all prayed with Maria Clara to receive Jesus. Maria Clara also gave them copies of the New Testament and some Family publications, and they hung some of the posters around the boy's bed.

After a number of visits and repeated prayer, the boy began to improve ever so slightly. Then he began to eat and sleep better; then he stopped throwing up. He has now been released from the hospital!

The second case was that of an infant girl, whom the doctors had also given up on. One day when her parents weren't watching, she had crawled out of their house and into the road, and was run over by a car. Among her many injuries were serious fractures of one leg and hip, and large open wounds. When Maria Clara saw and prayed for the little girl the first time, she had just undergone an operation to enable her to eliminate through a tube. The lower part of her body was covered in wounds. After more prayer and visits, a second operation was performed to remove a bone that was beginning to decay. More prayer. Three days later, the pus began to diminish. A third operation closed large wounds, which had been open up until then. Now the little girl is beginning to show signs of genuine recovery, and is smiling again. The doctors call her the miracle girl, as they really hadn't expected her to survive.

The third miracle was the change that occurred in this little girl's 19-year-old mother. In the course of Maria Clara's visits, the mother confided that she thought that her daughter's accident might have been due to her own sins. Since learning that her husband had been unfaithful, she had been attending witchcraft sessions and entertaining thoughts of killing her husband and herself. After receiving Jesus with Maria Clara, this young woman had a miraculous and visible change. So this little family experienced a double transformation—the baby's physical one, and the mother's spiritual one. Thank the Lord for His infinite love and power!

Testimony: The Prayer-Empowered Bus!

From Susan, SEA

One day we had a particularly busy trip planned, so we specifically prayed for good bus connections and good bus rides so that we could make our appointments on time.

When we made our last bus connection, the bus we got on was quite slow and old and the air conditioning kept breaking down. Finally we got off the bus at our destination, and just happened to look back over our shoulders. To our amazement, the bus had completely broken down—right after we got off! It broke down right in front of the dental clinic we were going to! Everyone else had to change buses, but we were right on time for our appointment! It was like an angel had held it together in answer to our prayers!

■ **God answers prayer!**

You'd be surprised how much God depends on your prayers—how concerned you are and how interested you are. He wants you to show concern and pray about things, and be specific about them. If you really believe, every prayer is heard and answered. But if you don't pray it is not done! A lot depends on you!

Jeremiah 29:13—And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.

In our meetings on this subject we'll be looking at how to get closer to God through our prayers, how to please Him by thanking Him and having an attitude of praise, and how to receive answers to prayer. Something that most of us need once in awhile is healing, and we will also look at how to receive healing in answer to prayer.

➤ **4. Hearing from God (Classes 4a and 4b—"Hearing from Heaven")**

Prayer is not just a one-way conversation, a monologue of us talking to Him, but the Lord delights in talking with us.

When we hear from the Lord in this way, we receive messages through what is called the gift of prophecy. This is a special gift that was promised to abound in the Last Days:

Acts 2:17-18—And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. (18) And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy.

God has always spoken to His children. He didn't stop speaking after the Bible was compiled. In the almost twenty centuries since the books of the New Testament were put together, He has continued to speak to His children, to His followers, to those who had the faith to listen. He has inspired His people with instructions, with doctrinal revelations, with poetry, with music, with literature. He has spoken personally to multitudes and He is still speaking today. In fact, He is speaking even more today, because we need to hear from Him. We need His guidance to keep us safely in a world that keeps turning further away from God.

If you're having a particularly difficult problem, wouldn't you like God to talk to you and offer specific answers? If you're faced with an important decision, wouldn't you like to get the Lord's advice?

Share one or two testimonies of how the Lord has spoken to you and/or how hearing His voice answered a problem or was in some way miraculous. Personal testimonies are best to share, or you could relate either of the following:

Testimony: How God can use a small deed to be His special touch of love

By Eva Mae Ramsey

In the mid-1960s, my husband's sister Muriel became very ill. My husband, our six-year-old daughter, Linda, and I traveled to Tulsa to be present while Muriel underwent surgery for a diseased kidney. As we neared Tulsa, a thought flashed into my mind out of nowhere. One red rose, a voice said. Take one red rose to Muriel. My husband agreed to stop at a florist's shop. However, it was late and everything was closed.

The next morning my husband went to the hospital to wait during the operation. I stayed with Linda and my husband's elderly mother at her home. All I could think of was that red rose. I felt compelled to search out that rose. So Linda and I walked uptown, and I bought one red rose.

When my husband returned, he said that Muriel had come through the surgery, and it was now touch-and-go as to whether she'd recover. He also told me he'd ordered a big bouquet of gladiolas for Muriel's room.

"That's lovely, honey," I said, "but she's got to have this red rose, too." When we went to the hospital later, Muriel was still groggy and wasn't able to talk to us, but I put the rose, by itself, in a vase where she could see it. Because of work commitments we had to return home without ever talking to Muriel, but we did learn that she would recover.

Soon we got a letter. "Before I went to the hospital," Muriel wrote, "I prayed that if I was supposed to live, God would send me a sign I specifically asked for, something that meant God was with me and would give me the heart to go on. When I opened my eyes after the operation, there it was, the very thing I'd prayed for—a red rose."

The combination

By Franz

Two years ago a friend had given us a suitcase. We had forgotten the lock combination and therefore never used the lock. But while storing it, someone had accidentally locked the suitcase and the combination was shut. What to do? We tried and tried all kinds of numbers and started to make a plan how we would have to go through all the combinations, when someone piped up, "why don't you pray?" So I asked the Lord to give me the number in prophecy. Lo and behold He did! I got a picture of the lady who gave us the suitcase saying the number, and when I tried it, it worked!

➤ **5. Getting Along with Others (Classes 5a and 5b—"The Golden Rule")**

There is a lot in the Bible about human relationships and about having love for others. The whole purpose for living is to love God and others. That's the most important thing! You may have a lot of gifts and talents, but if you don't have love it's not worth much! And this is not talking about love for your work or for material possessions. It's talking about love for the Lord and others. If you love God you'll love others too, because loving others is one way you show love for the Lord. Jesus said to His disciples:

John 15:12—"This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."

What is love? Love is not hurting, love is going out of your way to make others happy, and doing unto others as you would have them do unto you.

Matthew 7:12—Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

If you show a real love for people, you won't have a hard time winning friends. Love begets love! What is the greatest commandment?—To love God! What is the next greatest?—To love thy neighbor as thyself!

Matthew 22:37–39—Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." (38) This is the first and great commandment.(39) And the second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Probably most of us realize this already and we know we should be loving and kind to others. The difficulty, though, often comes in putting it into action! How do we get along with people who irritate or hurt us; how do we reach out and help others? Loving others is oftentimes easier said than done, so in our classes on this subject we'll be looking at some practical ways of getting along with people and living according to the loving principles Jesus mentions in these verses.

➤ **6. Bible Knowledge (Classes 6a and 6b—"Bible Knowledge")**

■ **Getting to know the Word**

We've already talked about how our life of faith is based upon God's Word. Our hopes for the future, our expectation that God will answer prayer, are all based on His promises in the Bible. The Bible tells us who we are, where we have been, and where we are going. It even tells us how we should get there! Throughout these classes we often read portions of the Bible, but it is important for you to also take time to read the Bible yourself. So we'll be looking at how the Bible was put together and where to find what you need. We'll also be looking at some of the prophecies in the Bible that have already been fulfilled, which are amazing faith-builders!

For instance, did you know that there are dozens of predictions about Jesus in the Old Testament made hundreds of years before His birth, that He specifically and precisely fulfilled in His lifetime, including His being born in Bethlehem, His ministry in Galilee, His triumphant entry into Jerusalem, the exact year of His crucifixion, the manner of His execution, His resurrection, and many more!

➤ **7. The Endtime (Classes 7a and 7b—"Bible Prophecy")**

The Bible tells us that Jesus will return to set up His reign on Earth. No more cruel wars, oppression, and the rule of the greedy and powerful, but a rule of love where God's plans will be fulfilled. According to some Bible scholars, there are 1,845 references to Jesus' Second Coming in the Old Testament and 318 references in the New Testament. We refer to the period before His return as the Endtime—which does not mean the End of Time, but the end of the present era, after which Jesus will return to set up His kingdom on Earth.

Along with many other Christians today, we believe that we are now living in the Endtime because of the way the signs of the times, events and conditions that were predicted as precursors to the Endtime are being fulfilled. In our classes on this subject, we will look at some of the main signs as they are described in the Bible, and then we'll look at how these are being fulfilled in our present day. We will try to give you enough information so that you will be able to discern the signs of the times yourself, as you observe what is happening around you.

➤ **8. Saved Forever—Spending eternity with the loving Creator (Classes 8a and 8b—"The Greatest Love")**

"How do you know you're saved?" "Is your salvation permanent?" "If you do something really bad, will you lose your salvation?"

In our classes on salvation we are going to look at the answers to these questions by carefully examining what the Bible says. Jesus loves you very much and will never let you down. You didn't earn your salvation in the first place, so you can never lose it by what you do or do not do. We are saved by grace—a free gift of God's love—and not by our works. The reason we can be so sure of this is because it is clearly explained in the Bible.

We'll also be exploring how to have a closer relationship with the Lord so that you can confidently rely on Him, trust in Him, and rest peacefully in His loving arms. He never fails and will always be there for you!

➤ **9. Our Destination: Heaven! (Classes 9a and 9b—"Heaven")**

We have an amazing future in store for us! Heaven is a great place to be and a great place to look forward to! The difficulties of life will seem like they lasted only a moment, in comparison to the wonderful life we will have in Heaven:

Romans 8:18—For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

When you think about our glorious future in Heaven, it helps you bear some of the things you have to go through now. It pays to think about Heaven and talk about Heaven and try to visualize Heaven. That's what we'll be doing in several classes, to help you visualize what you have to look forward to!

➤ **10. Sharing Our Faith (Classes 10a and 10b—"Witnessing")**

When you get to know the Lord and experience His love, His care, His joy, then it is only natural you will want to share this with others.

As a comparison, we could say it's like possessing a cure for cancer. If we had a cure for cancer and didn't tell anyone, we would be terribly selfish! Well, we have a cure for more serious and far-reaching diseases than cancer! We have the cure for unhappiness, for loneliness, for rejection, for depression, for fear, for eternal death—illnesses that afflict billions of people, a far greater number than cancer has ever touched, or will ever touch. And if we didn't share this cure with people, we would be failing God, failing others, and failing ourselves.

The job that God has given to each of His children is to give His Word and His love to others, to preach the Gospel, to "witness." Jesus told His disciples:

Mark 16:15—Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.

One of the most exciting things about having Jesus in your heart is sharing the good news of salvation with other people. You will be giving them something that will last forever!

We have a responsibility to tell others about salvation, but sometimes we are hindered by not knowing how to do it. Maybe we don't know how to answer people's questions, maybe we find ourselves drawn into arguments, or maybe we simply have a hard time getting started because we're shy. In our classes on this topic we'll be sharing practical advice on these and other issues. We'll find out how to lead someone to the point of praying to receive Jesus as his or her Savior, how to answer typical questions, and generally how to be an effective witness.

■ **The results will be changed lives!**

And on that subject, we have a few examples.

Testimony: Pass It On!

From Peter, Steven and Joseph, Russia

As we journeyed by high-speed hydrofoil down the Amur River to the far eastern city of Komsomolsk, near China, we looked forward to visiting a number of people with whom we had been corresponding. Some we would be meeting for the first time; others we had met on a previous visit. Luba and Andrew, two friends who had traveled ahead of us two days earlier to set up meetings with our friends in Komsomolsk, met us at the boat. With them was an older lady whose beaming smile we recognized immediately. It was Grandma Zoya, who we had met on our last trip to the city. She had been writing us often ever since.

About two years ago, Zoya received a piece of literature with the salvation message from one of us and prayed to ask Jesus into her heart. Since then she has experienced a lot of sorrow and pain (her husband and several other relatives died), but she has found great comfort in our letters and the literature we sent her. Mail from us, she said, was her only relief in her dark hour.

Zoya had latched onto Luba and Andrew the moment they met and went everywhere with them. They had taken stacks of literature to Komsomolsk, and Grandma Zoya joined right in with their distribution. During our visit, she passed out more than any of us!

"Every time I give out a piece of literature, especially to a young person," she told us, "I remember how much Jesus did for me, and I know He can do the same for them. Distributing literature seems such a little thing to do for Him in return, but lives will be changed. I love to pass it on!"

Testimony: Words That Change People

From Pearl, Hungary

We occasionally make trips to a nearby city to visit people we've met and won to the Lord on previous visits. Each time we do, we try to see Irene.

Irene had serious marital problems, largely due to her husband's heavy drinking. He was also a hard-line Communist, and didn't share her faith in God. Their relationship was one continual argument, but she didn't want to leave him as she felt sorry for him and worried that no one else would love him or take care of him if she left.

On a recent visit we gave Irene a copy of Treasures, a Family-produced book of faith-building Bible studies and articles on a wide range of subjects.

The next time we saw her, she exclaimed, "You wouldn't believe what happened! My husband found your book and read it from beginning to end. He couldn't put it down until he'd read the whole thing. He even highlighted parts and made notes in the margins, he liked it so much. Then I gave him all the letters I've received from you over the years that we've been corresponding, as well as the other literature you've given me. He was amazed! After all this time he finally wants to meet you. He's a changed man. We've never been so happy together!"

Thank God for the truth of His Word that has the power to change people and situations!

➤ **11. Got Problems? God's Got Solutions! (Classes 11a and 11b—"Overcoming Problems")**

We all pass through difficult moments—times of loneliness, sickness, disappointment, accidents, loss, failure, marital difficulties, financial hardship, discouragement, etc., etc.

A lot of people seem to think that as soon as they receive Jesus they'll be completely happy, all their problems will be solved and they'll never have any more, and things will go smoothly. But receiving the Lord into your life doesn't mean that you'll never have any more troubles. Troubles, difficulties, challenges, and problems are common to all. What makes the difference is that Jesus will help you through your problems and hard times.

In our series of classes on this subject we are not going to offer you any easy answers. There will be no wave of a magical wand that will solve all of your present difficulties and prevent any other problems ever coming upon you again! What we will pass on to you are "Three Steps to Victory." We'll be looking at how you should respond to the problems that come your way, whatever type of problems they are, and how you can find the solutions.—Because God does have a solution to every problem!

➤ **12. God's Ways (Classes 12a and 12b—"Going God's Way")**

As we journey down the road of life we are faced with a multitude of choices, both small and big: what to eat for breakfast; which newspaper to read, if any; what clothes to wear; what television programs to watch; what type of job or career to pursue; how much time to spend with family; where to do grocery shopping; what to buy; when to visit friends; whether to accept the invitation to that party or not; what books to read; what to do this weekend; whether to witness to this neighbor or not?—And on it goes, choices and more choices.

As believers we should be seeking to follow in the steps of Jesus. Perhaps you wonder how to apply His teachings to your everyday life, and that's what we'll be discussing.

In these two classes, we'll be looking at how to find God's will; and how to tailor our lives and make our choices according to His Word and what He knows is best. That way we'll be happier, we'll be pleasing Him, helping others, and finding greater personal fulfillment. And for those who want to do more for the Lord, we'll be giving you ideas of how to go further.

➤ **13. Conclusion of the Course (Class 13—"Completing the Course")**

For those who complete the course, a diploma is available.

Ending note

➤ **What is the source of material used in the *12 Foundation Stones* course?**

The concepts in this course are based on the Bible and on contemporary Christian writings, in particular those of David Brandt Berg, founder of our movement The Family, and the *Get Activated!* series by Aurora Production. Anecdotes and reference material came from a variety of sources. Many of the true-life accounts come from the experiences of those working with The Family. (More details about the authors quoted can be found in the back of the Study Notes book under the heading "Who's Who.")

■ **The Family's founder and current leadership**

In 1968, David Brandt Berg, a former pastor of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, began a Christian outreach ministry to the counterculture youth in Huntington Beach, California, USA. From these humble beginnings, what started primarily as a youth group grew to become an international Christian movement, whose members today live and work in over 100 countries worldwide. The movement became known as "The Family" in the early 1980s.

David was the founder and pastor of The Family, and many of our publications are based upon his writings, as well as of course on the Bible, which he taught was God's standard, the yardstick of measurement by which all truth and all error could be measured. Along with the classes in this course, you will be introduced to some of David's writings.

After leading The Family for 25 years, David passed away in late 1994. His wife of 25 years, Maria, now leads The Family together with her second husband, Peter. Like David, Maria continues to publish many writings to The Family on a variety of spiritual and practical topics.

➤ **Questions about the course?**

We hope, pray, and expect that the *12 Foundation Stones* course will give you a solid basis upon which to build your life. Wherever life leads you in the future and whatever happens, you'll know Jesus as a close personal friend and you'll have His promises to stand upon and His Word to light your way!