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# City Builders

### *The Story*

The people of that ancient time only existed because of the grace of God in saving Noah and his family, eight in all. The deliverance from the flood by God was now a distant memory. The descendants of Noah were no longer a single clan, their numbers were swelling, and people were dispersing across the land. Some moved eastward, coming down from the hill country, settling on a plain in Shinar, in Babylonia, in search of something more. We all want something more!

Urban planning became the topic of conversation. Rather than roaming as tribal nomads, as in the past, they wanted to settle, to put down roots, to establish themselves, and to make a city. And not just any city – a grand city, with an enormous tower (ziggurat), bigger than anything else around. Who doesn't like big? So, they began to build on the banks of the mighty Euphrates River. Genesis 11:1–9 reads:

## HIDDEN AGENDAS

Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. As people moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there. They said to each other, 'Come, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly.' They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. Then they said, 'Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth.' But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower the people were building. The LORD said, 'If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.' So the LORD scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. That is why it was called Babel—because there the LORD confused the language of the whole world. From there the LORD scattered them over the face of the whole earth.

Why the desire for more and big? What was stirring in the hearts of the people at this time? What made them say, 'Come let us build ourselves a city with a tower that reaches to the heavens'? Was there enough of a memory of the flood that they were fearful of another being sent their way by God? Perhaps, but this would also mean that they had completely forgotten the covenant that God had made with Noah, saying that He would never destroy the earth by flood again.<sup>1</sup> Or had they completely forgotten God, and they were now pursuing other gods? Most likely.

Part of ancient pagan worship included building a high tower, known as a religious ziggurat, to reach the heavens, the

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1 Genesis 9:11

home of the gods. Religion was the centre of life and the ziggurat was the centre of the city. The religious tower had a square base with a stairway rising up and around each side, ascending to the summit, upon which a temple was built. The temple on the tower top was the heavenly or godly place, where sacrifices would be offered and where gods would come down and meet with the people. It was their heaven on earth, their gateway to the gods; it was Babel.<sup>2</sup>

Now these people didn't want any old tower. Whatever other function it served, it is recorded that they wanted to commence the enormous building project 'so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth.' With God long forgotten, or at most a faint fear factor, the people had lost any alternative basis for establishing their identity. As nomads at risk of becoming nobodies, being scattered and lost across the face of the earth as disparate tribes, their hearts turned to filling their need of a sense of identity, by creating a reputation.

In ancient times greatness was measured in terms of numbers of people in your tribe, the size of the flocks and herds of animals in your possession, the enormity of structures built, and the height and thickness of city walls. To be a people of substance, of known value and identity, you would have a powerful god who visits you, and you would have all the necessary appearances of being a powerful people. Having the largest tower with the highest temple would go a long way to ensuring you attract the most powerful god and become the most significant people on earth. They didn't want to be lost to the footnotes of history;

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2 Babel sounds like the Hebrew word for 'confused'. The name Babel in its Assyrian form, *Bābili*, means 'gate of god'. Bromiley, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, (V1):382.

they wanted something more, to be known far and wide. They wanted to make a name for themselves. A big name.

## *Heart Agenda*

Their heart agenda was to be significant. They desired a great name and they thought a giant tower was the key to success.

It's no different today. Big towers that reach to the heavens: the tower of Babel (Babylonia), the great pyramids (Egypt), the Eiffel Tower (France), the Empire State Building (USA), the Petronas Towers (Malaysia), the Taipei Tower (Taiwan), the Shanghai Tower (China), the Burj Khalifa (UAE), and more under construction. The planners are still planning. The builders are still building. The presidents still want to make their nations great!

Where is the end? Are the planners, the builders, and the countries all trying to make a name for themselves? Are they seeking an identity, a reputation? Are they wanting to be considered significant? Probably! What is certain is that they don't want the opposite to be true. They don't want to be left behind, forgotten, insignificant. Just like the people of ancient times, being insignificant nobodies is not on their agenda. And so, with a heart bent on significance, with all the energy they have, the people of Babylonia commence construction. Having no stone or mortar they begin making a name for themselves out of bricks and tar.

What about you? It's not just the people of Babel, or the large cities of this world that have this heart desire, this heart agenda. You and I do too. Our heart's agenda is to be significant. We all want to be a somebody, to make a name for ourselves. And so we become city builders just like the people of Babel.

How do we build? It happens every day, through symbols, achievements, associations, and our words. Left unguarded our heart is constantly pulsating, to move us onward and upward, to make our name bigger and better, becoming more significant.

Our world is full of symbols. We are constantly pressured to believe that identifying with certain symbols will somehow impart significance upon us, elevating us to new heights through association. Symbols stand for something beyond the object itself. They are markers of a greater meaning. You don't just buy a pair of running shoes. You buy 'Nike' shoes. And by acquiring the 'Nike' symbol, you not only get footwear, but you feel like you receive the ability to immediately associate yourself with the images of all the sporting heroes that contribute to the meaning and significance of the name. You are elevated in status, becoming significant by wearing a name. Just do it, 'Nike,' and you will become more we are told. And so we accumulate symbols as markers of success and significance, like trophies to our own great name. Labels on clothes, cars and clubs, horses and handbags, houses and holiday destinations, watches and wine, suburbs, shoes, shirts and schools. These along with smartphones, laptops and devices of all types serve beyond their function to build our identity, our significance. And the more symbols we can accumulate the better.

We build our name through achievements. From a young age we learn that we are affirmed when we perform well and achieve much, and when we don't, we are ignored or even criticized. Our early years provide us with a myriad of opportunities to sort out where we shine and where we don't. When we don't shine, we tend to file that information away and say to ourselves 'Well, we won't try that again will we.' But when we do receive affirmation and applause and feel like we have achieved something, we

pursue it. If it's sports, we strive harder, if it's looks, we beautify, if it's academics, we immerse ourselves, if it's our career we climb the ladder, if it's humour, we become the best clown around. All in an effort to achieve that illusive significance, while all the time avoiding situations where we might look foolish or fail. We want that high feeling of success, not that low feeling of inadequacy. So we chase it. More achievements. Regular achievements. Larger achievements. Like a drug, clamouring after as much as we can get to build up our name.

We build our name through associations, who we are connected to, and what we are part of. Our associations matter to us. We want to be in not out. We want to be accepted not rejected. We want to be associated with the somebodies, not excluded and abandoned, a nobody. My friends, my family, my school, my city, my country, my football team. Even though I don't play in the football team, and even though I don't own the football team, I still say it's 'my' team. When they win, I say it loud and often! When they are not doing so well, I keep quiet; I then only mention my allegiance if pushed, as if their poor performance is attacking my net worth.

The people around us form a special means of gaining significance by association. We name drop. Why? We want to be seen as associating with winners, those of significant or popular standing. Sporting heroes, celebrities, movie stars, community leaders, knowledgeable professionals, rulers – actually anyone who will impress others. Then I can ride on their coat-tails and feel as though I am elevated in some way. Deep down we hope that by being connected with significant others their status will rub off onto us. Of course, we know this doesn't literally happen, but we love the feeling of hoping somehow it will. Or we pray that something else magical will take place. That the minds of

others will be changed. That because of my association with another they will, all of a sudden, view me from a completely different and elevated point of view. I want association status to rub off onto me, and I want others to believe it. Have you ever tried using something as tangential as ‘You’ll never guess who I saw at the airport the other day?’ What are we doing? Passing on information? Yes. But also secretly hoping that we move up one notch in the significance stakes, especially if we casually drop it into conversation at the right time.

The words we say and the conversations we hold can actually become battles for significance. Conversations, while vehicles for information exchange, are mechanisms we can use to impress others, hoping to gain significance points. We often play the one-up game. Why? We want to make a name for ourselves, pure and simple. You are in a group with friends and someone starts a conversation about the size of the fish that they caught over the weekend. Then another person chimes in with a story about the enormous catch they made last summer on vacation. And on and on it goes with the fish and the stories getting larger and more colourful. So what do you do? Join in and tell the story about your biggest catch. But maybe you don’t fish, and you certainly don’t have a story about catching a shark or a whale. But you play golf and so to join in the one-up game, you tell a colourful story about the hole in one you scored recently. Or someone tells a joke, which is followed by another which is even funnier, then a third and a fourth, growing in hilarity each time. Each joke is in some small way a search, not just for laughs but for significance. Then the conversation changes completely. Someone is criticized. And before long everyone is on the band wagon, criticizing the person. Everyone may feel it is justified. But that’s not all they feel. They feel good about

themselves for a moment. Why? Because putting another down elevates yourself. That's why criticism and gossip are rampant. Who doesn't want to feel better about themselves? Who doesn't want to feel more important?

More recently social media has given the city builders another tool with which to build their significance tower. The right text, the right look, the right photo, the right comment, that witty meme, all agonized over to achieve greatest effect, and targeted to serve the desire for more. We want to be liked, actually and digitally. In the eyes of others we want to be viewed as significant. And if we are honest, not only do we want to be considered significant, but we want to be more significant than others. Because it's only then that we can be satisfied with ourselves that we are not a failure, a nobody. Or in such situations do you remain silent, having no story, no joke, no post, feeling invisible, again?

## *Heart Fear*

That is our greatest fear, being invisible, being thought of as nothing, insignificant, a failure. What did the people of Babel fear? Being insignificant, being less than others. And so we also strive in our own strength to build something significant out of our lives.

There is an insidious sin at work in the significance factory of our lives driven by the fear of failure. It is the sin of comparison. There would be no gauge for success and therefore significance without comparison. We only know we are significant when we can measure the size of our city tower and compare it to others. When we can compare aspects of our lives with others and determine that our name is indeed great, only then are we satisfied. Comparison is a measuring stick designed to

effectively serve self-centredness rather than other-centredness. The disciples suffered from this.

Jesus had taken the disciples to a private place to talk to them about His upcoming suffering, death and resurrection. But the disciples did not really grasp what He was saying. They were preoccupied with thinking that Jesus would be victorious and not suffer, would build a new kingdom and not be buried, and would reign as king, without the need for resurrection. They were arguing between themselves over who would get the prime positions in their imaginary kingdom with Jesus. Their hearts were on a search for greater significance. They were busy comparing each other's merits, trying to ascertain how they could ensure that they would get the priority seats. So Jesus confronts them at the end of their journey as they come to Capernaum. 'What were you arguing about on the road?'<sup>23</sup> Jesus says. No answer. Embarrassment. They knew it was wrong to argue about who was to be the greatest – especially with the King. Perhaps this was the first time someone had confronted them and lifted the lid on their significance agenda, their self-idolatry.

Embarrassment must have turned to confusion with the betrayal of Jesus by Judas in the garden. The kingdom where they had hoped to take important seats was now being threatened. So Peter, fearing it would all be taken away, drew his sword as if he would take on the entire detachment of advancing soldiers. He managed to take an ear, but they took Jesus away. His hope was arrested. Things were deteriorating quickly. He followed Jesus as far as the High Priest's courtyard but had to wait outside. In the cool night air Peter stood around the open fire warming

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3 Mark 9:30-34

himself with other bystanders to the main action. Now what? Continue to follow Jesus or start to seek something else? The outcome of this kingdom didn't look so grand any more. He was brought back from his thoughts with a start by a servant girl who asked, 'You aren't one of this man's disciples too, are you?' Peter, outside, in the cold, found himself scrambling to protect what remained of his diminishing significance. Maybe he thought, 'If I admit I'm with Jesus it looks like it's all downhill from here. But if I deny it then I may have a chance at least of reclaiming my former life back.' So he said to the servant girl across the flickering flames and through the swirling smoke, 'I am not.'<sup>4</sup> He denies his connection to Jesus twice more when questioned by others standing outside around the fire. The cock crows, Jesus looks, and Peter goes outside and weeps bitterly.<sup>5</sup> All his significance is lost, he is a complete failure. In the eyes of Jesus, in the eyes of the servants, in his own eyes, his worst nightmare had just occurred. He was afraid of failure, of being a nothing. He thought it was all coming together with Jesus and His kingdom. But now what he had built up in his own mind was all crashing down around him.

The next time we see Peter he is in Galilee and has gone fishing with his friends. He knows fishing; it is familiar and he is good at it. At least out on the lake he feels like someone, not great perhaps, but someone doing something that others in the community around Capernaum will appreciate. Some significance again; well, not a failure at least. Does Peter love Jesus above himself and his friends? Has he put himself first and following Jesus second? The next time that Jesus and Peter

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4 John 18:15-18

5 Luke 22:60-62

meet, along the shores of Galilee after an unsuccessful night of fishing, Jesus asks him this exact question. ‘Peter, do you love me?’<sup>6</sup>

Perhaps this is the first time you have thought about your own self-idolatry in these terms. You desire significance, you fear failure, and you go to whatever lengths are required to feel better, to be more. Your heart agenda is to idolize self. You demand significance, and you run from failure.

## ***Heart Demand***

When we follow our heart agenda of significance and allow our fear of failure to take over, our heart becomes demanding. It demands others make us look good. It demands others affirm our worth. It demands others accept us.

Let’s take a closer look at what we do. When you are with a group of people what do you want from them? You at least want to be accepted as normal. That’s fine. But ask yourself how many times are you concerned, silently inside, about how others are perceiving you? Be honest! Often, we are hoping that we don’t make a fool of ourselves. Are we dressed OK? Do we look awkward? Don’t stumble! Don’t say something out of place! Oh the pressure of being accepted! We just want someone to agree with us, to laugh at our jokes, to say something good about us, to tell us that we are OK. We want others to come through for us and make us look good. We are constantly in a social battle, requiring others to affirm our worth. How selfish, how idolatrous!

As a Bible College lecturer I frequently run classes on preaching. One of the first things I tell students is that if you want

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6 John 21

to learn how to preach effectively you must learn how to get over yourself. In other words you must learn how to not think about what others are thinking about you. Your mind must only focus on communicating the message clearly to others. Don't think about whether you look good. Don't think about whether the hearers accept you. Don't desire to have them affirm your worth. You are there to serve them only, not your own ego or image. If you think about what others are thinking about you, you will become self-serving and inward looking, rather than serving others and outward focused. This is often not only the first but also the hardest lesson for preachers to learn.

As a preacher myself, I am not immune to this issue, not generally during the delivery of the message, but after the sermon. I conclude and say the final prayer and then step away from the pulpit and out to the congregation. The people at this time are just starting to move, striking up their first conversations, or going out for coffee. What do I want? Coffee? Of course! But more than that I have a restlessness inside that I want to get rid of. It is a question. And it is about me. How did I do? I want someone to come up to me and tell me that my preaching was good, or better still brilliant, so that I can feel significant again. Being aware of it I try and suppress it, but it creeps out.

But wait there's more. As I write this, we are in the midst of the coronavirus lockdown. No church gatherings allowed. We adapted and have begun to livestream our services into the homes of our members and others who wish to join us. I finish preaching and there is no one other than the technicians to come and tell me that I did OK. But who needs that when now there's on-screen feedback all the time? I know at any moment how many people are watching live and how many people have

clicked on the link and viewed the sermon after. Unless it's my father watching me over and over. Thanks Dad. Our digital world is now designed to feed our significance at the click of a mouse on the screen, instantly.

It's so easy to treat relationships the same way, as the click of our 'like' icon. When we fall in love, we give ourselves a big significance tick! We feel loved and we feel significant at the same time. How good is that? But, do we fall in love with serving and valuing the other above all else? That is our call. Or do we fall in love with the other because they value us and thus feed our heart's desire?

This is where my wife and I start our conversation in the first session of pre-marriage counselling. We sit the couple down and after only a few minutes I ask, 'So are you both ready to give your life to each other?' to which they normally say 'Yes, of course. We love each other and we want to be together for life. That is why we are here.' I say, 'That is not what I mean. I mean are you both ready to die for each other, to give your whole lives away to each other, because that's what marriage is all about?' Silence.

When our heart strongly demands significance from others, relationships become something we can easily use to build our towers of significance rather than opportunities to express the self-giving love of God. And when they don't serve to build us up, we reject them and try someone else. Build me up or I will let you down becomes our mode of relational operation. Then we get married, and with our voice vow in all circumstances to sacrifice everything, all the while hoping that the one we make the promise to will be a lifelong guaranteed source of significance. So while we promise sacrifice, we demand significance till death

do us part. We need to ensure our relational heart and vows do not look something like this:

I need to feel important and I expect you to meet that need by submitting to my every decision, whether good or bad; by respecting me no matter how I behave; and by supporting me in whatever I choose to do. I want you to treat me as the most important [person] in the world. My goal in marrying you is to find my significance through you.<sup>7</sup>

What are you thinking about when you enter relationships, or even enter church for that matter? Will I be accepted and valued? What will I get out of this? Do I look OK? What are others thinking? I hope my children don't play up! Where are my friends that like me and will make me feel good? Or is our focus where it should be, on others and on God? We so easily get sucked into feeding this heart demand for significance. It is a heart problem.

### ***Heart Problem***

So did I preach for God or for my own sense of significance? You may say, 'Well everyone does it, so what is the big deal?' It's true that everyone chases more and more significance for themselves. The problem is that it is just like stealing.

It's like the story of Achan in the book of Joshua.<sup>8</sup> The Israelites had recently crossed the River Jordan and entered the Promised Land with only what they carried. All equal. They created a pile of twelve stones, one for each tribe, as a reminder of the provision and faithfulness of God. Then they had together just experienced the power of God in the fall of

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7 Crabb, *The Marriage Builder*, 31.

8 Joshua 7

Jericho. They were all provided for by God. But Achan wanted more. During the battle of Ai he stole articles that were to be devoted to the glory of God. But he wanted more for himself, which always means less for others, and in this case less for God. Achan wanted to make himself more significant, more valuable, by taking that which was valuable away from others and God.

When we want more for ourselves, when we want to be seen as more significant, more valuable, we actually take value away from others. When we desire more, we are actually saying to others 'Look at me!' And when we do this, we are not able to look at others and value them as we should. Those around us are reduced to pawns in our game of self-aggrandizement. Driven on by our constant fear of failure, we use others, their comments, their affirmations and their acceptance, as fuel to feed our insatiable desire for significance. As if that's not bad enough, we then find ourselves also stealing glory from God by doubting Him.

When we are busy building our own significance, we are at the same time doubting our own value. And when we are doubting our own value, we are doubting whether God really values us. We show we doubt God and reduce His glory in two ways. We turn God into a blessing machine. This is where our faith in God is conditional upon God continually blessing us with increased signs of significance, in life through symbols, in relationships through affirmation, and in ministry through success. Or if this fails, we turn our back on God and start building our own towers of importance in our own way. We use relationships to feed our own egos rather than really caring for people. We use ministry to create moments and crowds that will adore and worship our gifts and abilities as much as worship God. We live life on our own terms, striving our utmost in

our own strength to achieve our own sense of significance, in whatever way we can, no matter how fleeting. All the while we believe that God is not enough for us, He is too small for us.

When we use others and God to feed our own value, we cannot, at the same time, value others and God as we should. When we are at this point, whether we realize it or not, we should not be surprised if God moves to wake us up from our heart problem, much like a defibrillator jolt, bringing us back to life.

At another time, in a similar place, a king arose from the descendants of the original city builders. His name was Nebuchadnezzar. He too was a significant city builder. One of his most famous constructions was that of the golden statue, bearing the image of either a god or himself as king. The image of gold was 27 metres high and 2.7 metres wide. Not satisfied with the grandeur of the statue alone, Nebuchadnezzar proceeded to command all to fall down and worship the image of gold.<sup>9</sup> He wanted more than power, which he already had, and that more than most. Through the image, Nebuchadnezzar wanted to join the power he already held over his kingdom with the religious act of worship. He wanted people to now worship his power, in essence to worship him. His heart agenda was the same as his ancestors. He desired significance through power and worship and would stop at nothing to get it. Yet the great Nebuchadnezzar would soon be humbled by God, judged and put out to pasture to eat grass like an ox.<sup>10</sup> As he walked on the roof of his royal palace, surveying all he had done he said:

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9 Daniel 3

10 Daniel 4

Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence,  
by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?<sup>11</sup>

As soon as he said this, God took away his significance and glory,  
and he became like an ox for seven years until he acknowledged

that the Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth  
and gives them to anyone he wishes.<sup>12</sup>

This is not the last we hear of Babylon in the Bible. Babylon is constantly referred to as the place that sets itself up as being against God, or anti-God. The final reference to Babylon is in the book of Revelation<sup>13</sup> where we see the city, one of the greatest cities, pictured as going up in smoke, destroyed by the sovereign God. For Babel and Babylon, chasing a name, pursuing the heart agenda of significance in the place of acknowledging God, ended in confusion, judgement and destruction.

As the sun sets on the story in the plain of Shinar, the one true God came down to visit the people gathered at Babel. With His hands He opened the heavens and descended to see what the people were doing. With their hearts turned against Him and set on building towers to honour other gods, including self-idolization, He confused their languages, and scattered the people across the world, humbling them, taking away their self-made significance, wanting them to find themselves and their significance in Him alone.

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11 Daniel 4:30

12 Daniel 4:32

13 Revelation 18–19:3

## *God's Heart Agenda*

God's agenda for our heart all starts with our image, not our impression or self-made images of ourselves but the fact that we are created in the very image of God.<sup>14</sup> This means two things. Firstly, that our significance is connected to God. And secondly that we are all created equal.

If we are created in the image of God, then our source of significance can only come from our creator. It's just like in the *Toy Story* movies. Woody the toy cowboy is worried that others will take his place as Andy's favourite toy. He finds his significance in the eyes of his owner, and the opinion of the other toys is far less important.

It should be the same for us. We are intimately created and infinitely valued children of God.<sup>15</sup> We must find our significance, which indeed we need, in one place only – the eyes of God. We must not look for it in the eyes of others, or from the building of our own towers and cities, designed to attract attention to ourselves and away from others and God.

Being made in the image of God also means that we are created equal – equal in value. We are equal in value no matter what our eyes see, no matter what the world says and no matter what value system is used in our own countries, because we are citizens of a better country that is not from here.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, it only matters what God sees, and what God says.

The Corinthians had a problem with significance. They were all puffed-up with their own importance. Some looked down on the others, parading their gifts around as if certain

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14 Genesis 1:26-27

15 Psalm 8, Psalm 139:13-16, John 3:16

16 Philippians 3:20

ones made them more spiritual and important in the eyes of God and others. They were taking what God had given them, the gifts, and turning them into something about themselves. They took what came from God and pretended that it was of their own doing.

We tend to do the same. We take what God has given us, our own life, our gifts, our abilities, and then we go off on our own to make a name for ourselves out of the very things God has gifted to us. We act as if we have successfully created our own significance by ourselves. As if out of nothing we have built our own lives. However, only God creates from nothing. We can take what He gives to us and use it, either to bring glory to His name, or to make a name for ourselves.

So Paul tells the Corinthians that they have it all wrong. The gifts speak of God's goodness not of their significance. He says:

But God has put the body together, giving greater honour to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.<sup>17</sup>

Every part has the same honour because the hand of God makes every part. We are all unique, yet all have the same value. Each one of us does not have all the gifts. Therefore, we are each dependent on others to be our hands and feet, to fill in the gaps that we leave open. That means we need each other. It should orient us toward humility and away from the arrogance of overinflated significance. On the other hand we are all gifted, which means we each have equal significance, but this comes from the giver not the gifts. The value that our Father the King

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17 1 Corinthians 12:24-25

of heaven places upon each one of us, His children, should be our only concern.

We can so easily be tempted to make a name for ourselves, to look down on others, like the people of Babel, or the Corinthians. This takes us back to the story of Jesus with the disciples who were still fighting for first place. What does Jesus do? He takes a child in His arms and says:

Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all.<sup>18</sup>

He turns the world upside down. Significance, status, power and place are not part of my kingdom, He says. If you want to be part of my work and world, it means acting with humility, service and faithful reliance, being totally dependent, like this child. You find your significance not in your own self-absorbed, look-at-me, tower-building kingdom project, but in belonging to the family of the King, knowing that in His eyes you are never a failure, or insignificant.

John the Baptist gives us an example to follow. His life was taken up with pointing to Jesus. At one point he makes the statement,

He must become greater; I must become less.<sup>19</sup>

Unlike the Corinthians or the city builders, John was taken up not with his own importance, but with pointing to the significance of Jesus alone.

Finding our significance in the eyes of the creator, we find we can lay down our heart agenda, of building cities of significance

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18 Mark 9:35-37

19 John 3:30

with towers of self-idolatry. We can now serve God and point to Jesus. Let's stop the tiring, frantic, uncontrolled building, and find it all in the eyes of our Father. Only then can we in humility value others above ourselves, just as Jesus did,<sup>20</sup> and serve others and God completely.

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20 Philippians 2:3-8