

MAGH

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7 Aug 2025

Building Scars

1. Protection

Thank you Ps Lakers for asking me to lead today.

Psalms 127 : 1-2

A song for pilgrims ascending to Jerusalem. A psalm of Solomon.

Unless the Lord builds a house,
the work of the builders is wasted.

Unless the Lord protects a city,
guarding it with sentries will do no good.

2It is useless for you to work so hard
from early morning until late at night,
anxiously working for food to eat;
for God gives rest to his loved ones.

This Psalm means a lot to me.

Let me explain the history and why.

6 years ago we returned to Perth after being away 15 years.

Our dream was to build a new home or to buy established and renovate it.

We opted to build and quickly found a block of land.

Using a building agent we found a builder and we were ready to go.

But then covid turned the building industry into chaos and what should have been a 2 year build ended up being 5 years!

I can't tell you the strain it put on my wife and I and our family generally (including parents).

Let me share some examples – financial and emotional (frustrational) strains.

One day after the home had been broken into twice during the build and cables and equipment stolen, we held a Connect group prayer – some of you were there like bro Barry and Josh.

We prayed over the house and one of the scriptures we read was Psalm 127.

Every day I visited the home I would read Psalm 127.

In the last 2 years of the build when the house was at lock up and starting to have expensive equipment installed and at most risk of break in, we didn't have a single break in!

Prayers of protection work!

Do any of you need a prayer of protection?

Please add to the chat now.

Let's pray.

2. The Spider

In late March this year we moved in...

After waiting so long it felt surreal. Despite some initial teething problems, the home was completed well and the end result was beyond what we'd initially envisaged.

God was so good to us to even let us finish the build.

You would think after enduring all that it would be a happy ending situation at home.

But since moving in it hasn't all been smooth sailing.

[JP to share on partner withdrawal; situations at church, connect and family events]

These were interesting situations and I must admit they caused me at times to question whether I was taking the right path in terms of church and my faith. At times I felt a little lost.

Paster David Storer in one of his Greenhouse courses taught us about the spider web.

Let me explain if you haven't heard this already....

[JP to share on the webs that appeared from the build and how identifying the spiders hasn't been so easy. Webs were heavy – stress, anxiety, fear – all are noisy and mask the spider; Spiders = past trauma; hurt around how situations have been handled; stories and meaning that we made around these].

What I can say now having experienced searching for spiders is that the only way to truly eradicate them is to hand over all our past hurts and trauma to God so that they can be gone for good.

Then we can not only have the cause of any issue resolved and quashed but then grow from this issue and develop perseverance, character and hope:

Romans 5 1:5

Peace and Hope

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

Now to be clear, this clearing of spiders hasn't finished yet but we have started the process and it has already helped.

Who of you are dealing with webs in your lives and struggling to find the spider? At home or at work?

Pray for healing of trauma and managing stress and anxiety.

Please add to the chat now.

Let's pray for the spider to be identified and for healing.

3. Ownership and Leadership

[JP testimony – initial reaction – judgement; I felt injustice; led to criticism]

So my initial reaction was to push back on behaviours I didn't like. Push back on pressure to change times we attended church; connect changes; rules at home.

I didn't want to be flexible and so I resorted to pushing back and below the line conversations.

I also withdrew into myself and since the start of this year started to see my inner thinking and self criticism increasing.

All this wasn't a Christ like reaction.

But how do I turn this around?

The Word of God tells us how:

Ephesians 5 -1:2 and 21-33

Living in the Light

Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God.

Spirit-Guided Relationships: Wives and Husbands

And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

For wives, this means submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of his body, the church. As the church submits to Christ, so you wives should submit to your husbands in everything.

For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's word. He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault. In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man who loves his wife actually shows love for himself.

No one hates his own body but feeds and cares for it, just as Christ cares for the church. And we are members of his body.

As the Scriptures say, "A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one." This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one. So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

So I have been praying (and asking others to pray) for wisdom to be guided on how to navigate the issues and how to love my wife as Christ directs us to.

Through this process I have realised that I had forgotten some important points:

- A) As the father of the home I have the authority to lead our family. But with this comes the responsibility to lead by example spiritually. For example I realised we had stopped praying regularly as a couple.
- B) My thinking had moved into withdrawing and complaining. I wasn't breathing life and the word of God into situations or into my wife. My language towards my wife in my mind and from my tongue needed to change.
- C) 3. My thinking was making my heart hard and making me inflexible.
- D) It was time to step up and have the discipline to say enough and to catch myself moving into drainer negative mindsets.

It hasn't been instant.

It's been a process.

But over the last 2 weeks situations have started turning around.

And mysteriously some of the webs have started to clear. Some spiders have been identified.

For my heart God has started to replace the discontent with gratitude for his blessings by providing us our new home and strengthening our faith through the build and in the aftermath we experienced after.

If you need prayer for wisdom on how to deal with a situation at home or at work, please say so in the chat now.

Let's pray.

Would anyone like to share?