

30. WHO LIVES IN YOU?



*You are a vessel that gives
glory to God.*

#NCSAMENTALHEALTHDEVOTIONS

WHO LIVES IN YOU?

Matthew 12:6: "But I say unto you that in this place is One greater than the temple."

Have you ever been on a diet? Or tried to go to the gym to build extra muscle or really, badly wanted your body to look better? I am sure your answer is yes. Why do you do that? Is it because you want to look good or because you want to feel good? Is it because you deserve to be healthy, or because good-looking people are awesome and others will respect and envy you? The sad thing about this is when you've reached your goal, you are in danger of becoming proud. As much as I love physical fitness and the ability to improve my health and my body, I realised that I needed to guard myself against pride. Every single one of us need to guard ourselves against pride, against falling in love with ourselves.

Romans 1:25 gave such a warning to the people of old: "... they worship and serve the things that God created instead of the Creator Himself, who is worthy of eternal praise" (NLT). This verse made me think about myself and my own life in terms of idolising myself. Am I focusing so much on myself and developing myself that I have lost sight of the One who created me? Am I focusing on perfecting myself for my own sake, instead of focusing on God and what He wants for His creation?

Let's take a look at what the Architect says about His creation, you and me, in order to see what the Architect who designed us had in mind for us.

**BE CAREFUL THAT YOU DO NOT
BECOME SO PROUD OF WHO YOU
ARE THAT YOU FORGET THAT GOD
IS THE ONE WHO LIVES IN YOU
AND MAKES YOU COMPLETE.**

The Bible talks about us as God's creation, but it also refers to us as the temple of the Holy Spirit. I further realised if we were to look at the designs of the temple in the Old Testament and what God had in store for them and how they were used, we could perhaps learn some lessons in terms of the temple we have. Our bodies, our minds, our emotions and our strength encompass the temple of God.

The Bible tells me in Psalms 139:14 how God designed us. *"I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are Thy works."* That was the original design of how God created us, perfect and wonderful and then He gave us the command to take care of what He created and to glorify Him through our bodies.

In 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 He also told us what not to do: *"You know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, and who you have received from God, don't you? You do not belong to yourselves, because you were bought for a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body."* The Bible is telling us that our body has a purpose. That purpose is to glorify God and for God to live in and through us. We are therefore supposed to take care of our bodies. And this care, I believe, is holistic; mind, body and soul.

There was a song we used to sing when we were young: *"Building up the temple, building up the temple, building up the temple for the Lord."* Whenever we sang it, I thought of building a church. What this song is actually saying, is that we are building our bodies.

**YOUR PURPOSE IN LIFE IS TO
GLORIFY GOD THROUGH YOUR
BODY, MIND & SOUL. YOUR
REASON FOR EXISTING IS FOR GOD
TO LIVE IN AND THROUGH YOU.
THEREFORE TAKE CARE OF YOUR
BODY IT IS GODS TEMPLE.**

We are building who we are, so that the Lord can live in us. Furthermore, we are supposed to build and improve our bodies mentally, physically, spiritually and emotionally.

A while back I watched a Ted Talk on brain activity and how you can literally improve your brain's functioning, activity and size through something called a **brain rehabilitation** programme. It is really simple and literally done by just making a few **lifestyle changes**. You can significantly reverse brain damage and improve brain function by making a few changes. This made me think that God wants us to build our temple, not only our physical bodies, but our minds as well, because the seat of our temple, the inner sanctuary of our temple, is the mind. That is the place where only God belongs.

There is a warning in 1 Corinthians 3:16-17: *"Don't you know that your body is the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God lives in you? If any man defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him; for the temple of God is holy, and you are that temple."* The Bible warns you to take care of yourself, take care of your being, because God lives in you. Don't destroy yourself. Don't let anybody else destroy you. God says if anybody destroys His temple, He will destroy them. Be careful, your bad habits can also cause the temple of God not to be so good.

An architectural design always has a very specific purpose and therefore a very specific design. Have you ever noticed the older churches in town? They all have these very high steeples.

**THERE IS SOMETHING CALLED
BRAIN REHABILITATION WHERE BY
MAKING A FEW LIFESTYLE
CHANGES YOU CAN LITERALLY
IMPROVE YOUR BRAIN'S
FUNCTIONING, ACTIVITY & SIZE.**

What is the purpose of the tower and the bell? The purpose is for the church to be visible from everywhere in town so that when people come into town, they would always know where to go to worship God. And the bell would call them to worship.

There is a specific purpose for a temple and how a temple is built. I believe it is the same for us. The reason why God tells us how to live our lives, how to build this temple, how to nourish ourselves, is for a very specific reason. The purpose is to take care of it so that He can live in and through us for the good of humanity and to glorify God. The crux of Christianity is that everything is centred around God. Nothing exists apart from Him. Nothing exists that isn't connected to God.

Let's consider our temple and also the actual temple in terms of how it was in the biblical days, because I believe we can learn some lessons from it. Let's look at the purpose of the biblical temple, how it was built, how it was defiled and how it was idolized. This is stuff we also struggle with in our lives. We struggle with realising what our true purpose is, why we are here, why we were built, how to build our temple, how to better it and how not to defile and how not to idolize it.

There were two temples in the Bible, the first and the second as historians call them. These physical buildings were built in specific times in the history of the Jews. The very first temple however, does not form part of the first and the second temples in Jerusalem. It was a tent in the wilderness and used by Moses.

**THE CRUX OF CHRISTIANITY IS
THAT EVERYTHING IS CENTRED
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GOD.**

The Bible tells us that God gave him very specific instructions how to manufacture this tent (temple), which later became the building in Jerusalem. We read in Exodus 25:8 what the purpose of this tent was: *“Build for Me a sanctuary that I may dwell amongst them.”* This is the same for us. Our bodies, our sanctuary, our temple, is for God to live in. The blueprint for the temple was given to Moses on Mount Sinai. In Exodus 25:9 we read about the very specific instructions on how to build it, what material to use, how it should be done and what colours should be used in the tent, down to the very last thread.

In building our lives, I believe God is also very specific about how we should care for our temple; what we should eat and drink. Genesis gives us an idea of what God had in store for His original temple. We can read in Genesis chapter 1 what God gave Adam and Eve to eat and to drink.

How to treat the temple when they were in the wilderness was very specifically outlined for Moses. It should be carried by the priests only. Everything in the Sanctuary was carried by priests only, and the most Holy Place, the third compartment of the Sanctuary was only to be entered by the High Priest.

I believe we also have compartments in our bodies and that the most holy place in our body is our mind, our brain. I believe the only one that should have access to our mind, is Jesus, the High Priest of our bodies. But we are allowing a lot of things into our most holy place, into our minds. We are giving access to any old thing, strange things that shouldn't be entering our minds at all.

**MOSES BUILD THE TEMPLE, WITH
SPECIFIC MATERIALS, COLOURS &
METHODS AND DOWN TO THE VERY
LAST THREAD. SHOULD WE NOT
ALSO BE SPECIFIC WITH WHAT WE
BUILD OUR SOUL TEMPLES?**

There are precious lessons for us to be learnt when we study the temple buildings in the Bible. The **first temple** that was built in **Jerusalem** after the Israelites arrived in Canaan, was erected during the most prosperous period of Israel's history. A tremendous amount of treasures was used for the purpose of building it. Those treasures were collected by King David. King David had plans for the construction of God's temple and these plans were divinely inspired as we see in 1 Chronicles 28:12-19. God gave David the idea of how to build the temple. David planned the temple and he collected a lot of instruments and materials from all over the world. Unfortunately he didn't build the temple. Solomon, his son, the wisest monarch of Israel, had to complete the work. The reason why God didn't allow David to build this temple was because of the sins he committed with Bathsheba and Uriah. The Bible tells us this temple was the most magnificent building ever seen in the world. Stores of treasures were collected by David over many years from various areas all over the world in order to build this temple. The place where it was built was a very holy site, Mount Moriah. Mount Moriah was chosen by David and interestingly, it was the very same Mount Moriah where Abraham was to sacrifice Isaac many years before the building of the temple.

We also read in the Bible as the temple was built, the builders cut the stones away from the actual temple site, so that no sound of the tools they used was heard at the temple site. The completed materials were taken to the temple site and then put together at the temple site.

WE ALSO HAVE COMPARTMENTS IN OUR BODIES AND THAT THE MOST HOLY PLACE IN OUR BODY IS OUR MIND, OUR BRAIN. I BELIEVE THE ONLY ONE THAT SHOULD HAVE ACCESS TO OUR MIND, IS JESUS, THE HIGH PRIEST OF OUR BODIES.

Logs of cedar wood were floated down from Lebanon in order to build the temple. The building was so magnificent that the Queen of Sheba came all the way to Jerusalem to behold this magnificent artefact. People from all over the world came to see the wealth of its construction. They asked about the architect, because they were so impressed by it. No wonder they marvelled and were impressed, because the architect was none other than God Himself. For us it is the same. How do we build our temple? Are we sparing any means and efforts in order to build our bodily temple, the temple of our mind, in order for it to be the best place for God to live in?

There was a warning given to the people of Israel through Daniel, Haggai, Amos, Ezra and Micah. All these prophets warned Israel of the destruction of the temple and that it would be taken captive and be destroyed. There were many reasons why Jerusalem and the temple were going to be destroyed. The reason I want to focus on is where it says that the people worshipped the creation more than the Creator. When this temple rose up it was so magnificent that everybody gorged at the temple. Everybody was so amazed at the building that they forgot the God who was living in the building. These prophets warned of the destruction of the temple if the focus of the people did not return to their Creator. In 586 B.C., just as the prophets predicted, a Babylonian invasion led by Nebuchadnezzar arrived in Jerusalem for his second siege. Many years previously, Nebuchadnezzar put Jerusalem under siege for the first time, but he left everything untouched. He didn't burn anything, didn't break anything, didn't steal anything or didn't take anything.

**BE CAREFUL THAT YOU DO NOT
END UP LOVING THE
CREATION(YOURSELF) MORE THAN
THE CREATOR(GOD) BECAUSE OF
PRIDE OR SELF LOVE .**

He left it untouched. He just put a new ruler in charge and he went back home. During the second siege in 586 B.C., Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed and the people were led away into captivity to Babylon. This all happened because they worshipped the created thing more than the Creator.

However, there was hope for the people. Haggai, the prophet, predicted that the temple would not be destroyed forever, but that the temple would be rebuilt eventually. He also predicted that the glory of the Lord's house would be greater than the former one. He said that the second temple would be greater than the first temple (Haggai 2:7-9).

It is the same in your life. God wants to leave you with hope, even if you are in a dark moment of your life right now. Even if you've been taken captive or destroyed by the sin of this world. Even if it was by your own doing that you were put under siege and that the enemy, Satan, has taken control of your temple and destroyed your mind because you allowed him in your holy place. God says your bodies and your minds can be built up again, just like He told the prophet Haggai that the temple would be built up again and it would be greater than the former one. You too can be greater in your body and in your mind than what you were before.

After many years of captivity in Babylon, Cyrus, the Great, gave the command that the temple in Jerusalem should be rebuilt. He freed the Jews so that they could go back to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. The rebuilding of the temple took place under the Judean governor called Zerubbabel.

**HAD SATAN TAKEN CONTROL OF YOUR
TEMPLE AND DESTROYED YOUR MIND
BECAUSE YOU ALLOWED HIM IN YOUR
HOLY PLACE? DO NOT DISPAIR GOD
SAYS HE CAN AGAIN REBUILD YOUR
MIND & YOUR BODY.**

The promise that the temple would be greater, was met with great disappointment. When the aged men who saw the first temple in its glory returned to Jerusalem and saw the new temple, they cried because the **second temple** was not anything near the beauty of the first. The new temple was far inferior, in the materials and in the building of it, to the first one. They remembered that Haggai promised that the new temple would be greater and they asked in Haggai 2:3 whether anybody remembered the temple in its former glory. The new one looked like nothing. They were complaining and saying that it was terrible, it was not at all like what Haggai said.

The second temple was not equal to the first in its magnificence; nor was it hallowed by those visible tokens of the divine presence. There was no manifestation of supernatural power to mark its dedication. No voice from heaven, no cloud, no fire, no Shekinah. The Ark of the Covenant with the two tablets of stone were gone. Aaron's rod, the Urim and Thummim, the holy oil and the sacred fire were no longer there.

The second temple, completed in 515 B.C., was not honoured in the same way as the temple in the desert and as it was with the first temple that was built in Jerusalem. But the way in which the glory of the second temple exceeded the glory of the first temple, was by the Living Presence of the One in whom the fullness of God dwelled. Jesus walked and talked in the corridors of the second temple. It was in the presence of Jesus Christ that the second temple exceeded the glory of the first.

The building that Zerubbabel constructed was a very modest structure and was built by Jewish exiles.

**IF YOU WANT TO REBUILD YOUR LIFE
LIKE NEVER BEFORE, WHAT WILL
MAKE YOU GREATER THAN EVER IS
HAVING OUR CREATOR LIVE IN YOU.**

They lost their focus because they saw the modest structure. They lost the focus of what the purpose of the temple was. The most important purpose of the temple was not so much how it was built, but that it was a place where God would dwell. Yes, it needs to be great because God is there, but God should be greater than the temple itself.

It is the same for us. We often lose focus of our purpose. We focus so much on ourselves and our lives, on the temple, instead of focusing on the God of the temple and how He made the temple amazing from the inside out. The boasting should not be on the beauty and strength and what we've accomplished, but the boasting should be about the God of the Universe who lives in our hearts and in our minds.

The temple that was built by Zerubbabel wasn't good enough for Israel of old. Jesus, the Emmanuel, God with us, was also not good enough for them.

In 20 B.C. Herod the Great decided to renovate the temple. He wanted to modify the mundane, boring temple which Zerubbabel built. He completely refurbished it. The original modest structure was completely overhauled into a large and magnificent edifice. His construction began with a massive expansion of the temple mount. He actually built up the mountain so that the temple could sit on top of it in order to be bigger and greater. The religious worships and the temple rituals continued during the construction process.

Herod's temple, or let's say his renovation of the temple, was one of the largest construction projects of the first century.

**DON'T LOSE FOCUS OF YOUR
PURPOSE. SOMETIMES WE FOCUS
SO MUCH ON OURSELVES AND OUR
LIVES, INSTEAD OF FOCUSING ON
THE GOD OF THE TEMPLE &
ALLOWING HIM TO LIVE IN YOU.**

Josephus, a historian, says that Herod was only interested in gaining fame through reconstructing the building. Architects from Greece, Rome and Egypt planned its construction. Ten thousand skilled labourers built the temple. One thousand Levites built the parts of the structure where the normal builders couldn't enter such as the Most Holy place where only priests were allowed. This renovated temple was still standing when Jesus was born. During a Passover visit by Jesus, the Jews replied that the temple was under construction for forty-six years (John 2:20).

As the disciples stood outside Jerusalem, looking at the temple, they made comments on the beauty and the magnificence of the temple that Herod built. Jesus then turned to His disciples and He predicted that the temple will be destroyed and not one stone will be left upon another (Matthew 24:1-2).

The reason why Jesus predicted its destruction, was once again because they lost focus. According to His words in Matthew 24:12, they lost focus – it was not to be about the created, the temple, but supposed to be about the Creator. Jesus also declared this while He was in the magnificent temple one day. In Matthew 12:6 He says: *"But I say unto you that in this place is One greater than the temple."*

Only a few years after they've completed the temple, it was destroyed by the Romans. That magnificent temple was destroyed under the command of Titus, a Roman commander who put Jerusalem under siege in 70 A.D.

**DO YOU KNOW WHY YOU WERE
CREATED? WHY YOU EXIST? THERE
IS ONLY ONE REASON. TO
GLORIFY GOD THROUGH YOUR
BODY, THROUGH YOUR LIFE! KEEP
FOCUSED THATS YOUR PURPOSE.**

When the Roman armies, after months of siege and many hard battles, finally broke through the walls of Jerusalem, Titus commanded his soldiers, as they entered into the city of Jerusalem, to leave the temple intact because of its tremendous beauty. He told them not to touch it, as it was too splendid to destroy. The rest they could burn. Because of the long siege and many struggles, the soldiers were enraged and they pretended not to have heard what Titus said and they burnt the temple to the ground, together with the rest of Jerusalem. The interesting thing is that when the temple burnt, the gold and all the precious jewels in the temple melted into the foundation of the temple. Afterwards the soldiers went back and they broke open the foundation of the temple in order to get to the gold. Just as Jesus had predicted, no one stone was left upon another within the temple. The prophecy in Psalms 74:7 reads as follows: *"They burnt your Sanctuary to the ground, desecrating your dwelling place."*

Another temple was built on the very same spot where the first and the second temple stood. These days the new temple is called the 'Dome of the Rock' because it has a golden plated roof. This golden dome covering was refurbished in 1993, following a donation of 8.2 million U.S. dollars by King Hussein of Jordan. He sold one of his houses in London to fund 80 kilograms of gold to be used for the golden roof on top of the golden dome. It seems as if the people throughout history, haven't learnt that it is not about the temple, but it is about the One who is in the temple. Yes, it is wonderful to build a house of God that is magnificent for Him to live in, but we lose focus because of its beauty. One day, at the second coming of Jesus Christ, this golden dome standing in Jerusalem right now, will also burn.

**GOD MAY HAVE BLEST YOU WITH
GREAT BEAUTY OR A STRONG
PHYSIQUE. BE CAREFUL NOT TO
IDOLIZE GODS TEMPLE WHICH IS
YOUR BODY. YOU ARE ONLY REALLY
GREAT IF GOD LIVES IN YOU.**

How many times was the temple destroyed, or almost destroyed and every time there was a warning, a prediction. Every time the people were told to bring the focus back to the Creator and not to focus on the creation. I wonder if it is not the same for us today. Maybe the reason why our lives are in trouble repeatedly, is because our focus is on us, instead of on God. Our focus is on the beauty of our lives here on earth, on how we have fun and how amazing and great we are, instead of being on God the Creator. Only after the correct focus is established, we can build our lives so that when the beauty arises, it is not because of pride or because of the outward want of display, but because of God, the Creator, who lives inside us.

The Bible tells us there is going to be another temple. Revelation 21 tells us after this earth is destroyed, there will also be a city called Jerusalem in heaven, kind of similar to the one here on earth. But it will be more magnificent. Revelation Chapter 21:22 makes a very interesting statement about the city. When Prophet John saw the New Jerusalem, the city of God, he looked around and he said: *"I did not see a temple in the city, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb was the temple."* This just struck such a cord, saying that God here on earth right now, needs a place where He can meet with us, but in heaven there will be no place, because He will be the place. We will go into the city and meet with God, not in a place, but with Him, face to face. God says we should focus on Him. Right now our focus should not be on the temple, but on the One of the temple, because God is the temple. What is God's purpose for you? It is so important for us here on earth while we are not yet together with God face to face, to understand why we are here, what our purpose is, because we are His temple.

**GOD KEPT DESTROYING THE
TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM BECAUSE
PEOPLE IDOLIZED IT. GOD WILL
ALSO BREAK US IF WE FOCUS ON
SELF AND NOT HIM.**

The only purpose is for God to dwell in us, for us to glorify Him in our body and mind. We need to learn to read God's instructions on **how** to build and improve this temple. How to grow ourselves mentally, physically and emotionally in order for God to be satisfied with this building He needs to live in. We need to allow the Architect to dictate how it should be build and what material should be used. Once we start putting this into practise our temple will become beautiful. Our temple will start looking as amazing as God designed it to be.

But be careful of the pride of life, because once this beauty comes up we might again **lose focus** of the One that has made this temple beautiful. Don't lose sight of Him who has created you and who lives inside you.

**WE NEED TO LEARN TO READ
GOD'S INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO
BUILD AND IMPROVE THIS TEMPLE.
HOW TO GROW OURSELVES
MENTALLY, PHYSICALLY AND
EMOTIONALLY .**

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