

Grounded in Grace

Pictures of Hope and Redemption Pt 7 **Picture #6 Five Marks of a Reconstructed Life** By Steve Benson



¹ Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. ² Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. Hebrews 12:1-3

Over the past ten years, we have seen “Ground Zero” turn from devastating destruction to an on-going revitalized construction zone. Below is a description of the picture above:

The Memorial’s twin reflecting pools are each nearly an acre in size and feature the largest manmade waterfalls in the North America. The pools sit within the footprints where the Twin Towers once stood. The names of every person who died in the 2001 and 1993 attacks are inscribed into bronze panels edging the Memorial pools.

As I think about the 9/11 reconstruction, I am reminded that God redeems tragedy and turns it into triumph through reconstructing our souls. Let’s look at five results of God’s reconstruction of our souls by using Hebrews 12:1-3 as our guide:

1. Learning from Faithful and Tangled Hearts

The first mark is learning from others’ faithful but tangled hearts. The writer refers back to the previous chapter where he described faithful men of scripture who trusted in the Lord’s provisions. But in each story you see faithful men who struggled and learned. Each one journeyed the road of faith, but “yet none of them received what had been promised (11:39).” These are the “*great cloud of witnesses*” who are cheering us on today to complete the journey. One who is willing to learn from others, from scripture, and from their story with a humble and honest heart has showed the mark of maturity and grace.

2. Perseverance in Running the Right Direction

The second mark of reconstruction is running with perseverance in the right direction. Notice that the Lord has the course set out for us. It is marked by men whom have gone before us, by the story of scripture, and by our own intimate relationship with the Lord. As we walk this road, the Lord calls us to persevere, to never give up, and to strain ahead toward the goal. A person who has experienced God's touch in a powerful way stands in awe of his power and has the confidence to continue in the direction He has laid out for him.

3. Co-writing Our Story with Perspective

We can't ignore the little detail of verse 11:2: that Jesus is "*the author and perfecter of our faith...*" He is the one who has authored our stories before time ever began. He wrote every detail and every theme of our stories. And now he asks us to join him in co-writing our stories in the present. The Lord guides us to discover what he has already written. A person who has been reconstructed in grace is able to see the way the details of disappointments and joys are woven together to form an autobiography of God's character transforming us. We have a perspective that is ripe with his story woven into our story for a grand artistic tapestry of his love.

4. Living in Joy by Knowing that We are Enjoyed

I have always wondered what or who was the joy set before him. Then it finally dawned on me- I am his joy. I was set before him before the creation of the world to be loved. (Eph 1:4) I am his joy. He went through pain, scorning, and shame to continue to enjoy me. And since I am enjoyed, I can live in joy. I can throw off all the hindrances of thoughts of shame, self-pity or any other negative thoughts because I am loved. When one experiences God's reconstruction, one's perspective on life is forever changed and the motivation is continually being rearranged.

5. Understanding the Gospel that gives Us Strength in Heart

Lastly, a reconstructed life is marked by not only the intellectual understanding of the gospel but also by the transformation of the hidden and inner motivations of our hearts. The gospel gives us strength to persevere by not only uncovering our sinful and prideful desires but by helping us rediscover the truth that we are loved beyond belief. The gospel gives us power to oppose strongholds within and outside our hearts. The gospel allows us to know in a deep intrinsic way that we will never be let go. The gospel allows us to rest our weary heads on the Savior's breast and go to sleep in his arms. The gospel provides us power to keep going and not lose heart. The gospel provides and leads us to the way of freedom.