*Jesus, Single Like Me: Our First Foundation
by* [*Kris Swiatocho*](http://www.thesinglesnetwork.org/)

It was 2 a.m., and I was scrunched down in my hall bathroom with nothing to keep me company but my dog, a black Cocker Spaniel named Joshua, and a battery-operated radio. I kept switching back and forth to the various stations trying to find out where the storm was. The power had gone out hours before, and panic was beginning to set in.

It was September 5, 1996, and Hurricane Fran was just about to hit my hometown of Garner, NC (a suburb of Raleigh). As I fought with the radio, my dog needed to go out again. I was reluctant to let him out but knew I preferred not to have him go in my small bathroom. I lit another candle and slowly opened the front door to let him out. Everything was pitch-black. The wind sounded horrible, and there was an uneasiness in the air. I hollered for Joshua to return, and a very wet dog ran back inside in seconds. We quickly walked back into my bathroom and lay on the mattress I had put on the floor. This would be a long, hot night, waiting for the storm to pass and praying my house would still stand. Had it been built, right? Had it been built on solid ground? Could it withstand the storm ahead? Only God knew the answers.

I have often used this story as I have led a single adult ministry of how important it is for our ministries to be started on solid ground. So many times, we get ahead of God, wanting to have a ministry for singles to have something fun to do. Sure, we know we need Bible study and prayer, but somehow, those things get prioritized toward the bottom of the list. In Matthew 7:21-29, Jesus tells us the importance of building not only our ministries on solid ground but ourselves as well.

*"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only those who do the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles? 'Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!' Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash." When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law (Matthew 7:21-29).*

**Jesus teaches me:**

**1. As a leader, it has to start with you and your relationship with God. It has to start with your solid ground.**As Christians, it's easy to say that we are good people and love God. That we go to church, read our Bibles, and say "Bless you" when somebody sneezes. Jesus tells us not everyone who calls out to God will enter the kingdom of heaven but only those doing the will of God. The devil believes, goes to church, and knows the Bible better than you or I, but he is not going to heaven. Our relationship has to be more than lip service. More than just fitting in with those beside you. More than just putting "Christian" on your Facebook page. It's how you are living your life. It's your walk, day in and day out. It's how you love others due to your relationship with Christ. It's how you spend your money, time, and energy. It's your attitude.

Are you seeing growth in your relationship with God? Has your salvation made a change in your life? A change that not only changes you but helps you to lead others to that change as well?
 *"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matthew 6:33).*

**2. Your salvation should lead to joy and passion for the Lord.** There are so many folks out there who live a mediocre life in Christ. They are like zombies in the world. They do the same thing every day, working hard for the paycheck only to end their day in exhaustion and emptiness. Christ came to give us life in abundance. This abundance is a life with passion and purpose. Out of our relationship with Christ, there should easily be a desire to serve the Lord, but it must be in HIS WILL. So many people serve the Lord out of obligation. Well, I am a member of this church, so I guess I should sign up to teach kids or serve food, etc. What? How boring is that! As you seek God with all your might and strength, I promise he will give you direction. He will help you find the passion that comes from purpose. He will guide you to serve in a way that brings joy to our heavenly Father and you and those around you. Those that you are leading. As you find your place in God's will for your life, it will spread to others to seek theirs. Don't just believe in God, but follow in HIS way.

*Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men,… (Colossians 3:23).*

**3. Your salvation should lead to serving and leading in humility.** As a ministry, Jesus tells us that many will say, "We" did this, and "We" did that in your name. Lord, we built this ministry and fed homeless people, raised money for this mission trip, visited people in nursing homes, and so on. But again, lost people feed the hungry and raise money and visit folks in nursing homes. When you say you do these things in HIS name but aren't living it yourself, it means nothing to Jesus. He will simply tell you he never knew you. So many so-called ministries raise funds to help orphans but keep most of the money for themselves. Even on a smaller scale, do we give God our leftovers or our best? Are we serving out of humility from grace or because it looks good to others? As a leader, what example are you living?  *Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of others (Phil 2:1-4).*

**4. Be ready to do what God asks when He asks.** God gives us direction all day. We don't move on to this action because we sometimes don't like what he is telling us to do. Sometimes I know God wants me to share with this person or deal with this conflict, etc., and I want to run the other way. A great leader will live in expectation of God's next task. They will be ready to lead others the way God tells them to versus what their flesh tells them.

*But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, (1 Peter 3:15).*

So I was with my dog, listening to the wind howl and the rain pound on the roof. All I could do was pray. I knew my house was built well. I knew I had done what I needed to secure items on my deck from blowing away or crashing into my home. I knew I had bought the necessary food and water supplies. But would it be enough? Would the preparations I had done save my house? Well, morning finally came, and to my surprise, my house had withstood the storm. I had one tree that had toppled over away from my home. I would find out later that weeping willows have short root systems making them easy targets for storms. However, as I walked throughout my neighborhood, some of my neighbors' homes had not favored either. Some had trees fallen through their roofs and cars. Some had windows blown out. I quickly ran home and grabbed some supplies to help my neighbors.  The whole neighborhood came out to help each other. Even though some of our home foundations weren't as strong as others, we still came together to help each other.

As leaders, we need to do the same. We need to help each other grow in our relationships with the Lord, build our foundations strong, and be ready for the task God is giving us so when the storms come; we are prepared.

[www.LaborDaySingles.org](http://www.LaborDaySingles.org) (Sept 1-4, 2023)

[www.TheSinglesNetwork.org](http://www.TheSinglesNetwork.org)

www.IntentionalRelationshipSolutions.org

[www.KrisSwiatochoMinistries.org](http://www.KrisSwiatochoMinistries.org)

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