

What Are You Building?

The Legacy We Leave Behind

A Different View, the Same Cup of Coffee

Good morning, Coffee Cup Family.

Sometimes a change of scenery can change the way we look at life.

Recently, I found myself standing in Montgomery, Alabama, looking at our State Capitol. It's a beautiful building with a tremendous amount of history. As I stood there, I began thinking about all the people who have walked through its doors, the decisions made inside, and the generations who have come and gone.

And then a question came to mind.

What are we building?

Not buildings made of brick, stone, or concrete.

I'm talking about what we're building with our lives.

Our relationships. Our character. Our families. Our communities. Our reputations. And perhaps most importantly, the impact we have on other people.

Every single day, whether we realize it or not, we're building something.

The question is whether we're building something that will last.

1. We're All Builders

Think about it for a moment.

Every conversation is an opportunity to build trust or damage it.

Every promise we keep strengthens a relationship. Every promise we break can weaken one.

Every time we encourage somebody, we're adding something positive to their foundation.

And every time we dismiss, criticize, or overlook someone, we may be taking something away.

We don't always recognize the significance of those little moments.

Most of us think about building something in terms of big accomplishments.

Getting promoted. Winning an award. Growing a business. Leading an organization. Reaching a financial goal.

And there's absolutely nothing wrong with any of those things.

Goals give us direction. Accomplishments can reflect years of hard work, discipline, and sacrifice.

But here's something I've learned over the years.

There's a difference between building a successful life and building a meaningful one.

And the greatest opportunity is finding a way to do both.

2. The Things We Chase Don't Always Last

I've spent much of my life in positions where there were goals to achieve, missions to accomplish, and people depending on me.

I've worn uniforms. I've held leadership positions. I've been part of organizations doing important work.

And like many of you, I've experienced moments of accomplishment and moments of disappointment.

But here's something that becomes clearer with time.

Eventually, someone else will hold the position.

Someone else will sit in the chair.

Someone else will receive the award.

And someone else will be responsible for carrying the mission forward.

That's simply how life works.

The mistake isn't pursuing success.

The mistake is allowing success to become the only thing we're building.

Because when our identity becomes attached entirely to a title or accomplishment, we risk losing sight of the people and relationships that make the journey worthwhile.

A title may describe what you do.

It doesn't define everything you leave behind.

3. People Remember More Than We Realize

Have you ever had someone approach you years later and remind you of a conversation you barely remember?

Maybe they said:

"You probably don't remember this, but you helped me through a difficult time."

Or perhaps:

"You believed in me when I didn't believe in myself."

Those moments can catch us completely off guard.

We might not remember the conversation.

We might not even remember what we said.

But they remember.

Why?

Because what seemed like a small moment to us was a significant moment to them.

That's something worth thinking about.

We often measure our impact by the big things we accomplish.

But the people around us may measure our impact by the little things we did when nobody was watching.

The phone call we made.

The encouragement we offered.

The time we stopped what we were doing to listen.

The opportunity we gave someone.

The moment we chose kindness instead of frustration.

Sometimes the most important things we build are things we'll never get to see completed.

And that's okay.

4. Be Careful What You're Building at the Expense of Something Else

Here's where this conversation becomes a little more personal.

We can become so focused on building something good that we unintentionally neglect something even more important.

We can spend years building a career while our relationships suffer.

We can give everything we have to an organization while giving very little of ourselves to the people waiting at home.

We can become so committed to helping everybody else that we forget to take care of ourselves.

And sometimes we justify it by reminding ourselves that we're doing good things.

But good things still require balance.

There's a difference between being dedicated and being consumed.

I've had to ask myself some difficult questions along the way.

Am I spending my time on the things I care most?

Am I present with the people who matter to me?

Am I building something that will strengthen my life, or am I constantly adding responsibilities that leave me exhausted?

Those aren't always comfortable questions.

But they're necessary.

Because building a meaningful legacy should not require sacrificing the very relationships we hope to be remembered for.

Sometimes the next step in building something worthwhile isn't taking on another responsibility.

Sometimes it's making room for what already matters.

5. You Don't Have to Build Something Famous

When we hear the word legacy, we sometimes imagine something enormous.

A building with our name on it.

A scholarship.

A business.

An award.

A major accomplishment.

But legacy doesn't have to be famous.

A parent who raises a child with love and integrity is building something.

A coach who helps a young athlete believe in themselves is building something.

A veteran who reaches out to another veteran struggling with life is building something.

A neighbor who checks on someone living alone is building something.

A friend who shows up when everybody else disappears is building something.

And the wonderful thing is that none of those examples requires wealth, recognition, or a special title.

They require something much more accessible.

Time. Intention. Consistency. And a willingness to care.

You may never know how far your influence reaches.

But that doesn't mean it isn't reaching somebody.

6. The Foundation Matters

Any builder will tell you that what happens beneath the surface is just as important as what people see above it.

A beautiful structure built on a weak foundation won't stand forever.

Our lives aren't much different.

Character is part of our foundation.

Integrity is part of our foundation.

Faith, values, relationships, accountability, and how we treat others all contribute to what we're building.

And foundations require maintenance.

Sometimes we have to repair relationships.

Sometimes we have to admit we were wrong.

Sometimes we have to change priorities.

And sometimes we have to stop building long enough to ask whether we're even heading in the right direction.

That's not failure.

That's wisdom.

You can change what you're building without abandoning everything you've already accomplished.

In fact, some of the most meaningful growth in life begins when we're willing to make those adjustments.

7. What Will Still Matter Tomorrow?

Imagine looking back on your life years from now.

What do you hope to see?

Will you remember the awards?

Probably some of them.

Will you remember the accomplishments?

Absolutely.

But I suspect many of our most meaningful memories will involve people.

The laughter around a dinner table.

The conversations over coffee.

The friendships that lasted through difficult seasons.

The people we helped.

And the people who helped us.

We may remember what we accomplished.

But we'll also remember who was standing beside us.

And hopefully, somewhere along the way, someone will remember that we made their journey a little better.

That's a legacy worth building.

The Coffee Cup Challenge

This week, I want you to ask yourself one question:

What am I building today that will still matter tomorrow?

Don't make it complicated.

Maybe you need to strengthen a relationship.

Maybe you need to reconnect with an old friend.
Maybe you need to spend some uninterrupted time with your family.
Maybe you need to encourage someone who has been struggling.
Or maybe you need to look at your own priorities and make a change.
Choose one thing.
Take one intentional step.
And don't worry about getting credit for it.
The important thing isn't whether somebody notices.
It's whether what you're doing matters.

One Final Thought Over Coffee

Standing in front of that Capitol reminded me that buildings can stand for generations.
But the influence of a life can reach generations too.
Not necessarily because of the positions we held or the recognition we received.
But because of the people we loved, the values we demonstrated, and the encouragement we passed along.
We're all building something.
And we don't need to wait until tomorrow to make sure we're building the right thing.
We can begin today.
Build something worth leaving behind.
Until our next cup of coffee, remember:
One person. One conversation. One cup at a time.

Build something worth leaving behind.
One Person. One Conversation. One Cup.

COFFEE CUP WORKBOOK

Episode 18

WHAT ARE YOU BUILDING?

The Legacy We Leave Behind

The question isn't whether you're building something. The question is whether you're building something worth leaving behind.

Name: _____

Date: _____

The Big Idea

Every day, through our choices, conversations, commitments, and relationships, we're building something.

This workbook helps you identify what matters most, recognize where you're investing your time, and take meaningful steps toward building something that lasts.

Designed for individuals, families, organizations, leadership teams, and small groups.

"The question isn't whether you're building something. The question is whether you're building something worth leaving behind."

Start With the Mirror

Before thinking about the legacy you want to leave, consider the life you're building right now.

1. What are the three most important things in my life right now?

2. Where am I investing most of my time and energy?

3. Do those answers match? If not, why?

What Does Your Foundation Look Like?

Rate yourself in the following areas, using 1 for Needs Attention and 5 for Strong and Consistent.

Family and relationships: _____ / 5

Personal integrity: _____ / 5

Keeping commitments: _____ / 5

Physical and emotional well-being: _____ / 5

Encouraging others: _____ / 5

Living according to my values: _____ / 5

Balancing responsibilities: _____ / 5

Reflection: Which area needs the most attention? What is one thing you can do to strengthen it?

Success Versus Significance

Sometimes we're so busy measuring what we've accomplished that we forget to consider whom we've influenced.

Think about the difference between achievements and lasting impact.

4. What accomplishments am I most proud of?

5. How have I made a positive difference in someone else's life?

Coffee Cup Reflection: Which answer brings you the greatest sense of fulfillment, and why?

The People Who Remember

Think of someone who made a lasting difference in your life.

It might be a parent, teacher, coach, military leader, friend, or someone you met briefly.

6. Who was that person?

7. What did they do that you still remember?

8. How can you offer that same encouragement to someone else?

Are You Building at the Expense of Something Else?

This exercise is about recognizing when good commitments begin competing with important relationships or personal well-being.

Check any statements that apply to you.

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

If you checked one or more, consider this:

9. What could I reduce, delegate, or change to make more room for what matters?

My Seven-Day Coffee Cup Challenge

Small actions. Meaningful impact.

For the next seven days, take one intentional action to build something that matters. Check off each action as you complete it.

☐ Day 1: _____

☐ Day 2: _____

☐ Day 3: _____

☐ Day 4: _____

☐ Day 5: _____

☐ Day 6: _____

☐ Day 7: _____

My Seven-Day Progress: ____ of 7 completed

What Do You Want to Leave Behind?

Imagine someone describing your influence twenty years from now.

10. What would you hope they say?

I hope people remember me as someone who...

One thing I can begin doing today to make that possible is...

The Final Cup

Finish these three statements after completing the workbook.

I want to spend less time building...

I want to spend more time building...

The person I want to positively influence this week is...

My Personal Commitment

This week, I commit to building something meaningful by:

Commitment date:

For Leadership Teams & Small Groups

This workbook can also be used as a 20–30 minute group discussion.

Suggested conversation starters:

What does building a lasting legacy mean to you?

How can an organization accomplish its mission without neglecting its people?

What do we want others to remember about how we treated them?

What are we doing today that will make our organization, family, or community stronger tomorrow?

What is one action we can take together this week?

Close by inviting each participant to share one personal commitment. Sharing should be voluntary.

Take This With You

We're all building something.

Some things will be seen by thousands.

Others may only be noticed by one person.

But that doesn't make them any less important.

Build with purpose. Build with integrity. Build with love.

And build something worth leaving behind.

 One person. One conversation. One cup at a time.

Final Question

What am I building today that will still matter tomorrow?

Every day, we're building something.

Keep planting.

Keep watering.

Keep showing up.

Build something worth leaving behind.

One Person. One Conversation. One Cup.