

1 Peter 2:4-5

As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Peter personally experienced the transformation he writes about.

The picture of stones, priests, and sacrifices, pointed people to the temple, which was the center of social and spiritual life—the place where heaven and earth overlap.

God no longer dwells in a place. He lives within His people.

→ **We are shaped by God, together.**

Romans 12:2

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Transformation = Metamorphosis = completely new creation

Masons shaped stones to fit together with the surrounding stones. Value was not in individual stones, but how they fit together.

The shaping God does in you, is rarely about you.

Romans 12:3-6

For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them:

Lamentations 4:1

How the gold has grown dim, how the pure gold is changed! The holy stones lie scattered at the head of every street.

→ Being an independent Christian, is not what Jesus died for.

Spiritual sacrifices are the unseen acts of faithful obedience God uses to form us into Christ's likeness and shape us to fit together as His people.

ie. Confession, forgiveness, service, giving, dedication to the church body

RELATIONSHIPS GOD USES TO SHAPE US

I. Every follower of Jesus needs stones beside them.

- People who have permission to ask the hard questions
- Provide stability, and security

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

→ God uses friction with those around us to grow and shape us. He uses diversity of backgrounds, perspectives, ethnicities, etc. to build His house.

II. Every follower of Jesus needs stones above them.

- People who protect us, carry weight, pour into us
- God prepares us for relationship with authority by commanding us to honor our parents.

Hebrews 13:17

Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

→ Don't let your church wounds convince you that God's design is the problem.

III. Every follower of Jesus needs stones below them.

- At some point faith has to move from consuming to contributing.
- Paul walks with Timothy, corrects, encourages, and challenges him.

2 Timothy 2:2

and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.

→ Paul doesn't say, make sure you're qualified or feel ready first.

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

- 1. Do you invite different perspectives into your life and community? Do you avoid friction?**
- 2. What is your relationship with authority? How does it impact your relationship with God?**
- 3. When was the last time you took someone who was new to the faith and walked them through the basics?**
- 4. How are you fitting as a living stone in God's church right now? What area of your life is "scattered"?**

