

When an artist begins to paint a portrait, he or she begins with brush in hand, an empty canvas, and an array of different color paints. The artist begins to paint with one blot, one stroke, the moving of the brush from side to side and up and down. With thoughtful and deliberate care, thousands of little details are in every painting session. The work may drag on for days, weeks, months even years, but the importance of the whole project is found in the little details. Finally and ultimately the portrait will be finished and the masterpiece revealed!

When a builder begins to construct a building, the most important part of the construction is the foundation, more importantly, the cornerstone within the foundation. If the cornerstone is not perfectly level and square (even if it's off just a little bit) the whole structure of the building will be off measurement. It will not be level, leaving the whole building in a weakened and vulnerable condition. This foundation stone is the first stone to be set and it determines the position of all the other pieces to be laid afterward. If the cornerstone is laid improperly, the whole building may fall under duress. The total weight of the structure rests on this particular stone...also called the "foundation stone."

There are thousands of little things that will happen everyday in your life. All these little things that may seem insignificant and small to you, in reality they are very important, because it is the combination of all the little things we do that make up the cornerstone and foundation stone of our life!

Homework is important, school attendance is important, the words you speak to your friends, teachers, and "everyday people" around you matter. The decisions you make about what type of friends you're going to hang with or what kind of activities you are going to do matter. All of these seemingly little things have big implications! Your choice to be a leader or a follower, to stand by and simply observe good and evil, or be proactive in doing good and defeating evil, will determine what your final painting looks like or how strong the structure of your life will be finally and ultimately.

The Cornerstone and foundation stone of your life should be the commitment to walk in truth. When we forsake truth for our own selfish desire and pleasure, this will always be the beginning of leading us down the path and place of disaster! Upon the perfectly set cornerstone and foundation stone of your life (which is truth) you can now use all the other great building products (wonderful character traits) to paint a portrait of beauty and build a strong structure which will last your entire life and bring you through anything.

One last illustration: The tallest and mightiest tree on the planet is the Redwood. This Magnificent king of the forest grows over 360 feet high and has a diameter of 30 feet! They have made tunnels in the

Redwoods wide enough for cars to pass through. The beauty and splendor of these trees stand firm for generation upon generation. They can withstand the most violent storms and the fiercest winds. This glorious spectacle of creation starts out as a little seed 1/8 of an inch big. The seed of a Redwood could rest on the end of your index finger.

The little things you do every day in your life will turn into powerful forces which will far outlast you and even touch and influence the lives of many people who come after you for many generations.

On your part, this will take vision, resolve, hard work, and sacrifice. The benefits for your life, family, friends, and those you will meet throughout your lifetime, will far outweigh the sacrifice you gave.

The following are some little Redwood seeds you can plant every day in your life that will cause you to grow into a person who is strong, successful, productive, and influential for the good of others:

I. Honesty

II. Loyalty to family, friends and others

III. Goodness

IV. Compassion

V. Giving to others

VI. Hard work

VII. Perseverance

VIII. Respect for others

IX. Commitment to education

X. In everything you do, setting the example for those who are watching you and coming up behind you.

Conclusion: The above illustrations should be lived out in your life everyday. paint with passion, diligence, excellence, and focus. In everything you say and do may it be upon the Cornerstone and

foundation stone of Truth. Plant the Redwood seeds of right choices and good morality not only in your life, but in the lives of others. In doing so, you will create a great legacy for yourself and help grow a new generation. It must begin with you!