

## Week 1 Day 1 | *Names for Jesus: Cornerstone*

Have you ever seen a cornerstone on a historical building? Maybe you've even seen one decorated with a relief or inscription of some kind. These are pretty much ceremonial these days, but in earlier times they had a purpose beyond decoration.

The cornerstone was the first stone set in construction of a foundation requiring masonry. Notice it was not only part of the foundation, but it was the first part of the foundation. Since it came before anything else, all the other stones would have been set in reference to it. An imperfect or misplaced cornerstone would alter the position and integrity of the entire structure.

However, using a cornerstone that's true changes everything. One with perfect 90-degree right angles. A building block that has straight edges and level base. Construct your foundation out from there and you'll have a building that can last . . . that can stand the test of time.

Understanding the purpose of a cornerstone in biblical times provides context for the significance of this description given to Jesus:

*"Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself."—Ephesians 2:20 (NLT)*

Jesus certainly needs to be the cornerstone of the church and of our faith. He also needs to be the cornerstone of our goals, motives and intentions, decisions, and ambitions. Since He's the only perfect cornerstone, all other cornerstones by definition are off. They will result in misaligned ambitions, unstable decisions, wobbly motives, and shaky goals that, over time, will crumble. Other cornerstones will always require us to rebuild.

We see this all the time with money, influence or jobs, and certainly with fitness. If the cornerstone of my fitness goals is to impress others, what happens when I fail to get feedback? What if I see someone else who is far more impressive than I am? My focus will become even more self-centered than it already was. If the cornerstone of my fitness is to look better, what happens when I stop seeing results in the mirror? Or if the results I see are never enough? I get discouraged, frustrated, and discontent. From there, I'm likely to compromise my nutrition, exercise or sleep. Nor should "Feeling better" be the cornerstone of our fitness. What happens if we never feel better, if we get hurt or diseased? Our attitude will quickly shift to one of apathy and laziness. When the focus is about us, the building we're erecting becomes less and less stable. It is unable to survive high winds or the weight of a heavy snow.

This is not to say that having fitness goals is wrong. In fact, I encourage them. They give us quantifiable data to shoot for, measure progress against and can teach us how to make adjustments. They can also reveal how we are wired. However, our goals can also unknowingly trick us. They become the purpose for our fitness. That's why goals and focus should never be synonymous. When our goals become our focus, Jesus is not. Before we know it, our goals have become our cornerstone.

However, with Jesus as the cornerstone of our fitness, He can lay the foundation. From that foundation, our reflection of Him might serve as a catalyst for others. Where looking better could be a result, rather than a point of focus. Where feeling better and performing better can be a natural byproduct of our efforts, rather than the emphasis of them.

It's essential to establish this from Day 1. Above all else, our goal should be to honor God with our fitness. We do this *not* by having Jesus merely involved. We do this by making Jesus the cornerstone. Then and only then will we have a foundation that is true. One that is sound, without cracks and unsusceptible to settling. One that is solid, impermeable to torrential downpours and flash floods. One that is strong, sturdy enough to withstand the emotional earthquakes that come with living in an imperfect world.

Sound. Solid. Strong. Certainly a description worthy of our Jesus.

### Prayer

*Father, thank You for your son Jesus, the perfect Cornerstone. Thank you that He wants to be at the basis of our lives, decisions, and motives. Will You forgive me when I let the primary focus of my fitness be anything other than Him? Please gently remind me to continually build my faith on Him, a foundation void of cracks, unmovable, and everlasting. Amen.*

### Meditation

Jesus, the Cornerstone of my faith, the foundation of my life.

### Daily Spiritual Exercise

Pray without ceasing.