

# Uprooted

October 2025

If what we do or think is not rooted in God's love, these things will pass with the wind. If what we build is not anchored in God's love, our structures will eventually fall and crumble. If what we plant is not sowed in God's love, the budding fruit will struggle to grow and never flourish. Yet, we are still tempted to build and plan apart from God's presence in our lives. We are enticed to believe that there is no afterlife to weigh, consider, or prepare.

Unfortunately, our world today is becoming more uprooted and less stable. Increasingly, people say they feel ill at ease, filled with more anxiety, worry, and are not sure who to trust. Without our lives rooted in the love of God, these current plagues of distrust and disorientation will remain, and uprootedness might become a new frightening way of life.



Today we are living in an increasingly secular world. People in general are less religious. The word "secular" comes from the Latin word "saecularis," meaning "of this age, world, or generation." Opposite of secular, therefore, is eternal. If one is secular, you care most about the here and now, not giving a lot of regard to what might be in the future or everlasting. In other words, from a secular standpoint, God does not occupy much of your mind or time. But, if one is religious, God generally occupies many of your waking thoughts and eternity is always on your mind.

Many people today are building things on their own, not very often conferring with God or asking his advice. They would rather glean what they can from their own intelligence, the internet or AI, priding themselves on doing things "my way." An increasing number of people today are comfortable building their lives without God, raising children without the benefits of Sunday School, or approaching each day without prayer. The last thing they want to do is waste time with the demands of a religious institution. They are busy and their time is precious. They have become comfortably secular.

In your own life, what are you are currently building – a marriage, business, family, career, or mission? Are you including God in your plans? Are you asking for his help to make your structures as strong and steadfast as possible, cooperative with the moral order of the universe? God is certainly ready to help us. He wants to be part of our daily plans – but we need to reach out and ask for his companionship in our lives. He gives us incredible freedom to ask for



his help or ignore him completely. It is our choice. If we do reach out to him, the Bible tells us he will show up with his wisdom and tools ready to help us build our lives with firm foundations – making them so strong they will never be blown down during this life or the life to come. Jesus put it this way in his Sermon on the Mount: “Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won’t collapse because it is built on bedrock. But anyone who hears my teaching and doesn’t obey it is foolish, like a person who builds a house on sand. When the rains and floods come and the winds beat against that house, it will collapse with a mighty crash.” (Matthew 7:24-27)

Last month my colleagues and I were attending a conference in Germany for Iranian believers in diaspora. My mission organization supports many of these Iranian leaders throughout Europe and the United States who provide leadership and theological training for the underground Church in Iran. At the conference we befriended one of these dynamic leaders, his wife, and young children. While sharing a long and interesting lunch the father told us the harrowing story of his year-long imprisonment in an Iranian jail.

If Christians are caught sharing their faith and hope in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior in Iran, they are threatened with immediate imprisonment for an indefinite time by the Ayatollah Khamenei and his regime. Our new friend, we call him Amir, told us what it was like to be in solitary confinement and mentally tortured for hours on end in one of the Iran’s worst prisons. His only crime was believing that Jesus was the Son of God. He said that his interrogators would confront him 10 to 12 hours a day for weeks at a time trying to break his spirit and cause him to confess that his Christian faith was an illusion, and that returning to Islam was his only true hope. Amir said at one point he was on the brink of losing his mind, but somehow managed to maintain his sanity and faith. He later learned at that same moment in time Christian friends from South Africa had traveled to Iran and spent hours and days at a time praying for him outside his prison walls. Amir said at his lowest point in prison he felt the palpable presence of God as never before. The strong faith he had built over the years and the prayers of his friends from South Africa gave him the needed stamina to withstand the very strong winds of his interrogators and torturers.

Amir was eventually released from prison but was constantly followed by police for four years throughout Tehran before he decided to finally leave the country and resettle his young family in Germany. Amir has now started an organization providing leadership and theological training for the underground church in Iran. He is dedicating his life to helping others who are suffering for their Christian faith in Iran. He has an enduring hope that someday Iranians will be free to worship Jesus in public as their Lord and Savior. God has his hand on Amir’s life.

I tell you this story of Amir and his family because of the beauty and vitality I saw in their lives. They are remarkably anchored in God's truth and love. They have endured incredible suffering but triumphed with God's help. Amir could have easily recanted his faith and saved himself weeks and months of terrible and intense torture, but he didn't. He was convinced of Jesus being God, God being with him, and eternal life being real. He was willing to die for his faith rather than deny it. What an inspiration he has become to so many people including my colleagues and me. Please pray for the many Iranian Christians still in jail today who are being tortured and suffering.



St. Peter in Prison by Rembrandt

While in prison, Amir remembered the words of the Apostle Peter: "Dear friends, don't be surprised at the fiery trials you are going through, as if something strange was happening to you. Instead, be very glad – for these trials make you partners with Christ in his suffering, so that you will have the wonderful joy of seeing his glory when it is revealed to all the world." (1 Peter 4:12,13)

In the United States today my heart goes out especially to the younger generation trying to build their own lives as best they can with so many winds against them including the sirens of secularism. They are struggling to afford houses, find stable jobs and businesses, and trust in the many blessings of marriage and children. Many are suffering from feelings of isolation, transience, and a lack of community and faith. My hope is they open their lives anew and give God a try to discover the joy of building lives together with him full of joy, hope, strength and everlasting life. The Psalmist said it beautifully when he wrote: "Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers. But they delight in the law of the Lord, meditating on it day and night. They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do. (Psalm 1:1-3)