



## Tom Keefer

"But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand." (Matthew 7:26)

The foundation was shaky. The walls were crumbling. The beams and structure: rotted. No, I'm not talking about my house, but the foundation of my soul. I grew up in Chicago, had a closet for a bedroom and wore the same Chicago Bulls jersey to school every day. It made me the target of bullies. My mother was bi-polar and my father was abusive. It was the perfect recipe for a depressing childhood.

I tried to escape it all by moving out and getting a construction job. Construction was an escape from the abuse and pain I endured at home.

After my wife, Mandy, and I started having children, we began to have marital problems. A Christian friend of mine in the construction business invited us over for dinner and shared with us the love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ.

Shortly after that dinner, I moved my family to Florida for another construction job. The money was pouring in, but I was working 80 hours a week, growing more arrogant by the day and tragically turning into my dad. While I was busy working, Mandy discovered MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers) and heard the call of the Holy Spirit to radically transform her life. I saw the change in her and decided to commit the rest of my life to Christ.

That's when I heard about Columbia International University. Mandy and I visited the school and knew we wanted to make CIU our new home. Today I am passionate about church planting and reaching others for Christ. I'm not sure where God will place me. But one thing is for sure; CIU has made an impact on me and my family and has helped me reconstruct my life for God's glory. Laying a new foundation for my life could not have happened without CIU.

"He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built." (Luke 6:48)

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