

# Parable of Wise and Foolish Builders



Scripture Reference: [Matthew 7:24-29](#)

**Suggested Emphasis:** Read the bible and do what it says.

**Memory Verse:** "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock." ([Matthew 7:24](#))



Background Study



Story Introduction



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## Story Overview:

Everyone who hears the word of God is building a house. The one who hears God's word but does not do what it says is like a foolish builder who builds his house on sand. That house will be crushed in a storm. The one who hears the word of God and obeys it is like a wise man that builds his house on solid rock. That house will stand up to any storm. Wise people build their faith on the foundation of God's word. This faith stands strong against the storms of life.

## Background Study:

A parable is a story with two levels of meaning. On the literal level the story is simple and the meaning straightforward. On a figurative level the story represents deeper and often spiritual situations. Sometimes parables were used by Jesus to help people understand spiritual lessons more easily. Sometimes he spoke in parables so that believers could understand but enemies of the gospel could not ([Luke 8:10](#)).

Jesus told the parable of the wise and foolish builders at the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount. He made sure his audience understood the meaning by explaining it. After all of the teachings in the sermon it was

important that the people understood that simply listening to his words was not enough.

In Luke's account of this parable ([Luke 6:47-49](#)) Jesus begins by asking the question, "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord' and do not do what I say?" That is the real point of this lesson. We cannot just say we are Christians or attend church or read the bible and then not do what the word of God says. This kind of life will not stand up against the problems that come our way in life.

In the area of Palestine there were low valleys and gullies that had been exposed by water from rain and storms. During heavy rainfall these became swollen rivers that washed away everything in their paths. A foolish builder would build his house without thinking about what kind of foundation there was. He might have liked the way the building site looked. Perhaps he decided to ignore the warnings of people who had experienced the past floods.

That is how we live our lives if we do not live them according to the word of God. We just do what feels right at the time. We do not listen to warnings or we ignore God's wisdom. There are many people who build their lives on shifting sand. They may listen to sermons and bible classes but they do not live according to what the bible says.

The wise builder, on the other hand, carefully plans his house. He investigates the building site to make sure that it will sustain his building. He judges the soil and elevation to make sure that there are no flood hazards. He will listen to warnings of those who know the area. He builds with confidence and knowing his building will last.

We can live our lives with confidence when we live according to the word of God. It is not just about listening or talking but it is about doing! Other Scriptures to consider:

- [1 Corinthians 3:9-15](#)
- [1 Timothy 6:17-19](#)
- [James 1:22-25](#)



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## Way to Introduce the Story:

"Who knows the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears? The story is all about a little girl going into a stranger's house when they were not home. She got very frightened when the bears came home! What is the lesson that we learn from Goldilocks and the Three Bears? The lesson is that we should never go into people's houses when they are not home. It is a simple story about bears that helps us understand a lesson that is important.

Sometimes Jesus wanted people to really understand important lessons. If the lessons were hard then Jesus sometimes told simple stories to help people understand the things that were hard to understand. These stories were called parables. Today we are going to learn a parable that Jesus told.

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# The Story:

Sometimes Jesus told parables to people. A parable is an easy-to-understand story that helps people understand something that is very hard to understand.

Jesus told a parable about two men who each decided to build a house. The two men went out looking for the perfect place to build the house.

The first man was very wise. He thought carefully about the kind of house he wanted to build. He wanted a house that was strong. If a strong wind or heavy rains came he did not want his house to break up or wash away. This wise man knew that the most important part of a house is the foundation. The foundation is the first thing that is built. It is the bottom of the house. The foundation has to be sturdy and strong to make the house sturdy and strong.

The wise looked everywhere and then he found the perfect place. He found a huge flat rock. The rock could be the foundation for the house. The wise man dug around and chipped the rock until it was the perfect size for his house. Then he built his house on the rock.

After he was finished he lived in the house. Many times storms came to his house. The winds blew and the rains came but the wise man sat comfortably in his house. He did not worry about the storms because he had built his house on a rock.

In Jesus' parable he told of the other man that built a house. This man was foolish. He did not think carefully about the kind of house he should build. He just found a nice flat place and started building. He built his house on sand. The foundation kept slipping and sliding in the sand but the foolish man did not care. He just wanted to build a house.

When the foolish man finished his house he moved in. Guess what happened when the first storm came? The winds blew and the rains came down and the foolish man's house fell apart. It fell apart because it did not have a strong foundation.

After Jesus told the parable he explained to the people what the parable really meant. He said that the wise man was like someone who listened to Jesus' instructions and then followed the instructions. Jesus' instructions are always right. When a person builds his life on Jesus' words he is building a strong foundation. He will be strong inside.

The foolish man in the parable was like someone who listened to Jesus' instructions but then did not follow them. A person that does not build his life on Jesus' words will not have a strong foundation. He will be weak inside.

The people were amazed at the parable that Jesus taught. They were happy that he made things very easy to understand. His parable helped them want to listen to more things that Jesus had to say. The parable also made them want to follow Jesus' instructions.

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## Ways to Tell the Story:

This story can be told using a variety of methods. Always remain true to the facts found in the Bible but help children connect to its meaning by using drama, visual aids, voice inflection, student interaction and/or emotion. [Click here for visual aids and story-telling methods.](#)

[039 - Wise and Foolish Builders Parable](#) from [GNPI](#) on [Vimeo](#). A slideshow and set of illustrations for this Bible story can be downloaded directly from [Free Bible Images](#). Be selective. Each teacher is unique so only use the illustrations that best relate to the way

YOU are telling the story in THIS lesson. Too many illustrations can be confusing so eliminate any that cover other stories or details you do not wish to emphasise in this lesson.

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## Review Questions:

1. What is a parable? A story in which something that is easy to understand is used to explain something that is harder to understand.
2. What must a person do to be like the wise man that built his house on a rock? Hear the words of Jesus and put them into practice.
3. A person who hears the words of Jesus but does not put them into practice is like a house builder who builds his house on what? Sand

## Song Suggestions:

- [Wise Man Built His House Upon the Rock Song](#)
- Refer to the [Song Page](#) on this website for more options.

## Learning Activities and Crafts:

[\(How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation\)](#)

*Activities:*

- Sing: [The Wise Man Built His House Upon the Rock](#)
- Ask a builder to come to class and talk about the importance of building a house on a good foundation.
- Go on a walk around the building and find sandy or firm soil. Also look at the building's foundation.
- Use bible encyclopaedias or commentaries to find out about houses in New Testament times.
- Bring sand to class and look at it with a magnifying glass. Let children blow on it and move it around. Put pressure on it using various objects. Show how it shifts and moves easily.
- Object Lesson: Bring a food item or candy bar to class and place in front of the children. Lay your bible beside it. Talk about how simply looking at the candy bar is not enough. It is not until we take it and eat it that we can enjoy it. The Bible is the same. Just carrying it around or looking at it is not enough. It is not until we read it that we can receive the benefits. Read a few Scriptures you have chosen beforehand. After you have discussed this with the children then let them enjoy the candy bar.
- Here's a good idea sent in by Tom, one of my readers:  
First, make two simple small boxes/houses with card 3-5 inches high. Then, on a big tray, put a brick or a large rock, then put a house on top. Pour a little water gently onto the house (rain) and then a lot onto the rock (floods). Next, remove the rock, water and house from the tray. Make a sand castle from either a small bucket or other container on the tray and repeat the process. As you pour water onto the sand, it will subside eventually. This can be done outdoors or indoors, but if you are indoors, a waterproof sheet or table cloth below the tray helps minimise mess.
- And an idea sent in by Eileen. This makes use of game pieces from the board game "Monopoly"...Glue a Monopoly house on a flat rock and put another Monopoly house on top of a small sand pile in a pie pan. Pour water (rain) on the house on the rock and it will stay firmly on the rock. Then pour "rain" on the house on the sand, it of course, will be knocked off the pile of sand. *Hint: test the glue you are using to make sure it will stand the pressure of the water.*

*Crafts:*

- Make a "Parables" poster. Each week add a timeline picture depicting one of the parables.

- Collect stones that have at least one flat side (like river stones). Have the children paint the rocks with the words “God’s Word” or “Jesus” on them. *(Thanks to Sharon for sending in this idea)*

Check the [Teaching Ideas](#) page on this website for ideas that are adaptable to any lesson.



[Click for “Parable of the Wise and Foolish Builders” printables to print on A4 size paper](#)  
[Click for “Parable of the Wise and Foolish Builders” to print on Letter size paper \(USA\)](#)  
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## Other Online Resources:

- [Colouring page and worksheet about the house built on a rock \(Calvary Curriculum\)](#)
- [Colouring page and worksheets about parables in general \(Calvary Curriculum\)](#)
- [Colouring \(sermons4kids.com\)](#)
- [Video: You tube clip 2 minutes and 10 seconds. Good animation with no speaking. Really nice.](#)
- [Video: You tube clip 2 minutes and 54 seconds. The story told using legos. Sound effects and good scripture references.](#)
- [Wordsearch \(sermons4kids.com\)](#)
- [Activities \(sermons4kids.com\)](#)
- [Flip chart, puzzles and more \(ebibleteacher.com\)](#)

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