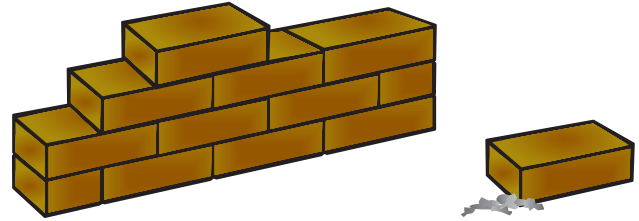
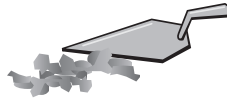




Wise and Foolish Builders

Matthew 7:24-27

This week we are learning how to build our lives on a firm foundation by hearing and obeying God's instructions. Pray each day to talk to God about what you are learning.



Day #1: All Authority

One day Jesus went up on a mountain near Capernaum to teach. A large crowd of people had gathered to listen. Jesus' teaching was unlike anything the crowd had ever heard before. Instead of a long list of do's and don'ts, Jesus taught them that what was most important was what was in their hearts. Before that, people might have thought they could "get by" with something because they looked good on the outside. Jesus taught them that God sees what is hidden and He is most concerned with what is happening inside our heart.

Jesus taught His listeners not to judge other people, and instead to treat people the way they, themselves, would like to be treated. Jesus taught people to help the poor and He taught them how to pray. He taught His followers that God loves them and that He longs to bless His children. And Jesus taught people that He is the only way to get to heaven. Matthew chapters 5-7 is packed full of Jesus' amazing teachings on the mountain that day.

T At the end of this great teaching, Jesus said, *"So then, everyone who hears my words and puts them into practice is like a wise man. He builds his house on the rock. The rain comes down. The water rises. The winds blow and beat against that house. But it does not fall. It is built on the rock. But everyone who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man. He builds his house on sand. The rain comes down. The water rises. The winds blow and beat against that house. And it falls with a loud crash."* - Matthew 7:24-27

The Bible says that when Jesus was finished teaching, *"The crowds were amazed at his teaching. He taught like one who had authority. He did not speak like their teachers of the law."* - Matthew 7:28-29

Jesus did have authority! The Bible says all authority in heaven and earth was given to Jesus (Matthew 28:18). And Jesus spoke exactly what His Father taught Him (John 8:28).

Pray and thank God for sending Jesus to teach with all authority. Ask God to help you DO what Jesus teaches us to do.

Day #2: Strong Tower

If you have any building blocks or "Jenga" blocks, build a tower on your kitchen floor. Make it pretty high. Your kitchen floor is a good foundation. Pretend your tower is a real building. Now create a wind storm. Blow on the tower and hit the ground around your tower. What happens? Now get your bed pillow. Build the same size tower on it. Your pillow is not a good foundation. Create the same storm. What happens when you hit the ground (pillow) around your tower this time? Why is it important to build on a firm foundation?

If a building is built on a poor foundation, it will not stand for long. Even if it looks solid from the outside, down deep in its core it will be weak. A weak foundation will crack. Then water will seep in and cause the cracks to grow. Walls may lean or bulge. Eventually, the building will no longer be able to stand. If someone owned a building like this, it would take a lot of time and money to fix it.

A person might buy a house that was built on a poor foundation and not even know it because it looks fine on the outside. It might take years for the problems to show up. But they will show up. And it will be very costly.

This all makes sense for a building, but how does it apply to us? We are all builders of our own life. We each make decisions every day. We make choices about how to spend our time, who to be friends with, and how we treat other people, just to name a few. If we are wise "builders" of our own life, we will hear Jesus' instructions and DO what He says. Think of the truths that Jesus taught as bricks we can build with. When you need wisdom - you know where to go. Study God's Word! Tomorrow we will look at this further.

T *If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.* - James 1:5

Day #3: Young Builders

The process of building your life never ends. The older you get, the bigger your decisions seem to get. But don't be fooled into thinking your decisions don't matter when you are young! That is absolutely not true. Remember the foundation of a building is what is put down first. Everything else is built on top of the foundation. If you make good

Day #3 continued:

choices when you are young, building the rest of your life will be easier and more solid.

For example, pretend you have a friend in your neighborhood who gets mad every time you play together. He gets mad at you, at his little sister, even at his video games. It seems he is always mad about something. It makes you feel pretty uncomfortable to go to his house. You're not sure what to do. Look to the Bible for advise! Proverbs 22:24-25 warns us, *"Do not make friends with a hot-tempered man, do not associate with one easily angered, or you may learn his ways and get yourself ensnared."* The Bible is clear - you should not be friends with this person or it will lead you into trouble. Now, you can certainly pray for him. And you might even invite him to do things with your family every once in a while when your parents are along side you. But you should not spend "unguarded" time with him.

What if you didn't take the Bible's advise? What if you chose to become best friends with this hot-headed person? Imagine the consequences. You would eventually become like him, bringing friction into your own home. As you grew older you would probably fight with people outside your home. You would have a bad attitude and it would lead to trouble in school and to more bad choices. Soon your tower is cracked and leaning.

Remember that you must **DO** what the Word says. *Don't just listen to the Word. You fool yourselves if you do that. You must do what it says.* - James 1:22

Pray and ask God to show you any area in your life where you are not building a solid foundation. Seek His wisdom in the Bible and be willing to do what it says.

Day #4: The Manual

Ask your Mom or Dad to show you the manual for their car. A manual is the book that shows how something works. Flip through it. It is very complicated. If something goes wrong with your family's car, your parent would have to look at the manual before they try to fix it. Why would they look at the car manual? Why not just guess what is wrong? Why not open the hood of the car and just start unplugging things that look like they might be in the wrong place? Your mom or dad would look at the manual because it was written by the people who built the car. The same people who designed the car wrote the manual to help us understand how the car works. Someone might think they know more than that manual, but that is foolish. They could not possibly know more than the people who created the car.

Amazingly, God has given us a manual for life. God created everything (Genesis 1). He set the planets in place, and made every one of us. He made everything we see and everything we can't see. God is also the author of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17, 2 Peter 1:20-21). The very Creator of the universe gave us a manual - written instructions for everything we need.

Day #4 continued:

The Bible calls someone who thinks he knows more than God "wise in his own eyes," and says this is very foolish. Proverbs 26:12 says, *"Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him."*

Can you imagine thinking we know more than the Creator? That sounds ridiculous, but that is really what we are saying every time we do what seem right to us instead of checking what God's Word says.

Pray and thank God for giving us His instruction manual. We can TRUST His perfect Word.

Day #5: Trials & Trouble

Go outside and find an ant on your driveway. Watch it for a while. Ants are very hard workers, and it seems they are always in a hurry. The ones you see are usually looking for food or bringing food back home to the queen ant. Think about what the ant can see compared to what you can see. To the ant, grass is as tall as a skyscraper and a rock may seem like a mountain. But those things are small to us. From where we are, high above the ant, we can see all the obstacles she will face. Just imagine, if the ant could talk to us! We could tell her which way would be the easiest way for her to travel. We could warn her if there were sticks in her way, and we could help her avoid the spider web up ahead!



The Bible calls God "the Sovereign Lord" nearly 300 times! That means God is in control of everything. It also tells us God has always been and always will be. Psalm 90:2 says, *"Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting You are God."* He has seen everything that has ever happened and knows everything that will happen in the future.

Everybody will face difficulty at some time. It may be something natural, like an illness. We'll call that a trial. Or it might be something of a more human nature, like facing temptation or making bad choices. We'll call that trouble. But everybody will face trials and troubles throughout their life. God loves us and wants everything in our life - even our trials - to work together for good (Romans 8:28). It is wise for us to get our instruction from the One who loves us completely and who sees everything ahead on our path. God's perfect word can help us stay away from human trouble and can help us stand strong through natural trials.

If we build our lives by hearing God's Word and doing what it says, we will be living on a firm foundation!

**He will be the firm foundation for their entire lives.
He will give them all of the wisdom, knowledge and
saving power they will ever need. Respect for the
Lord is the key to that treasure. - Isaiah 33:6**