

# April 7, 2024

Bible Passage: Luke 6:46–49; Matthew 7:24–27  
(Parable of the Wise and Foolish Builders)



## God Requires Obedience

### Remember Verse

Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God,  
and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. John 17:3

## LESSON OVERVIEW

### CONNECT// 10 minutes



#### My House

##### SUPPLIES

- Wooden blocks or plastic connecting blocks (at least a few dozen)

### GATHER// 30 minutes



#### Remember Verse

#### Game: Remember Verse Scramble

##### SUPPLIES

- Index cards (approx. 10)
- Marker

#### Storytelling

##### SUPPLIES

- Optional: Storytelling video\*, Investigate Questions\*

- Bibles
- Chairs (2)

#### Discussion Questions

### RESPOND// 15 minutes



#### On the Rock

##### SUPPLIES

- Large, brown paper bag
- Newspaper (several sheets)
- Stapler
- Marker
- Index cards (1 per child)
- Pens or pencils
- Tape

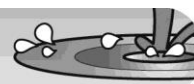
#### (Optional) Blown Away

##### SUPPLIES

- Feather
- Wooden block
- Disposable cup
- Construction paper (1 sheet)
- Rock
- Coin

- Metal spoon

### BLESS// 5 minutes



##### SUPPLIES

- Remember Verse cards\*
- At Home Weekly: Lesson 6\*
- Recipe cards and Parent invitations\*
- Bible

#### Further Resources

To help you plan and lead:

**Customizable copy of Lesson 5  
2018–19 Scope and Sequence  
TruStory How It Works  
Small Group Enhancement**

#### At Home Weekly: Lesson 5

The weekly for the next lesson—to be sent home for preteaching by parents—is found in BLESS.

# LEADER PREP

*Each week you'll find a list of resources along with encouraging articles that help you prepare your heart to present the lesson.*

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## **Inspire** *Shares personal stories from fellow ministry leaders about how God has worked in their lives*

When I was young, my favorite books were the *Little House on the Prairie* series. In one of the books, Laura had been in the house all day. As a treat, her mom promised her that she could help with the evening milking. But before they even reached the cow pen, Laura's mother sharply told her to get back in the house. Laura, who had been waiting all day for this adventure, immediately obeyed.

What Laura later learned was that as they approached the cow, her mother saw a large bear in the pen. If Laura had whined or questioned her mom, she may have been hurt. But she trusted her mom enough to obey her right away—no questions asked. Our journey with the Lord involves a lot of choices about obedience. Sometimes we obey immediately, and sometimes it takes us longer. But as we learn about God through His story, we get to know His character. He requires obedience from us because He loves us and knows what's best. It is worth it to follow His way, even when it's difficult. Obedience to God comes out of hearts that trust our heavenly Father and His great love for us.

*Denise Snyder*

Crossroads Church

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## **Equip** *Offers perspective and context to the lesson's Bible passage*

In the parable of the wise man and the foolish man, Jesus makes a distinction between two foundations: rock and sand. Jesus' parable raises a question: What is the rock? It's vital that we know what the rock represents, since Jesus tells us to build our house upon it. Take a moment to think about it: What do you understand the rock foundation to be, according to the parable?

It's easy to glance at this passage and think that the rock represents Jesus, since several places in Scripture refer to Jesus as the Rock. But in this parable, the rock isn't Jesus. Jesus says that anyone who hears these words and puts them into practice is like a wise man who builds his house on the rock. How would we characterize someone who hears something and then puts it into practice? Obedient. So in this story, the rock becomes obedience. The two foundations refer to how someone hears the truth and then either chooses to put that into practice, and obey, or chooses not to put that into practice, and disobey.

This is the partnership of faith and action. It's putting into practice what we believe. It's not simply hearing God's Word—because the foolish man heard it and didn't put it into practice. It's hearing His Word and obeying it.

*(Adapted from *Spiritual Parenting* by Michelle Anthony)*

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## **Support** *Provides reflection and assessment through encouragement, prayer, and time in God's Word*

It's easy to want to be the wise man in the parable Jesus told at the end of the Sermon on the Mount. Wouldn't it be nice to just read Jesus' teachings and then immediately put them all into practice? And do them well? But it doesn't always work that way. Giving in secret is hard, and so is loving our enemies. Not to mention the command not to worry. That's why we have the Holy Spirit—the Counselor, the Helper.

Take a moment to read Jesus' encouraging words in John 14:23–26. Then pause to think of the commands that are the hardest for you to obey. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you in submitting to these commands so you'll know that rains don't hold a chance against the firm foundation of obedience.

## CONNECT//10 minutes



*Children develop relationships with their leaders and one another through simple activities and conversation starters.*

### My House

Children will work together to build their own houses made of blocks.

#### SUPPLIES

- Wooden blocks or plastic connecting blocks (at least a few dozen)

#### RELATE

**CONNECT QUESTION:** Welcome and greet children. Open your time by asking: **If you could build a house out of anything (e.g., graham crackers, flowers, gold), what would it be?**

Invite your children to work in small groups to build their own houses made of wooden blocks or plastic connecting blocks. As they work together, have the kids spend time getting to know each other by asking and answering questions about their own homes.

- Where do you live?
- What color is your house (or building, complex, etc.)?
- Who lives in your house (or apartment, flat, condo, etc.)?
- Where is your favorite place to be inside your home?
- What do you like to do at your home?

## GATHER//30 minutes



*Children experience and learn more about God through prayer, storytelling from The Big God Story, an investigation into God's Word, and creative ways to memorize Scripture.*

### Remember Verse

Each week children will spend time memorizing a portion of Scripture together. The Remember Verse focuses on a character trait of God that's highlighted in today's portion of The Big God Story.

Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. John 17:3

### Game: Remember Verse Scramble

#### SUPPLIES

- Index cards (approx. 10)
- Marker

#### PREPARE AHEAD

Write phrases of the verse on separate index cards.

#### SET UP

Shuffle the index cards and lay them on the ground or place them on a table.

#### RELATE

Read the verse with your kids out loud a few times, having them repeat it each time. Then, using the scrambled index cards, have them work together to unscramble the verse. When they have finished unscrambling it, have them say the verse together. Repeat this process several times to give the kids extra practice.

# Storytelling

**Bible Passage: Luke 6:46–49; Matthew 7:24–27**

**Storytelling Technique: Following Directions**

**God Requires Obedience**

## SUPPLIES

- Optional: Storytelling video (see Resources), Investigate Questions (see Resources)
- Bibles
- Chairs (2)

## SET UP

Choose two helpers ahead of time and let them know you will call them up during The Big God Story. Tell them you will be giving them instructions to follow. Ask one child to follow your instructions exactly. Tell the other child he needs to do the opposite of what you say. Practice the motions ahead of time so the helpers know what to do during the Storytelling time. Tell them not to reveal the fact that you gave them these instructions. Place two chairs at the front of the room.

## RELATE

**God invites us to know and be a part of the big story He’s telling. We’ve been learning all about The Big God Story and have seen how God gives us instructions so we can walk in His way. He requires obedience because He knows that His way helps us. We know that God is good and that He loves us so much, which helps us trust that His way is best! Let’s take a minute to thank God and praise Him for showing us His way.** Lead the children in a Prayer of Release to pause, be still, and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet their hearts and minds.

**Have you ever played the game Simon Says?** Invite answers. **Let’s try a couple of rounds.** Ask the children to stand up, and lead them through a couple of rounds. After this, ask the children to sit down. **Wow! You’re really good at that game! What do you think is the most important thing to do in this kind of game?** Allow answers. **Listening is important, isn’t it? Hearing and then either doing or not doing what I said kept you from getting out, didn’t it?**

**I have two helpers who will keep doing motions that I give them. This time, though, they won’t be playing Simon Says. All they have to do is listen and obey. It should be pretty easy for them.** Have the helpers come to the front of the room and sit in the chairs.

To the helpers: **I wonder how good you are at listening to instructions. Let’s see. First, I want you to raise your right hand up in the air** (one child should raise her right hand; the other should raise his left hand). **Okay, well, I guess we need to work on that a little. Next, I want you to lift up your left knee** (one helper lifts left knee; the other raises right knee).

**Wow, okay ... that’s interesting. Next, as we start The Big God Story, I want you to put your hands in your lap** (one helper puts hands in lap; the other puts hands out to the side). **Hmm ... maybe our lesson will help one of our helpers learn to listen and obey a little better. We’ll have to see.**

**In Matthew chapters 5—7, Jesus taught His followers in a message we call the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus gave us a clear path to follow for our entire life. He requires obedience from us because He loves us so much. Let’s open to Matthew chapter 7 to learn more about Jesus’ path for us.** Encourage children to locate this passage in their Bibles. **As Jesus taught the people, He spoke about trusting God instead of worrying. He also talked about love, forgiveness, kindness, and a lot of other amazing things.**

**When you hear a lesson in school or at church, do you immediately run out and do what the lesson told you to do?** Allow answers. **Sometimes we hear the message, but when we leave, it’s easy to forget the message. Jesus didn’t want this to happen to His followers. After Jesus finished the Sermon on the Mount, He told the people a story, or parable, to help them remember His words so they would obey God.**

To the helpers: **Now I want you to place your arms across your chest, forming an “X.”** One helper crosses hands over chest; the other does nothing.

To everyone: **Let’s read together Matthew 7:24–27.** Give the children a moment to locate this passage. **Everyone raise your hand when you find the word “therefore” in verse 24.** When your group is ready, read Matthew 7:24–27 aloud.

To the helpers: **Now I want you to put your right hand on your head and your left hand on your tummy.** One helper follows instructions; the other puts left hand on head and right hand on tummy.

To everyone: **In the passage we read, what was the difference between the wise builder and the foolish builder?**

Invite responses. **Good answers.** Yes, one of the builders was wise and did the hard work of digging down to the rock to make his house strong. The other builder was foolish, and it appears that he didn't want to do that hard work. So he just built his house on the topsoil, or the sand. And his house didn't have a strong foundation. When a rainstorm came, the strong rush of water destroyed the man's house.

Let's look again at how Jesus started this parable. He said in verse 24, "Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice." What does it mean to hear Jesus' words and put them into practice? Invite answers. What are we doing when we do what Jesus says? Invite answers. **Good thinking. We're obeying!** Jesus doesn't just want us to remember His words and do nothing about them. He wants us to put His words into practice, to act on what He said. He requires us to obey because He knows that His way will be best for us.

There's a big difference between a wise person and a foolish person. Can anyone tell me what it is? Invite answers. Let's read the beginning of verse 24 and verse 26 again. It says, "Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is ... wise," and "Everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is ... foolish." Jesus doesn't want us to simply listen to His words; He also wants us to obey them.

**I want to thank our helpers for helping us today.** Lead the children in a round of applause for the helpers as they return to their seats. **If these two helpers had been in today's parable, which one do you think would have built his house on rock?** Pause for answers. **That's right—the one who obeyed.**

**When we hear the words of Jesus and act upon them, it's like we're building a firm foundation onto solid rock that nothing can shake. What can we do to be wise?** Pause for answers. **That's right! We can do more than just listen; we can hear Jesus' words and then do what He says! Say that with me: "We can do more than just listen; we can hear Jesus' words and then do what He says!"** Children will repeat. **Can any of you share a time you heard and obeyed?** Children and leaders can share. Examples might relate to obeying God as well as obeying parents, teachers, and other authority figures.

## Developmentally Speaking

Because first and second graders appreciate rules and boundaries, they should be able to relate well to Jesus teaching and asking His listeners to obey. You might remind your group that rules help keep us safe and Jesus loves us and wants the best for our lives.

### Discussion Questions

- **What do we call Jesus' message in Matthew 5—7?**
- **What did the men build their houses on?** Matthew 7:24–26
- **Why does God require obedience?**

## RESPOND//15 minutes

*Children reflect on what the Holy Spirit is teaching them and respond to God through creative activities and games.*

## On the Rock

Children are invited to ponder how God is asking them to obey Him right now.

### SUPPLIES

- Large, brown paper bag
- Newspaper (several sheets)
- Stapler
- Marker
- Index cards (1 per child)
- Pens or pencils
- Tape

### PREPARE AHEAD

Stuff a paper bag with newspaper and staple it shut. Crinkle it a bit and shape it into a "rock" form.

## RELATE

At the end of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus told His followers the parable of the wise and foolish builders. In the parable, the foolish man chose to build his house on the sand, while the wise man built his house on rock. When we choose to hear Jesus' words and obey them, it's like building a house on rock—a steady foundation that will not fail.

Show your children the "rock" you made from the paper bag. Ask them what commands they remember Jesus giving. They can be commands from today's lesson or other commands Jesus taught His followers. Write those commands on the stuffed rock.

- Why do you think Jesus wants His followers to obey His teachings?
- Which commands do you think are the hardest to follow? Why?

God requires obedience, and His plan for our life is best. He also knows it's hard to obey Him on our own. Before Jesus left the earth, He promised to send His followers a Helper to guide them in following His words and obeying His commands. That Helper is the Holy Spirit. Encourage your kids to listen as you read John 14:15, 25–26 aloud: "If you love me, keep my commands ... All this I have spoken while still with you. But the [Helper], the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."

Invite the children to spend a few minutes in silence. They can pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help them follow Jesus' words, or they can talk to God about a command they have a hard time obeying. Then allow them to take an index card and write a word or draw a picture to attach to the paper bag "rock" to show their desire to hear and obey Jesus' words. Their word or drawing can be something they want to spend time doing as they listen to God's voice, such as praying or reading the Bible. Or, it can be a command they want God's help in obeying more.

## (Optional) Blown Away

Invite your first and second graders to take part in an activity during which they'll see which items can be moved by the wind.

### SUPPLIES

- Feather
- Wooden block
- Disposable cup
- Construction paper (1 sheet)
- Rock
- Coin
- Metal spoon

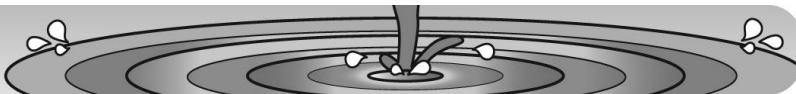
### SET UP

Place all the supplies on a flat surface.

## RELATE

In the parable of the wise and foolish builders, the house on sand blew away easily because it wasn't on a firm foundation. Give the kids a few minutes to look over all the items. Have them make predictions about which items can be moved by the wind and which items have a strong enough "foundation" to stay put. Then have the children take turns blowing the objects to see if the "wind" they create will move those objects.

**BLESS//** 5 minutes



*Children receive a blessing from their leaders and sometimes one another. A blessing can be a prayer of commission, a portion of Scripture, or words to encourage and guide.*

### SUPPLIES

- Remember Verse cards (see Resources)
- At Home Weekly: Lesson 6 (see Resources)
- Recipe cards and Parent invitations (see Resources)
- Bible

## RELATE

Gather your class and read the following blessing adapted from Matthew 28:20:

**May you remember that Jesus has given you His words to guide you, and He will bring you back when you go the wrong way. May you learn to obey everything He has commanded, for He is with you always, to the very end of the age.**

Now invite the kids to bless one another with hand motions adapted from the words in Psalm 119:35. You might go through the hand motions once or twice for your group, and then do the hand motions together as the final blessing. Children should pair up and stand facing their partners.

Direct: Have kids point in front with one hand and point to the side with the other hand.

(Child's name): Have kids point to the person whose name they're saying.

In the path: Have kids move hands back and forth, indicating a pathway.

Of your commands: Have kids put their palms together and then open them like they're opening a book.

For there: Have kids hold up four fingers on one hand.

(Child's name): Have kids point to the person whose name they're saying.

Will find delight: Have kids put their pointer fingers to the edges of their mouth and smile.

Send home Remember Verse cards, the At Home Weekly, and the Recipe cards and Parent invitations with your kids.