

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



Building a House

SUPPLIES

- Construction or scrapbook paper (various colors and/or patterns)
- Scissors
- Glue

GATHER// 30 minutes



Remember Verse


Game: Remember Verse Scramble

SUPPLIES

- Index cards (approx. 10)
- Marker

Storytelling

SUPPLIES

- Optional: Storytelling video*, Investigate Questions*
- Bibles
- Wooden or plastic blocks (or shoe boxes) (at least 2 doz.)
- Beach chair or lounge chair
- Glass of lemonade 

Discussion Questions

RESPOND// 15 minutes



Writing on the Rock

SUPPLIES

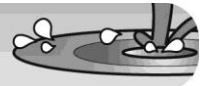
- Whiteboard
- Dry erase marker
- Paper lunch bags (1 per child)
- Newspaper (several sheets)
- Markers
- Yarn (several feet)
- Scissors

(Optional) Props and People

SUPPLIES

- Random large objects (e.g., wood boards, potted plant, blankets)

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.

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

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.

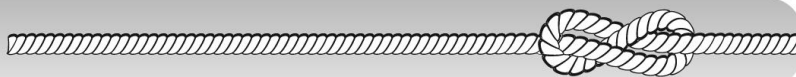
*(Adapted from *Spiritual Parenting* by Michelle Anthony)*

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.

Building a House

Invite your third and fourth graders to work in teams to build their own collage houses made of different sizes and shapes of construction paper.

SUPPLIES

- Construction or scrapbook paper (various colors and/or patterns)
- Scissors
- Glue

PREPARE AHEAD

Optional: Cut the paper into various shapes and sizes. Note: Today's activities and discussions will focus on houses and homes. Encourage your leaders to be aware of the variety of homes your students come from. Encourage sensitivity with all volunteers as they work with the children.

RELATE

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

Point out the paper and encourage the kids to cut out various shapes and sizes (if you didn't cut up the paper earlier). Have the kids glue the different shapes onto a solid piece of construction paper to create a house. As the kids work together to build their houses, encourage them to 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
- Wooden or plastic blocks (or shoe boxes) (at least 2 doz.)
- Beach chair or lounge chair
- Glass of lemonade 

SET UP

Choose two helpers ahead of time and tell them you'll call them up during Storytelling time. Tell one of the helpers to follow your instructions and tell the other helper to simply sit in the chair and drink lemonade. Set up the chair and put the lemonade next to it. Set out the blocks or boxes.

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 been caught in a rainstorm or watched one happen outside a window? What happened? Invite several children to share examples. Then share an example from your own life about being in a storm or watching one happen. **Rain is a gift; it helps us water crops and lawns. But it can also cause damage to houses, buildings, and roads.**

Talking about rain reminds me of a parable Jesus told His followers. What's a parable? Invite kids to answer. **That's right. It's an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. In the parable Jesus told, He mentioned builders, foundations, and, of course, a storm.**

Before we begin, I'm going to need two people to help me. Call forward the helpers you chose earlier and give them the following instructions. **During The Big God Story, I want each of you to build a house for me with these blocks. I want both of you to work hard, because whoever builds the strongest house by the end will be the winner. Ready? Go!** One helper begins to build, and the other helper sits down and starts to drink his lemonade.

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. Encourage children to locate this passage in their Bibles. Have leaders help as needed. **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? Invite 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.**

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. **What was the difference between the wise builder and the foolish builder?** Invite answers. **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 check in on our helpers and see how they're doing. One helper continues to build while the other continues to lounge. Hmm ... it looks like one of them isn't doing so well. We'll see what their houses look like by the end.

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 responses. 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 wants us to obey. 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? Allow 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.

Let's see how our builders did. Look at the building made by one of the helpers and notice that the other helper never started building. Well, it looks like one of them heard and obeyed and did a great job. The other one—not so much. This builder didn't do anything I said to do. It looks like we have our winner. Lead the children in a round of applause for your helpers as they take their seats.

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

Third and fourth graders can understand context and figurative language. Today's lesson contains both! Be sure to spend time on the transition word Jesus used in 7:24: "therefore." Reinforce that Jesus helped His listeners learn by using both commands and stories.

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?
- What are some ways you want to practice obeying God this week?

RESPOND//15 minutes



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

Writing on the Rock

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

SUPPLIES

- Whiteboard
- Dry erase marker
- Paper lunch bags (1 per child)
- Newspaper (several sheets)
- Markers
- Yarn (several feet)

- Scissors

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. Ask your group what commands they remember Jesus giving. They can be commands mentioned in today's lesson or other commands Jesus taught His followers. Write those commands on a whiteboard. Discuss: **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—an Advocate—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 Advocate, 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 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. Next, invite your kids to pick up a bag and write on it any words they noticed in the verses you read or a command they want to follow this week. (You might read the verses one more time once each child has a paper bag.) The kids can also decorate the paper bag with designs. Then show them the newspaper. Give the children time to stuff their paper bag into the shape of a rock and tie it closed with a piece of yarn. The children can take home their “rocks” to remind them of Jesus' parable about hearing and obeying.

(Optional) Props and People

Kids will build a house using themselves and random props.

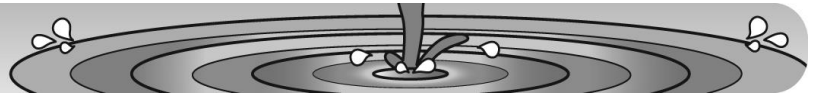
SUPPLIES

- Random large objects (e.g., wood boards, potted plant, blankets)

RELATE

The wise man's house stood firm because he took time to build it the right way—on the rock. Gather random objects and have the kids work together to build a home using themselves and the props you set out. Your children can be the walls and doors, and they can drape blankets to be curtains or the roof. See how creative your group can get, and make sure you join in the fun!

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.