

LEADER'S GUIDE

Discussion Questions: The House Built Upon the Rock

Jesus concludes the sermon on the mount with this excellent comparison, explaining the benefits of putting His words into practice. Matthew and Luke both describe the parable of the man who built his house upon the rock and the man who built his house upon the sand. Matthew 7:24-27 and Luke 6:46-49.

- 1) Have someone read: (outlined in green) Luke 6:46.
 - a) **Why is Jesus calling out to the listeners on the mount, asking them, “Why do you call out to me when you don’t do the things I say you should be doing?”** Calling out to the Lord for help is a familiar request the Lord hears. They probably respected Him and His teachings but did not act on them. Jesus knows they either forget, ignore or reject His teachings.
 - b) **What does it mean to act on His sayings?** This point is at the very heart of this lesson. It is not enough to call ourselves “Christians,” attend church, and read the bible. The intent to “act” does not match the behavior. Acting on His word demonstrates to Him that you not only heard His word but have made a personal decision to implement and put his word into action.
- 2) Have someone read: (outlined in red) Matthew 7:24 and Luke 6:47-48a.
 - a) **What does it mean to hear Jesus’ sayings?** Hearing a pleasure book being read to you is an example of passive listening. Sitting in a classroom with a pen and paper ready to take notes is an example of active listening. Hearing Jesus’ teachings is not enough. People must implement His words into their lives and then act on them. Putting Jesus’ words into practice creates a solid foundation for living and making decisions. People will observe you by your actions and decide for themselves if you are who you say you are.
 - b) **What does it mean for someone to build his house on a rock?** The house, just like a person’s spiritual strength, can be strengthened or weakened throughout its life. The person who heeds Jesus’ words has a strong foundation. The same is valid with a person’s foundation. When someone’s foundation is firm and solid, that person can take on additional burdens or challenges throughout life and ride out the storm.
 - c) **Who represents the rock?** Jesus represents the rock. He is our solid support. A pillar of strength to draw from when we need guidance, wisdom, and assurance, we are doing what is right in His eyes.
 - d) **Who do you represent?** We each represent a house. Houses are made weak and strong. Without a rock and a strong foundation, no house is immune to the life’s problems.
- 3) **What is the importance of a strong foundation?** The building’s strength lies in its foundation. The main purpose of any foundation is to support the entire

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structure. The foundation is the key to building and creating a successful and long-lasting structure.

a) **Using the “rock” as a metaphor, how do we prepare for a solid physical foundation for a house? (What are the steps):** The foundation of a building has a specific sequence of events. (1) The first step is to inspect the soil's condition. (2) Excavate a trench or dig to bedrock into accommodating the footings. (3) Install reinforced rebar. (4) Build the footings. (5) Prepare the concrete. (6) Pour the concrete. (7) Layout the foundation and slab. (8) Inspect the foundation.

b) **What are some critical elements to building a solid foundation on Jesus Christ?** If our goal is to have Jesus Christ as our foundation, there are several vital steps to follow; however, they are not as stringent to require them to be in a specific order. (1) The first step is to inspect and evaluate your person's spiritual level with Jesus Christ. (2) Faith. We must put our trust in God. (3) Have family and Godly friendships. (4) Obedience to God demonstrates a person's commitment and outward sign of having a deep and authentic relationship with Jesus Christ. (5) Finances. Be a good steward over the Lord's finances that has been provided to you. Live within your means and manage His money responsibly. (6) Food and Fitness. Our bodies are God's living temple; the Holy Spirit resides in you. Maintain your body with a healthy spiritual discipline. Asking for forgiveness of our sins, walking with the Lord, and things like the serenity prayer, and many others are important but are building blocks on top of the foundation. The foundation needs to be established before a deep meaningful relationship can exist.

4) **Have someone read: (outlined in blue) Matthew 7:25 and Luke 6:48. Think of a lighthouse.**

a) **How can a lighthouse withstand constant powerful waves beating on its doorstep?** Lighthouses are known for being built on rock. The wise man's house has a strong foundation and can withstand life's obstacles and challenges. The winds are similar to the waves. They blew and beat on the house. So did the stream. It, too, beat vehemently against the house. And yet, the house stood firm.

b) **How does this compare to a person's life with obstacles and challenges who has a strong foundation with God?** No person can escape the storms of life. The person who hears Jesus' words and acts on His sayings is prepared for judgment and will withstand the storm. Both demonstrate life's obstacles and challenges everyone faces. Yet the house stood firm and was not shaken, for it was founded on a rock foundation.

5) **Have someone read: (outlined in black) Matthew 7:26 and Luke 6:49a.**

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- a) **What happens to a physical sand-based foundation when the rain comes?** As water descends through the sand, the sand and water start to mix, and the underground slowly shifts and moves. As more water is added, the slimy substance becomes more diluted water. The sand can no longer hold its form and starts to flow wherever the water takes it. At this point, the foundation begins to give way. The weight of the house can no longer be sustained; ultimately, the foundation is unstable, and the house collapses on itself.
 - b) **What happens to someone who does not build a strong spiritual foundation?** When someone does not build a strong spiritual foundation, their soul becomes susceptible to persuasion, allowing sin to be entered easier. Satan uses temptations to conquer people's souls. There are several reasons someone does not build or does not want to make a solid spiritual foundation. Here are some main reasons in no particular order, but they may be very familiar. Money, Sex, Pride, Envy, and Lust; See the in-depth study for a more comprehensive explanation on each. In essence the person turns away from God.
 - c) **What are the reasons why someone loses their faith?** The most common search has been the death of a close relative or friend. Other events include stress, depression, illness, uncertainty, trauma, betrayal, fear, and loneliness.
- 6) Have someone read: (outlined in purple) Matthew 7:27 and Luke 6:49b.
- a) **What happens to the house made on sand?** Both Matthew and Luke conclude Jesus' parable of the man who built his house upon the sand. Both describe a violent storm, with rain, winds, and a stream that beats vehemently against the house. A foundation made on sand would be no match for the storm. Matthew and Luke conclude with the destruction of the house and how great the destruction was.
 - b) **What happens to someone who builds his house on sand and does not build his house on a rock?** This storm is not to be taken lightly. The person who hears Jesus' words and does not act on His sayings is the foolish man and will be destroyed in the storm of judgment. This story is not merely about choosing a location to build a house on solid rock versus a house built on sand. It is a metaphor for choosing to hear Jesus's words and putting them into action. Without having Jesus as our rock, life's problems and difficult situations intensifies the stress, depression, illness, uncertainty, trauma, betrayal, fear, and loneliness. Failure to do so will result in the living for all eternity in a ceaseless storm. How great that storm will be.
- 7) **What do you think it means to be a wise man?** Student's opinions.

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8) What are the characteristics the world considers to be a wise man?

They educate themselves are they are always learning

They are disciplined

They admit their mistakes and learn from their experiences

They are patient

They are observant and open-minded

They take instruction humbly

They can handle rejection and failure

They know they can only control the controllable

They are guided by wisdom

They know their priorities

They are trustworthy and steadfast

They take calculated risks and accept change

They make the most of their relationships and give fantastic advice to others.

They don't live beyond their means.

9) What are the characteristics the Bible considers to be a wise man? Not a big surprise. Most of the definitions come from Proverbs. Instead of writing out the verses, it is better received when they are looked up from the bible. Have someone read them: Proverbs 29:11; Proverbs 21:20; Proverbs 12:15; Proverbs 1:1-33; James 1:5; Proverbs 29:7; Romans 14:1-23; 1 John 4:1; "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock. Matthew 7:24-25, Luke 6:46.