The Parable of the Builders	
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SESSION GOALS	
Every session has a point—what each participant should	
walk away from the discussion knowing, feeling, and doing.	
<b>Main Idea</b> : The wise person hears and does what Jesus says while foolish people hear what he says and do not	
obey.	
<b>Head Change:</b> To understand that truly knowing Jesus means belonging to him relationally.	
<b>Heart Change:</b> To feel released from the shame of our	
past failures in order to walk with confidence into the future.	
<b>Life Change:</b> To work with diligence at building our lives on the foundation of God's Word.	
OPEN	
What's the worst weather-related storm you've ever	
been through? Maybe it was a hurricane, a tornado, or a	
serious thunderstorm. How did you feel in the midst of it? What did you rely on for safety?	
When danger looms, we run to what we rely on for	
rescue. That's why people build storm shelters and stock	
up supplies to prepare for potential disaster. The same is true of our spiritual lives. Our concerns cause us to run to	
what we believe will rescue us—and that's not always God. Sometimes we look to our own strength, our bank	
account, our reputation, or a relationship. Either way,	
storms always lead us to what we look to for salvation. And what we look to makes all the difference.	
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READ	
Read Matthew 7:21–27.	
WATCH	
Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in Jonathan Evans's teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how Jonathan answers the following questions:	
What does Jonathan call the fruit that looks good on the outside but is produced by those who do not follow Christ?	
What is "the rock" followers of Jesus are supposed to build their house on?	
SHOW	
The Parable of the Builders (10 minutes)	

## **DISCUSS**

Matthew 5–7 contains perhaps the most important words	
uttered throughout the ministry of Jesus. Typically referred to as the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus took the opportunity to lead his listeners through a thorough	
examination of a life marked by faithfulness to God. As we pick up here in verse 21, he is winding down and getting	
ready to land the plane, if you will. In verse 15, he warns that true and false prophets are determined by the kind of	
fruit they produce, a warning connected to his words in verses 21–23.	
What fruit do the "many" claim as evidence of their faith based on verse 22?	
What does Jesus indicate as the true evidence of faith?	
These verses should startle us. They tell us that it's	
possible to perform mighty works in the name of Jesus without ever knowing him as savior. In other words, it's	
possible—quite literally—to mistake the fruit for the tree.	
Christ is the one who saves, and we experience that salvation by belonging to him, not by performing for him.	
[Note: For further study on belonging to Jesus, see Go	
Deeper Section 1 at the end of this session.]	
Jonathan referred to the fruit produced by those who do	
not belong to Christ as "genetically modified." It may look good on the outside, but it is ultimately unusable when it	
comes to the kingdom of God. What are some examples of genetically modified fruit that you have witnessed in	
others?	
In what ways have you looked to genetically modified fruit as evidence of your own salvation?	
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The reason this kind of fruit is unusable is because it's produced to make much of ourselves. As we see in	
verses 21–22, "the many" boast in their works as the evidence of their salvation, but Jesus makes it clear that	
only those who know him will enter the kingdom of	
heaven. How would you define what it means to "know"  Jesus in this way? How does knowing him in this way	
differentiate from simply knowing about him	
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	Now, let's take a look at the parable he tells to cap off the Sermon on the Mount in verses 24–27. Note that when he says "these words" in verse 24, he's not merely referring to the words that follow, but everything he taught throughout the Sermon on the Mount up to that point.	
	Based on verse 24, what are the two qualities of wisdom?	
	Jesus says that it is not enough to hear his words, to study them closely, to memorize them. True Christ followers hear his words and act on them in obedience.  Take a moment to reflect on your spiritual life. Are you a doer? Or simply a hearer? Where are you struggling to obey God's Word?	
	How would you like to grow in your obedience to Christ?	
	Like verses 21–23, this parable should startle us as well. Jonathan pointed out that both the wise man and the foolish man looked good on the surface, heard the same words of Christ, and lived in the same community. Just like it's possible to do good works in the name of Jesus without actually knowing him, it's also possible to hear his truth and live foolishly never actually knowing him.	
	Based on the parable, what allows us to know the difference between the wise and foolish man?	
	In terms of outward appearances, both of these men probably looked like they had it all together. They each had a stable enough situation to build comfortable homes. It's only when the storm arrives that we're able to discern between the wise and the foolish.	
	Describe a storm that tested your spiritual life. What did it reveal about your foundation?	
	How would you like to respond differently in the future?	
	Storms are inevitable. We all face them at some point or another. That's why the foundation we build our lives upon is so crucial. God's Word keeps us afloat and helps us to wade through the flood waters when they come.	
ri	What are you doing to build your life on the rock of God's Word? How practically can you be more intentional about doing so in the days ahead?	

cling to the Lord in that time instead of relying on your own strengths?  What can you do to cultivate that kind of dependence on God today so that when the next storm comes you will hold onto him all the more?	
LAST WORD	
LAST WORD	
None of us has faced our storms perfectly. Thankfully, our Father is both patient and gracious. He does not look down on those shortcomings as reason to withdraw. Instead, he paid for them by sending his Son to take our place on the cross and to lead us into new life through his resurrection from the dead.	
Think back on those times when you tried to go it alone,	
but not with shame. Christ has paid for your failures. Instead, look back in order to learn how to better walk	
forward. Identify where you have built your home on a	
faulty foundation and ask the Lord to teach you how to rebuild it on the rock of his Word.	
When you have the right foundation, you don't need to	
fear the storms. The rain will fall, the flood will come, the winds will beat against your home, but it will not fall. Take	
hope in that truth today. Dig deep and build your foundation on the rock of God's Word. And when the	
storm comes, hold onto your loving Father who will carry	
you through to safety.	
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## **GO DEEPER**

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The Go Deeper section has two potential functions. It can supplement your small group discussion by providing extra discussion material. We've highlighted a place where the following segment could fit in the Discuss section of the study guide.	
But you can also use this section as a short devotional to carry you through the week until your next group meeting. Consider reading one section a day to deepen your study of the parable of the builders.	
1. Belonging to Jesus	
Read Luke 10:1–12, 17–20.	
Who are the seventy-two? In what ways are the different from the "many" Jesus describes in Matthew 7:21–23?	
In many ways, the scene concludes like the one we see at the end of the Sermon on the Mount, but the key difference lies in the fact that these seventy-two were disciples of Christ. They were not merely bystanders eavesdropping on his preaching. Rather they had committed their lives to him and were sent out to prepare the way for Jesus. In other words, he knew them, unlike the "many" in Matthew 7:21.	
When the seventy-two return, what do they describe as the source of their joy (10:17)?	
How does Jesus respond?	
Like Jonathan said in the video, it's possible to create "genetically-modified" fruit. We also know from Scripture that it's possible to do wondrous works by drawing on power from sources other than God (Acts 19:13–16; Rev. 13:13–14). But Jesus makes it clear in these verses that even when great works are truly accomplished in his name, they are not to be the primary source of our joy.	
Based on verse 20, what are Christ followers called to rejoice in?	
The greatest miracle any of us could ever witness is having our hearts transformed by the gracious mercy of	

God. More astounding than any authority we may possess or work we may perform is the fact that, by grace, our names are written in heaven.	
Reflect on your spiritual life for a moment. What do you rejoice in?	
What can you do to more fully rejoice in your belonging to Christ in the days ahead?	
Our world measures success by what is visible, but God looks at our hearts. Belonging to him requires an internal transformation before anything can change on the outside. If your name is written in heaven, strive to make that the source of your joy. And if you do not know Jesus today, surrender to him. Stop trying to justify your life with a résumé of performance. Instead, rest in his finished work and rejoice as he leads you into new life.	