

# The Sermon on the Mount (Part 2)

## The New People of God

### Study 17 – The Wise Response

#### Introduction

Would you consider yourself to be a wise person? It's an unusual question, perhaps even an old fashioned one, but it is an important question, one which Jesus himself puts on the agenda for us to consider. So, back to the question, would you consider yourself to be a wise person?

In order to answer the question we need to think a little about what wisdom is and more particularly about what wisdom is according to the Bible. When Jesus speaks about a *wise man* or a *foolish man* in this passage, he is once again drawing on language from the Old Testament, particularly a book like Proverbs. What is interesting is that unlike the world's understanding of wisdom, the Bible takes wisdom beyond the idea of mere success. In everyday terms, people tend to think of wisdom as the ability to get things done and to do them successfully. In the Bible there is also an emphasis on this practical element for true wisdom is more than knowledge, it is knowledge put into practice for a good result. But the Bible also includes a moral element in its understanding of what is truly wise. Thus in the book of Proverbs, the wise man is also the righteous man and the wise woman is also the woman who fears the Lord. Indeed Proverbs defines wisdom in this way: "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom" – meaning that true wisdom begins with a right relationship with the LORD.

When we turn to Jesus' words in Matthew 7:24-29, we discover that true wisdom is indeed practical and does lead to success for the wise man who builds his house on the rock does not lose his house in the storm. But we note that true wisdom is also closely connected to obedience – for the wise man is the man who both hears and does *Jesus' words* not just any words that seem to be wise. In the passage then Jesus is presented to us as the One who teaches with authority and whose words, if obeyed, will lead to true stability in the storms of life and in the ultimate test, which is the judgement day of God.



Read Matthew 7:24-29

1. Jesus used the image of two builders in His teaching. What do you think the picture of 'building a house' symbolises?
2. What was the key difference in the way that each of the two houses was built?
3. What was the final result for each of the two houses when the storm came?
4. What do you think Jesus had in mind with the images of *rain, wind, flood and fall*?
5. What was it that made the one builder *wise* and the other builder *foolish*?





## Apply

1. If someone asked you to explain Jesus' teaching in this parable of the two builders what would you say?
2. Which one of the builders in the parable best describes you? Is this always true?
3. What needs to change for you to be considered *wise* in Jesus terms?
4. How would you use this passage to commend Christianity to someone?