

# BUILDING UP GOD'S HOUSE



ONE SOUL AT A TIME



7TH - 12TH GRADE  
STUDENT WORKBOOK

## Matthew 16:13-19

When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi,  
He asked His disciples, saying,

**“Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?”**

So they said, “Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and  
others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

He said to them, **“But who do you say that I am?”**

Simon Peter answered and said,  
“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

Jesus answered and said to him,  
**“Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has  
not revealed *this* to you, but My Father who is in  
heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this  
rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not  
prevail against it.”**

### Building Up God's House

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# God's House, The Church

I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. 1 Timothy 3:15



When we think of a house, we think of a building made of stone or brick. Under the law of Moses, the temple was God's house. We read in Matthew 21:12-13 that Jesus went into the temple and drove out those who bought and sold goods in the temple. The temple was a physical building, just like our houses are today.



Under the new law, Paul writes that the church is God's house. 1 Timothy 3:15. Many people today think the church is a building. They believe these buildings are holy because they belong to God. They build big, beautiful structures, decorate them with crosses and statues of Jesus and Mary, and call the buildings "churches". But is that really what the church is?

Paul tells the church at Corinth that they, the church, are the temple of God and are holy. 1 Corinthians 3:17. In other words, God's church is the people of God and not a building! The apostle Peter also conveys a similar thought in 1 Peter 2:5, "you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house." The church is a spiritual house in which God dwells.

"For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people."

2 Corinthians 6:16

Although spiritual in nature, the church shares many of the characteristics of a physical building. According to the Bible, the church has:

- ❖ an architect, an architecture, and a builder
- ❖ specific structural components,
- ❖ a time and place of construction, and
- ❖ workers who labor for the builder to expand and maintain it.

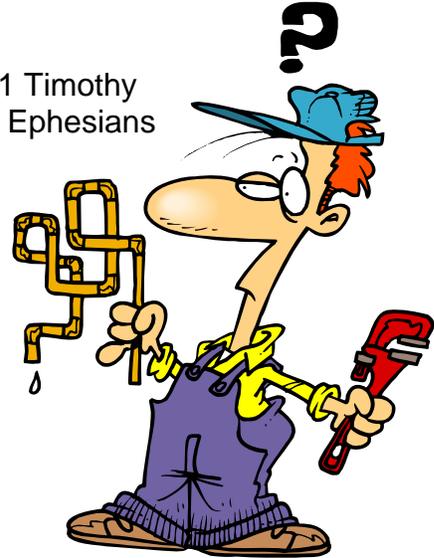
We will discuss these characteristics in more detail in the sections that follow.





1. What are six ways that Paul describes God's people in 1 Timothy 3:15, 1 Corinthians 3:16-17, 2 Corinthians 6:14-16, and Ephesians 2:19-22

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_
- e. \_\_\_\_\_
- f. \_\_\_\_\_



2. What are three ways that Peter describes God's people in 1 Peter 2:5-8.

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

3. A house has more honor than he who builds it. Hebrews 3:3. TRUE or FALSE

4. According to Hebrews 3:6, we are Christ's house if we

- a. worship God on Sundays,
- b. believe on His name,
- c. feed the poor and care for the sick,
- d. hold fast and firm to the very end,
- e. ask Jesus into our hearts as our personal savior

5. Now, therefore, you are no longer \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, but fellow \_\_\_\_\_ with the \_\_\_\_\_ and members of the \_\_\_\_\_ of God. Ephesians 2:19.



# Architect and Builder

For he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God.  
Hebrews 11:10



Imagine building a house with no preplanned design. Each worker cuts and nails boards in place where he thinks they should go, without consulting the other laborers. The resulting layout would probably be a maze, with many different styles and resembling more of a patchwork quilt than an attractive house with all the expected features neatly fit together. What if no one thought to build a kitchen? Or what if everyone built a kitchen? There would be no bedrooms or bathrooms. Or what if there was no way to go from one room to another without going outside the house and back in another entrance? The house wouldn't be particularly useful, would it? Do you think the owner would be pleased with the results?

This is why an architecture is drawn up before one begins building a house. An architecture is the arrangement of the various parts of the house in an orderly and pleasing manner. It specifies the structure of the house and is based on desired functionality and tastes of the owner.

A detailed architecture or *pattern* for a house is captured in a *blueprint*. Any time a house is built by precisely following a blueprint, the result will be an identical house with the same features. By specifying and writing down the plans and having a builder who will follow the plans, the owner of the house can be assured he will get exactly the house he wants.

The one who plans the organization and structure of something to be built is called the architect. The architect is the master designer. The builder is one who builds what is specified in the architecture.





# God's House

So what about God's house? Is it any different? Let's see what the Bible says.

In Ephesians 3:9-11, Paul tells us that God's manifold wisdom is made known through the church, which was His eternal purpose. God's house was purposed; that means it has a plan and therefore, an architecture. Having an architecture means it must have an architect. The question then is, "who is the architect of the church?" According to Paul, God purposed the church. That means that God is the master designer or planner of the church.



If there is an architect and an architecture, then who is the builder? In Matthew 16:13-19, we read that Jesus said, "... **on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.**" And so we see that Jesus is the builder of God's house, the church.

Okay... so there's an architect, an architecture, and a builder. But where is the architecture? We cannot build according to God's plan if we don't have a copy of the architecture.

Paul told the Philippian Christians in Philippians 3:17, "**Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.**" And he told Timothy to "**hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.**" 2 Timothy 1:13. The very words and lives of the apostles are a pattern or blueprint for us to follow today, and these words and the account of their lives are recorded for us in the Bible!

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John tell of preparations for God's house. John the baptizer prepared the way for the builder who would come, much like an excavator who bulldozes down trees and moves rocks that are in the way, preparing for the General Contractor to come in with his crews. John helped the people to understand that God's church, the kingdom, was at hand. That simply means that God was about to build the church. Luke 3:1-4. Jesus came behind John training His workers, the apostles, to build His house the way He wanted it built.

The book of Acts records the works of the apostles, as they went around building God's house and teaching others how to build. They wrote letters to further explain how things were to be done, and to correct things that were not being done according to God's blueprint.



## Why are there so many churches today that look nothing alike?

Many people today think they can choose any church that suits them, that one is as good as another. They think that churches can choose their own way of organizing themselves, create new ways of getting into the church, and decide for themselves what to include or not include in worship. The Bible tells us there is one church, and that God has a blueprint for that church, which specifies what God wants done and how He wants it done. Paul, in 1 Corinthians, explains what the Corinthian Christians were doing that was not in line with God's plan and how it should be done. If God would not tolerate the Corinthians deviating from His blueprints, will He tolerate us deviating today?

**UNLESS THE LORD BUILDS THE HOUSE,  
THEY LABOR IN VAIN WHO BUILD IT.**

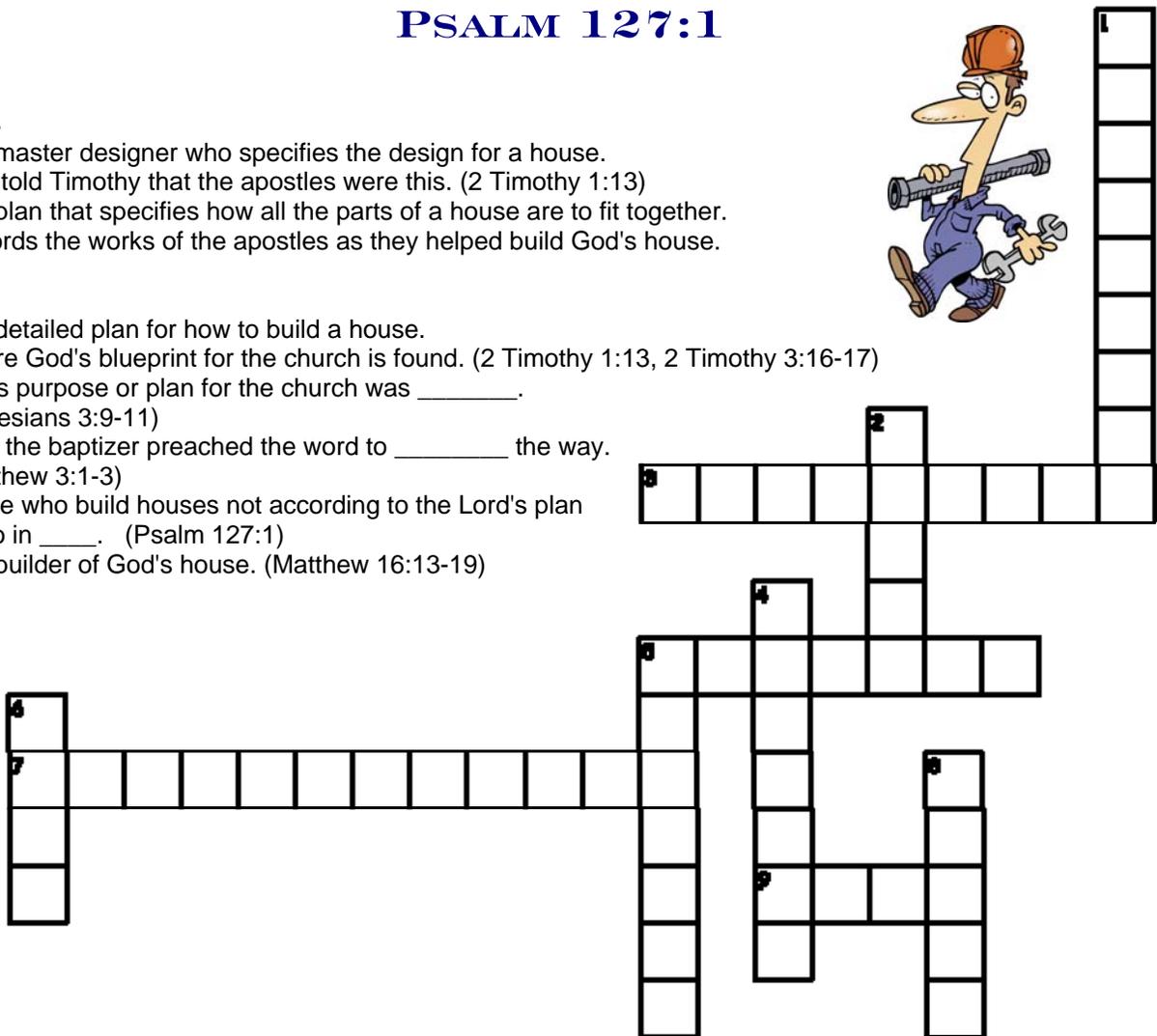
**PSALM 127:1**

**Across**

- 3. The master designer who specifies the design for a house.
- 5. Paul told Timothy that the apostles were this. (2 Timothy 1:13)
- 7. The plan that specifies how all the parts of a house are to fit together.
- 9. Records the works of the apostles as they helped build God's house.

**Down**

- 1. The detailed plan for how to build a house.
- 2. Where God's blueprint for the church is found. (2 Timothy 1:13, 2 Timothy 3:16-17)
- 4. God's purpose or plan for the church was \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Ephesians 3:9-11)
- 5. John the baptizer preached the word to \_\_\_\_\_ the way.  
(Matthew 3:1-3)
- 6. Those who build houses not according to the Lord's plan do so in \_\_\_\_\_. (Psalm 127:1)
- 8. The builder of God's house. (Matthew 16:13-19)





# STRUCTURAL COMPONENTS

Behold I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame. 1 Peter 2:6.

As we have already studied, we have the blueprint for God's house – the Bible. A blueprint specifies how the ground is to be prepared, the foundation that is to be laid, and all the parts that must be put in place for the house to be usable.

God's house is similar – it has a foundation, a cornerstone, bricks and stones for the walls, supports and trusses, even a front door. Let's study to see what God has to say about all these parts and how they work together in His house.



## ***The Cornerstone***

The cornerstone is the key part of a building because everything is lined up according to it. Jesus is the cornerstone of the church. 1 Peter 2:6. Everything begins with Him. In what way is Jesus the cornerstone of the church?

## ***The Foundation***

Remember the parable of the wise and foolish men? This parable speaks of the foundation upon which we build. One man built on the rock, and his house stood firm when the storms came. He was called "wise" for choosing to build on the right kind of foundation. The other man didn't build on a solid foundation. This man was called "foolish". What happened when the rains came?

## **What Is A Cornerstone?**

“The cornerstone concept is derived from the first stone set in the construction of a masonry foundation. Until the development of modern construction, the stone was usually at a corner, possibly as the first of the foundation stones, and it was a real support.”

The cornerstone was vital to early construction because the initial walls and supports, and eventually the remaining corners, were set in reference to the cornerstone. If it was not completely true – a perfect 90° angle – the remaining corners would not be true, and the foundation would not be rectangular; no wall in the resulting building would be straight. The cornerstone was the most important stone in the building.

## *Building Up God's House*



This parable is so true: every house needs a solid foundation, on which to build. Today, concrete is typically poured to create a foundation. Once the concrete is dry, the house is constructed on the dry surface. What is the spiritual foundation upon which God's house is built?

In Matthew 16:13-19, Jesus asked the disciples who men said he was. Then He asked who the disciples thought He was. Peter confessed His faith in Jesus as the son of God. Jesus said this faith is the rock upon which He would build His church. This faith would allow workers to lay the foundation of the house. Paul writes in I Corinthians 3:9-11:

<sup>9</sup>For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, *you are* God's building. <sup>10</sup>According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. <sup>11</sup>For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Using the raw material of faith in Christ Jesus, Paul and the rest of the apostles built a solid foundation for the church during the first century.

### ***The Walls***

If Jesus is the cornerstone, and faith in Him is the foundation that goes with the cornerstone, then what composes the walls of God's house? In ancient times, walls were built of stones or bricks, and some houses are still built that way today. In God's house, the bricks and stones are the believers – the Christians. I Peter 2:5: says

you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

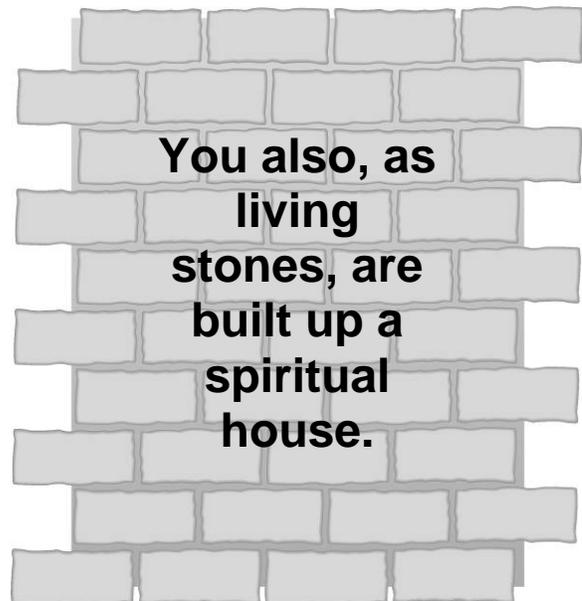
### ***The Supports***

Houses are built with supports throughout. Each wall supports the walls adjoining it; the rafters and beams support the roof, and are in turn supported by the wall; load-bearing beams and timbers run throughout, and all sits upon a solid, level foundation that holds everything up. So it is with God's house – each Christian has a part to play, and each supports and encourages the others. 1 Thessalonians 5:11-14.

### ***The Door***

Finally, a building must have an entrance. Jesus is not only the cornerstone of God's house, He is also the door. The way into God's Kingdom is through belief in Jesus Christ and obedience to His commands. Jesus said in John 10:9,

**I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.**





# Tools of the Trade

A variety of tools are needed to build a house, everything from large earth moving machinery to small fine-detail paint brushes. Each tool is

needed for a specific task, and the job becomes more difficult without all the right tools.

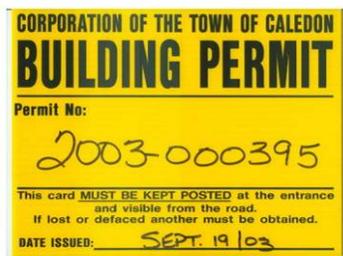
Building God's house is no different; many tools are needed – but these are spiritual tools. Let's look at some of the tools Christians need in building God's house.

- ✓ **Shovels** are used to break ground, level the ground, and prepare it for the foundation. To help the Christian break new ground and prepare the soil, we have a special shovel. What is it according to Hebrews 4:12? \_\_\_\_\_
  
- ✓ **Saws** cut all types of materials, from wood to stone and metal and anything in between. They cut materials to length, they shape pieces - they remove excess material. The Christian uses God's word to remove excess material – to eliminate that which doesn't belong. This means removing anything that disagrees with God's Word. We have to be careful, however, to not cut away things that belong. What will happen to the person who doesn't cut according to the pattern God has given? (Revelation 22:18-19) \_\_\_\_\_
  
- ✓ **Chisels** are used on either stone or wood. Cold chisels are used to shape stone, both for fine shaping and rough outlining. Wood chisels are used for carving; they have sharp blades that can cut a perfect 90° angle or carefully shave away material for a recessed door hinge. In a sense, Christians use a spiritual chisel to shave away the bad things, pruning the evil influence from our lives. What are some of the things we are to shave away from our lives, according to Paul in Galatians 5:19-21? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
- ✓ **Nails**, along with **hammers**, have been used for centuries to fasten together pieces of wood. For the Christian laboring on God's house, we bind the pieces together with love for our brothers and sisters in Christ. The bond of love holds God's house together. Read Ephesians 4:1-3, 31-32 and Colossians 3:12-14. What are some things that love will do to help us stay together? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
- ✓ **Rulers, squares and levels** are constantly in use during the building process to make sure all pieces are square, straight, and exactly as they should be according to the plans. Read John 12:48, John 20:31, Romans 15:4 and 1 Peter 1:15-16. What is Christian's ruler? \_\_\_\_\_



# UNDER CONSTRUCTION

**"And on this rock I will build My church."** Matthew 16:18.



## ***Waiting on the Authority to Proceed***

When people want to build a house, in most towns they cannot simply begin building whenever they wish. They have to apply for permits, submit the plans for review, and then sit and wait for approval to begin construction. Recall in Matthew 16:18 when Jesus said He would build His church. In verse 19, He told Peter,

**And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.**

Jesus told Peter he would give him the authority to begin building the church and open its doors. He did not give Peter the keys at that time. That would come later. Peter had to wait. Following His resurrection, Jesus appeared to His disciples. Jesus reminded them of all He had told them and prepared them for the task that was to come – building the church. He gave them His final instructions in Luke 24:49:

**Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.**

They were to return to Jerusalem and again wait until they received “power from on high.” This was the comforter, the Holy Spirit, that Jesus spoke of in John 14:26. A few days later, on Pentecost, the disciples were together in Jerusalem, as Jesus commanded. What happened next is told in Acts 2. The Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles, giving them the miraculous ability to speak in other languages, ones they did not know (Acts 2:5-12). This was the fulfillment of Jesus’ promise in John 14:26 and the prophecy in Joel 2:28-32 (Acts 2:17-21). The apostles now had the authority to proceed with building God’s house.

## ***Preparatory Steps***

Once the necessary approval is granted and permits are issued, a team of workers moves in to begin the work of constructing the house - preparing the ground and laying the foundation and setting the cornerstone.

As we studied before, John the baptizer prepared the ground for God’s house. Luke 3:1-4. Before He went to the cross, Jesus spoke of building His church. A very important thing had to be done before that process started: He had to face the cross, and death – and to rise from the dead after three days. Once that had taken place, the Cornerstone was ready to be set on the foundation.



### **The Foundation and Base House**

Now is the time to lay the foundation. As we studied before, the foundation is faith in Jesus Christ. Faith comes from hearing God's word (Romans 10:17), so to create faith, Peter preached what we now know as the first gospel sermon. We don't know how large the crowd was. We do know the crowd was not completely friendly; some had mocked the apostles, accusing them of being drunk when they heard them speaking in foreign languages. We also know the results of Peter's preaching, found in Acts 2:37-41. 3000 Jews had faith in Jesus as God's Son, the foundation of God's house, obeyed what Peter commanded, and were added to the church. Construction of the church had now begun and there were living stones in place. Peter and the apostles went about, continuing to preach to the Jews and adding more living stones to God's house.



### **Major Additions**

For some time after Pentecost, the church was limited entirely to the Jews. This was about to change, however. Acts 10 introduces Cornelius, a Roman centurion and a devout man who feared God, who gave alms to the poor and prayed continually. An angel of the Lord appeared to him and told him to send for Peter (Acts 10:1-7).

At this time, Peter was receiving visions from the Lord, preparing him for what was to come (Acts 10:9-16). Shortly afterward, the delegation from Cornelius reached Joppa, and Peter went with them. Upon meeting Cornelius and his household, Peter explained all that had happened to bring them together, and began to explain the faith – Jesus' sacrifice, His resurrection, and the basics of the faith (Acts 10:17-43).

When he began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on Cornelius and his household, exactly as it had done to the apostles in the upper room on Pentecost (Acts 11:15). This was a sign to Peter and all the Christians with him: gentiles (non-Jews) were to be added to the church. Much like an addition or an extra story, God's house had just expanded – and its potential for growth was unlimited.

### **Continued Expansion**

Throughout the book of Acts, we see the Lord adding to His house precisely as He did on the day of Pentecost: people hear the word of God, believe, repent of their sins, confess the name of Jesus before men, and are baptized. Like then, God's house is built one soul at a time. How are we supposed to build God's house today? Exactly as the apostles did then – teaching those they met.



# Find the Hidden Message

C Y M O J R U T A H L T S O  
 A E S O E E N L C I S V I N  
 G G N T D E W R S O T O N E  
 D O E T P G U S C S S A R E  
 E P S E U H N E B U U I B L  
 V T R P C R T I U I P A A S  
 O P B I E N I R K L I T P U  
 U A L U E L H O O E U S T E  
 T S O P I L I W N N W F I L  
 G E N T I L E S T R W K Z O  
 A P P O J P D G Y O P E E N  
 C T N O M R E S N C D N D O  
 J E R U S A L E M A F F Z L  
 R E W O P X R M N H P M N L

- ANGEL
- BUILD
- CENTURION
- CHURCH
- CORNELIUS
- DEVOUT
- GENTILES
- GOSPEL
- JERUSALEM
- JEWS
- JOPPA
- KINGDOM
- PENTECOST
- PETER
- POWER
- SERMON

Copy the unused letters from above to find Peter's message.

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## “FLIP THIS HOUSE”

The practice of house-flipping emerged as a common investment practice in the United States during the housing boom of the late 1990s through the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

“Flipping is a term, used primarily in the United States, which refers to the practice of buying an asset and quickly reselling (“flipping”) it for profit. Though flipping can apply to any asset, the term is most often applied to real estate and initial public offerings.”

The goal of house flipping is to take a property that is need of repair, make the necessary repairs, and resell the house at a profit. Flipping a house usually involves a complete facelift, including new paint, flooring, and fixtures. Depending on the age and structure of the property, significant structural repair may be necessary (new roof, foundation repair, new wall framing, etc.)

How does the concept of flipping apply to God’s house, the church?



# LABORERS NEEDED!

For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building.  
1 Corinthians 3:9

Jesus needs good workers to help expand His house. As with all jobs, there are certain skills and abilities an employer seeks in his employees. Jesus seeks laborers who have specific qualities. Read the passages of scripture and determine how they apply to the desired qualities.

- ❖ Ability to read and understand Jesus' blueprints.  
2 Timothy 2:15 \_\_\_\_\_
- ❖ Willingness to work; not lazy.  
Matthew 21:28-30 \_\_\_\_\_
- ❖ Productive in labor.  
John 15:1-6 \_\_\_\_\_
- ❖ Produces quality work.  
1 Corinthians 3:9-16 \_\_\_\_\_
- ❖ Ability to grow and develop new skills.  
Matthew 25:14-30 \_\_\_\_\_
- ❖ Works well with others.  
John 15:12 \_\_\_\_\_  
1 Corinthians 1:10. \_\_\_\_\_  
Luke 11:17 \_\_\_\_\_
- ❖ Desire to please the Master more than self.  
John 14:23-24 \_\_\_\_\_





## THE FARMER'S NEW FARM

A story is told about a prosperous farmer who decided to build a new farm. He wanted a new house, new barns, new outbuildings – everything. He picked out a suitable site, drilled a well nearby, and drew up plans for each building. He indicated precisely what was to be built, where it was to be sited, and how it was to be constructed.

Unfortunately for the farmer, he was called away to attend to other business far from home just as construction of his new buildings had begun. His business was pressing, so he left his oldest son in charge. Before he left, he gave the plans to his son along with parting instructions to follow the plans.

He was gone for three months, but eventually his business was complete and he returned home. Upon reaching his new farm, something didn't quite look right. When the son greeted his father outside the new house, he noticed the puzzled and unhappy expression on his father's face.

"Welcome home, father! Everything has gone well and is exactly as you wanted!"

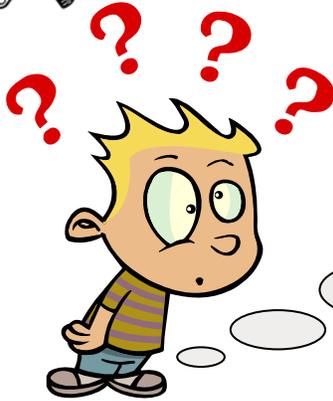
"That's not quite right, son," the farmer said. "I expected the smokehouse to be just beyond the well, and instead I see it's next to the henhouse, close to the front porch. Weren't my instructions clear?"

"Perfectly clear," the son replied. "But while you were gone, I started looking at the plans and had some concerns. Neither you nor mother are getting any younger, and the smokehouse was very far away in the location you had planned for it. I thought that if we moved it closer to the house you'd have an easier time getting to things. Other than that one small change, everything is exactly as you wanted. I've obeyed your instructions."

To the son's surprise, his father said, "You have obeyed me in nothing. I left detailed plans for how I wanted this farm to be constructed. The first time your ideas disagreed with my instructions, you did what you wanted, not what I told you to do. Everything else you did was only because you agreed with it, not because you respected my wishes."

God has left clear instructions in His Word about what He expects from His people. If we substitute our wishes for His commandments, we are as disobedient as the son in this story.





If God's architecture for his house calls for things to be done a certain way, but the laborers choose to do it a different way, have they built according to what God wanted or did they build according to what they wanted?

## ARE YOU A LABORER FOR CHRIST?

Read the scriptures and fill in the blanks to see what one must do to become a laborer for Christ.

**Romans 10:17**, So then \_\_\_\_\_ comes by \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ by the \_\_\_\_\_ of God.

**Hebrews 11:6**, But without \_\_\_\_\_ *it is impossible to please Him*, for he who comes to God must \_\_\_\_\_ that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

**Acts 17:30**, Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to \_\_\_\_\_.

**Romans 10:9**, if you \_\_\_\_\_ with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

**Romans 6:3-4**, Or do you not know that as many of us as were \_\_\_\_\_ into Christ Jesus were \_\_\_\_\_ into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through \_\_\_\_\_ into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in \_\_\_\_\_ of life.

Once you do these things, you will be added as a living stone to God's house and be qualified to labor for the Master Builder.

**IF YOU ARE NOT A CHRISTIAN,  
WHY NOT BECOME ONE NOW?**