

Parable of the Master Carpenter

A master carpenter who worked for the same builder for nearly 50 years announced that he wanted to retire. The builder told him how much he appreciated his work. He gave the carpenter a \$5,000 bonus and asked him if he would build just one more house. The builder owned a magnificent lot with a spectacular view, and he wanted to build a dream home.

The carpenter was bitterly disappointed at the small bonus, but his last building fee would help him buy a small cottage, so he agreed to build the dream house.

The carpenter usually prided himself on his uncompromising commitment to quality, but his resentment caused him to cut corners, ignore details, and accept shoddy workmanship from other workers. He even looked the other way when some of them substituted cheaper materials and pocketed the difference.

When the house was finished, the builder shook the carpenter's hand, and with a huge smile gave him an envelope with a thank-you card and a folded piece of paper. The carpenter was disdainful – until he unfolded the paper and found the deed to the house he had just built. The carpenter was ashamed that he had misjudged his old friend and betrayed his own values, and he was remorseful that the house he would live in for the rest of his life was made so carelessly.

Our character is the house we live in and it is built piece-by-piece by our daily choices. Deceit, irresponsibility, and disrespect are just like shoddy workmanship. Whenever we put in less than our best and ignore our potential for excellence, we create a future full of creaky floors, leaky roofs, and crumbling foundations.