

Build it with care

A carpenter was so devoted to his trade that he became one of the best home-builders around. His skills were in such high demand that he found himself working exclusively for wealthy clients. Though paid well for his position, he had incurred many debts and could only afford to live in a modest home with his family.

As he watched others enjoy and benefit from his talents, dismay turned into discontent, and the carpenter made plans to leave his career. After finishing a major project, he announced to his employer, "I quit. My family will miss the paycheck, but we will figure out how to get by. I just don't care any more."

The employer was sorry to see his good man go, because he had relied on the carpenter's reputation to grow a profitable company from the ground up. He had just won a major contract that allowed him to reward the carpenter with a significant bonus and an exciting project, but he had to respect his employee's choice

So, he asked the carpenter if he would agree to build one last house as a personal favor. "Spare no expense" he said kindly. "This house needs to be built second to none, because its family depends on your talent and devotion."

Alas, another wealthy client, but begrudgingly, the carpenter agreed.

Work began right away, but the employer did not come by regularly to check up on things as usual. In time it was easy to see the carpenter's heart was no longer in his work. His attention to details began to suffer, and he began to cover up mistakes instead of making sure they were done right. He accepted inferior materials to speed things up, and he bypassed quality checks to make his work easier. He no longer cared. He just wanted to get the job done so he could get on with life.

When the carpenter finished the house, he had the employer come by for its final inspection. But instead of walking with him through the house, the employer just handed him front door key and said, "This is your house. It is my gift to you." The carpenter was stunned, but the employer continued, "For all you have done for me, my wish is for you and your family to live in the same luxury that you create for others."

In gratitude tinged with sadness, the carpenter stared at the ground. "Had I only known who I was building for," he muttered. The job was complete, and he was now given to live with less than his best! Knowing all that needed to be redone, something inside of him changed. In time, he returned to work and built with the kind of grace that humbled the wealthy and inspired the poor.

What we build every day is the life given to us in the end. Build it with care.