

Wings

*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”
Isaiah 40:31*



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Notes From a Carpenter's Workshop

Jesus' early career as a carpenter was a fitting preparation for His later mission.

Even today, working with wood can teach important lessons about dealing with people.

“Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us? And they were offended at Him” (Mk. 6:2-3).

Have you ever wondered why, of all the possible options available to Jesus when He took on human form, He choose the occupation of a *carpenter*? I used to wonder that, too, until a mid-life career change unexpectedly landed me in the role of a finish carpenter. I spent three and a half years breathing sawdust before moving on to another occupation, but the lessons I learned during that time have proven invaluable in my later years, especially in my dealings with people. Here are some examples:

A good carpenter job begins with a good foundation. The floors and walls must be square, plumb, and solid. If they aren't, corrections must be made to make up for the deficiencies. Otherwise, the finished work won't look right and will likely not function properly. Likewise, working with people first requires a good relationship based on respect and dignity. See Titus 3:1-2.

The right tool must be used for the right job. In some applications a scroll saw is more appropriate than a circular saw. In other situations, it's the reverse. A carpenter can create a real mess if he doesn't know the difference. In the same manner, working with people requires knowledge of a wide range of tools: private counseling vs. public rebuke, incentives vs. punishments. True wisdom is knowing when to use the best approach for each situation. See Jude 22-23.

Like different varieties of wood, different people must be handled differently. Oak is hard and can take a pounding to force it into place; pine is soft, and must be handled gently to avoid damage. Working with people involves dealing with all sorts of personality types and backgrounds, and the wise friend will treat every relationship as unique. See 1 Cor. 9:20-22.

The most effective skills are learned through experience, not teaching. Working with wood requires a certain “feel” that can't be easily explained in words. Only by making thousands of

cuts and driving thousands of nails can a carpenter develop that innate sense that tells him a job is going “right” or “wrong.” Likewise, the best way to learn how to deal with people is to just plunge in and do it. A few pointers along the way are helpful, but expertise is developed only by spending time dealing with others and their issues. See Heb. 5:14.

Like wood putty, love covers a multitude of sins. Ideally, working with wood should involve zero mistakes — every joint is perfect, and every piece of wood is free of blemishes. But that ideal is not reality. Mistakes are inevitable, so even the best carpenter must occasionally use a little putty to mask flaws in his work. In the same way, even the best of friends realize that nobody is perfect; they know that they must love each other despite their imperfections. See 1 Pet. 4:8.

As a carpenter, Jesus worked in an occupation that was best suited to His life's ultimate mission: “I will build My church” (Matt. 16:18). We don't have to be carpenters to learn the lessons that made His work so successful.

– David King