

The House

ONE DAY, THE MASTER BUILDER CAME TO A HOUSE, WHICH WE'LL CALL HARRY, AND SAID, "HARRY, AS YOU'VE SEEN, I'VE BEEN MAKING RENOVATIONS ON MY OTHER HOUSES IN ORDER TO FORTIFY THEM AND REPLACE THE OLD FRAMEWORK THAT MAY NOT BE STRONG ENOUGH TO WITHSTAND FIERCER WEATHER CONDITIONS. I'D LIKE TO MAKE RENOVATIONS ON YOU. WOULD THAT BE OKAY?"

HARRY SAID, "WELL, WHAT KIND OF RENOVATIONS ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?"

THE MASTER BUILDER SAID, "FIRST I'D START WITH YOUR PIPES. YOUR SEWAGE-MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IS OUTDATED AND OVERLOADED. YOU HAVE MORE WASTE THAN YOUR CURRENT PIPES CAN HANDLE, AND SO YOUR SEWAGE IS OVERFLOWING INTO THE GARDEN."



HARRY FELT UNEASY. "MY PIPES! BUT ... BUT ... I'VE USED THIS WASTE-MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR SO LONG! DO YOU HAVE TO REVAMP IT? AFTER ALL, THE OVERFLOWING SEWAGE PROVIDES FERTILIZER FOR MY GARDEN. ... OH, MY GARDEN! IF YOU DIG UP AND REPLACE ALL THE PIPES, MY GARDEN WILL BE A BIG MESS FOR MONTHS."

"YES, I WANTED TO MENTION YOUR GARDEN. YOU MIGHT HAVE PLENTY OF FERTILIZER, BUT IT APPEARS THAT ALL THAT FLOURISHES IN YOUR GARDEN IS AN ABUNDANCE OF WEEDS. ALL THE GOOD FRUIT TREES AND ROSE BUSHES HAVE BEEN CROWDED OUT."

"OH, I'D RATHER YOU DIDN'T MESS WITH THE PIPES."

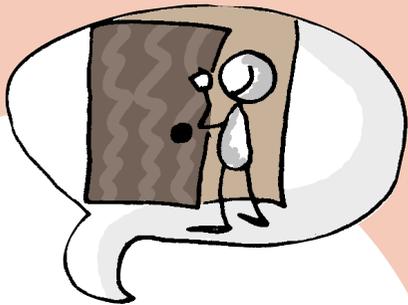
"ARE YOU SURE, HARRY? I'D ALSO PUT IN LARGER FRESHWATER PIPES, SO YOU'D GET PLENTY OF WATER TO KEEP YOUR HOUSE CLEAN AND SANITARY. YOU'VE BEEN EXISTING ON AN INADEQUATE WATER SUPPLY FOR YEARS. I COULD FIX THAT!"



"I HAVE PLENTY OF FRESH WATER," SAID HARRY. "A FEW DROPS A DAY IS ALL I NEED. I KNOW THINGS ARE GETTING A LITTLE CRUDDY AROUND HERE DUE TO LACK OF CLEANING, BUT I THINK THE EXTRA COATS OF DUST AND GRIME ADD AN OLD-TIME CHARM TO THE PLACE, DON'T YOU? ANYWAY, YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT MY PIPES—I'LL SPARE YOU AND YOUR WORKMEN THE EXTRA LABOR. NOW, WHAT ELSE DID YOU WANT TO RENOVATE?"

THE MASTER BUILDER HOPED HE COULD YET PERSUADE HARRY: "YOU'LL BE HAPPY TO KNOW WE'D UPGRADE YOUR WINDOWS! YOURS ARE PRETTY SMALL, DON'T LET MUCH LIGHT IN, AND THE FRAMES ARE RUSTED AND OLD. DOUBLE-PANED WINDOWS WILL PREVENT HEAT FROM ESCAPING YOUR HOUSE IN THE WINTER, AND THEY'LL ALSO PROVIDE BETTER LIGHTING THROUGHOUT."

"MY WINDOWS?!" CRIED HARRY. "YOU HAVE GOT TO BE JOKING. I'VE HAD THESE WINDOWS SINCE I WAS A YOUNG HOUSE."



"EXACTLY," SAID THE MASTER BUILDER. "ALTHOUGH THE INCREASED LIGHT MIGHT TAKE GETTING USED TO AT FIRST, I PROMISE YOU'LL SOON GROW TO LOVE IT AND WONDER HOW YOU'D EVER DONE WITHOUT IT!"

HARRY SIGHED. "LET'S PUT THE WINDOWS ON HOLD FOR NOW. WHAT ELSE DO YOU HAVE IN MIND?"

"THERE'S YOUR DRIVEWAY. IT'S PRETTY NARROW, AND I WAS HOPING TO REBUILD IT MUCH WIDER."



HARRY HAD HEARD ENOUGH. "MASTER BUILDER, FROM THE SOUNDS OF IT, YOU WANT TO COMPLETELY DESTROY WHO I AM, TAKE AWAY ALL THE THINGS I LOVE ABOUT MYSELF, AND UPSET THE APPLE CART OF MY EXISTENCE!"

THE MASTER BUILDER LOOKED THOUGHTFULLY AT HARRY.



"DO SOMETHING FOR ME, WILL YOU, HARRY? LOOK DOWN THIS STREET AT ALL THE OTHER HOUSES I'VE BEEN WORKING ON. DO THEY LOOK DESTROYED? YES, I KNOW THEY'RE DIFFERENT LOOKING, BUT DON'T THEY LOOK HAPPIER, MORE LIGHT-FILLED, MORE BEAUTIFUL WITH THEIR NEWLY PLANTED GARDENS, AND MORE EXCITING WITH ALL THE VISITORS THEY'RE NOW ENTERTAINING?"

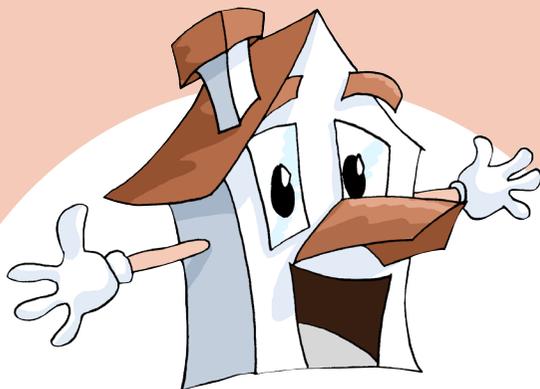
HARRY LOOKED DOWN THE STREET. IT WAS TRUE THAT THINGS HAD BECOME QUITE EXCITING AROUND HIM, AND HE'D BEGUN TO FEEL A LITTLE LEFT OUT. HE HADN'T THOUGHT OF CONNECTING THE RENOVATIONS WITH ALL THE NEW AND WONDERFUL THINGS THE OTHER HOUSES WERE EXPERIENCING. HE'D REGARDED ALL THE WORKMEN AND REBUILDING EQUIPMENT AS A LOT OF NOISE AND HASSLE THAT HE HOPED WOULD GO AWAY SOON. BUT NOW HE WAS SEEING THINGS DIFFERENTLY.

HARRY GULPED AND LOOKED AGAIN AT THE MASTER BUILDER. IT WAS HARD TO SAY THIS, BUT HE WAS DETERMINED TO TRY.

"MASTER BUILDER," HE STARTED. "I REALIZED THAT ALL THIS TIME THAT I'VE BEEN ARGUING WITH YOU, I'D FORGOTTEN ONE IMPORTANT THING. I BELONG TO YOU! YOU BUILT ME TO BEGIN WITH, AND IF YOU THINK IT'S TIME TO MAKE SOME IMPROVEMENTS, HOW CAN I ARGUE? EVEN IF THE CHANGES SEEM UNCOMFORTABLE AT FIRST, I KNOW YOU CARE FOR ME, AND THAT ALL THE CHANGES YOU'RE PROPOSING WILL WORK OUT FOR THE BEST. YOU CAN CLEAR ANYTHING OUT OF MY HOUSE THAT YOU DON'T THINK IS BEAUTIFUL OR HELPFUL. CLEAN IT UP AS SHINY AS YOU CAN AND MAKE IT FIT FOR YOUR FUTURE USE."

THE MASTER BUILDER LOOKED UP AT HARRY, AND HARRY SAW THAT THERE WERE TEARS OF GRATITUDE RUNNING DOWN HIS CHEEKS.

"THANKS, HARRY," HE SAID SOFTLY. "I PROMISE YOU WON'T REGRET PUTTING YOURSELF IN MY CAPABLE HANDS."



"FORGET THE FORMER THINGS; DO NOT DWELL ON THE PAST. SEE, I AM DOING A NEW THING!" (ISAIAH 43:18-19 NIV).

"THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL MOVE ONWARD AND FORWARD; THOSE WITH PURE HEARTS SHALL BECOME STRONGER AND STRONGER" (JOB 17:9 TLB).