

RENEE COATES SCHEIDT

# Building Castles in the Sand

**W**arm salt water lapped across tanned toes as I walked beside the ocean with my two daughters. It was a perfect beach day. The sky was clear, the sun was bright, and the ocean breeze was cool and steady.

"Look, Mama," 10-year-old Tara said as we walked, pointing at two sand-covered preschoolers. "What a cute little castle they're making!"

We paused to watch as the children dribbled the sand, forming a castle tower. "Great job," I told the young builders as my girls and I continued down the beach.

Soon we came upon another group of children, immersed in their own project. Using plastic shovels, they diligently packed down sand-filled buckets. They quickly flipped the buckets and gently pulled off the plastic mold. There stood the base of the castle — a perfectly formed image. Before long, they declared the castle a completed work of art.

Several yards down the beach, we came to the biggest sand castle of all. "Wow, look at that!" Tara squealed.

"It looks big enough to live in!" Nicole, my older daughter, added. No detail had gone unnoticed. With sweat pouring, a grown man scooped up a shovel full of sand.

"You're supposed to be on vacation," I kidded.

"Hey, this is fun," he replied with a laugh. "Come back in another hour and I'll be finished."

"We'll catch you on our way back," I said. "I can't wait to see the finished product." We moved on.

Suddenly, I realized God was providing a teachable moment for my young daughters. "What do you think about all the different sand castles we've seen today?" I asked them.

Tara jumped in. "I like the dribble castle we saw first," she said. "It's the easiest and quickest to build."

"I like making dribble castles and sand bucket castles, but I wouldn't want to spend as much time on a gigantic one," Nicole added. "Besides, in a couple of hours, all his work will be washed away. Why work so hard on something that will be gone so soon?"

Impressed with her insight, I asked "Do you remember what Jesus said about building a house on the sand?"

"Of course," Nicole said. "We've sung that song all of our lives."

"But today you've seen firsthand how true Jesus' words are," I said. "Tomorrow, not one of those castles will be here. It doesn't matter how hard the builders worked, how much time they spent, or how sincerely they tried — when a house is built on sand, it's only a matter of time till the tide washes it away."



"Build your life on a relationship with Christ," I added, "and your foundation will be solid."

"Don't worry, Mom," Tara chirped in. "We'll make the right choice. But you don't mind if we start building a sand castle now, do you?"

"Grab the buckets, girls!" I shouted as we gathered our supplies. "Thanks again, Lord," I whispered, "for an opportunity to point my girls to Your truth."

*Renee Coates Scheidt is a speaker and host of a weekly TV program, "Hearts of Hope," in Charlotte, N.C. She considers her greatest claim to fame that of being mom to two godly young ladies, Nicole and Tara. They build their home in China Grove, N.C.*

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