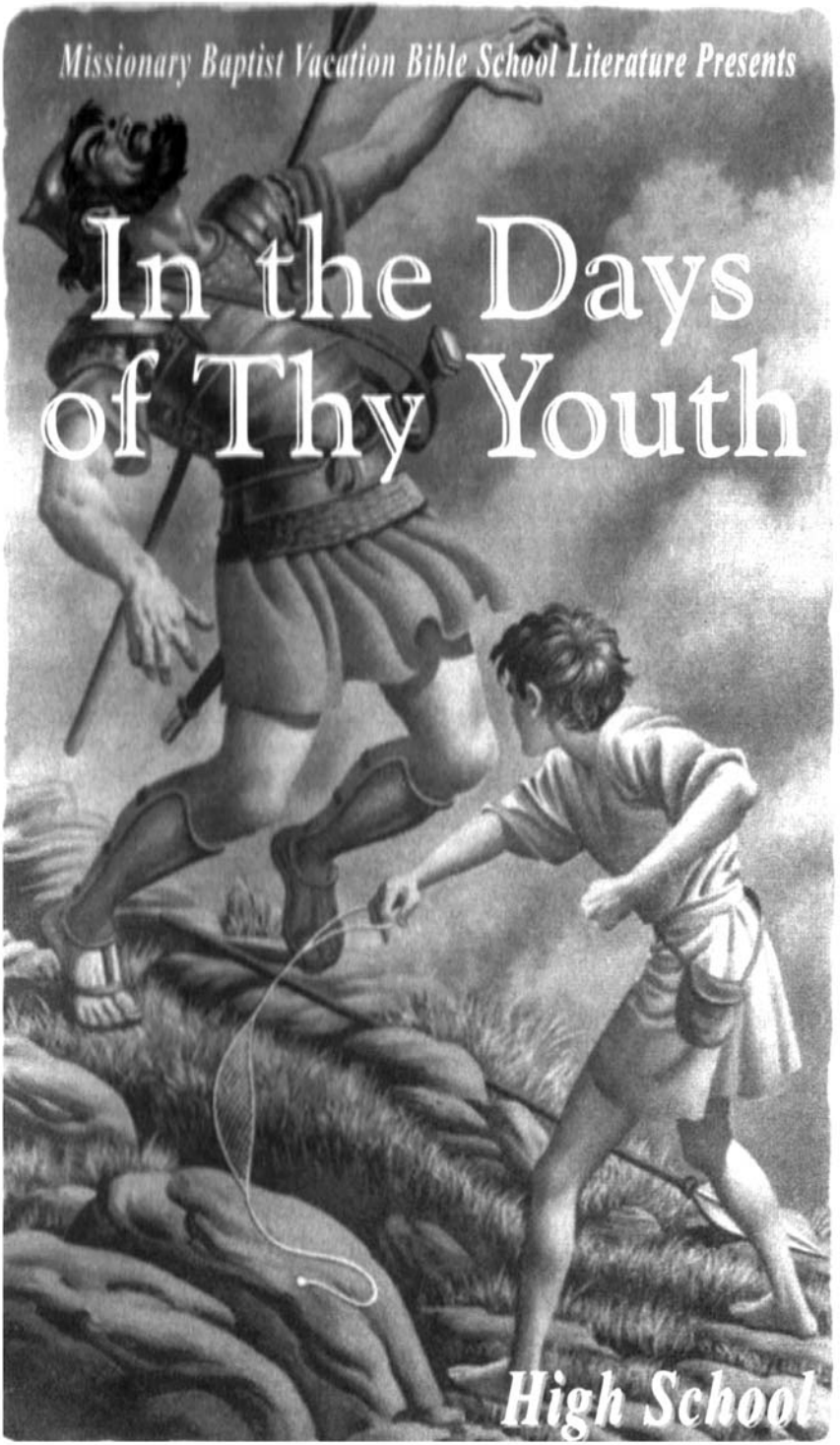
Missionary Baptist Vacation Bible School Literature Presents
In the Days of Thy Youth
High School

The Missionary Baptist
Vacation Bible School Literature Committee presents

"In the Days of Thy Youth"

Vacation Bible School Lessons for High School students

Written by Sister Tangi Wheet, Brother Mike Carter, Elder Mitch Glasscock, Brother Travis Tims, and Sister Ashley Atkerson

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LESSON 1

REMEMBER NOW THY CREATOR

LESSON TEXT
ECC. 11:7-10, 12:1

WRITTEN BY
Tangi Wheet

Ecclesiastes 11:7-12:1

7. Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun:
8. But if a man live many years, and rejoice in them all; yet let him remember the days of darkness; for they shall be many. All that cometh is vanity.
9. Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.
10. Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh: for childhood and youth are vanity.

12:1 Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;

INTRODUCTION

We have all been in an uncomfortable situation wherein we weren't sure of the "right" way to behave. Whether one is being pressured into doing such things as drugs, ditching school, or having premarital sex, there are answers. Fortunately, all of the answers to these and other situations are bound into a book that God Himself inspired. You may know it as the Bible. This week we are going to discuss ways to succeed in those types of situations, how to avoid them, and what instructions God gives us in the Bible. These subjects cover such things as: recognizing God's spirit and following it; recognizing temptation before it becomes sin; understanding the importance of being true to God; and why there is no greater cause than taking up the cross of Jesus. We are going to start the week by discussing why it is important to seek and find God early in life.

These lessons will help anyone who follows them with his or her heart in the right place. However, you cannot possibly know the true benefits unless you are a child of God. You may want to reread the lesson text with this in mind.

CONSEQUENCES OF A MISSPENT YOUTH

King Solomon was given wisdom by God. He wrote Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and The Song of Solomon because God inspired him to share his wisdom with the world.

What was his purpose in writing this text? Like everything in the Bible, we can apply this lesson to our lives today. (Refer to verses 11:7-9.) As we grow older, we look back on our youth with fondness. We remember days of fun in the sun, mud pie fights, and peanut butter sandwiches. Times were simpler then, and sin was just something Adam and Eve did. Now that we are old enough to know better, our youthful ways and ideas are no longer excusable. There are now consequences to our actions other than spankings or timeouts. We now risk hurt feelings, broken relationships and trusts, diseases,

injuries, and even death. However, (see verses 11:10-12:1) if we remember our Creator, that is, honor God by the way we live, then consequences such as these will have a harder time finding us. As Moses said in Numbers 32:23, "...be sure your sin will find you out."

Let's look at the parable of the Prodigal Son, which is found in Luke 15:11-32. As some young adults do today, this young man went out to please his flesh by overindulging. He enjoyed himself until his money ran out, and his friends abandoned him. He was ashamed of himself and was too proud to return to his father; that is, he was, until he found himself on the ground eating with the hogs in order to satisfy his hunger. He then remembered his father and the way things were at his house. He returned to his father with a repentant heart and his father accepted him with open arms. There, the Prodigal Son found the love and security he had missed.

If the son had never left his father in the first place, he could have avoided the trouble that he went through. So it is with our relationship with the Lord. If we walk in the footprints of Christ, we will never be far from God's love and protection.

SPIRITUAL MATURITY SHOULD BEGIN EARLY IN LIFE

This class is probably made up of students who are leaving childhood behind. There are many truths children realize as they mature; one of these is the certainty of death, the separation of the body from this world. Most children can remember the point at which they learned that life is not endless. The death of a friend, family member or even a favorite pet often teaches this lesson. In Psalm 90, Moses prays for God's help to realize how short life is, so that he won't waste it. All mature adults realize that life is not endless.

Consider, however, that many people are children in a spiritual sense. This state of childhood depends not on age, but on the condition of an individual's relationship with God. Many choose to keep the same degenerate spiritual condition that they were born with. While the spirit is eternal, there is a spiritual death, which is separation of a soul from God. Realizing this vital truth - that we are separated from God and therefore spiritually dead - is the first point of spiritual awareness. There is no defined age of this spiritual realization, but it begins and innocence is lost when an individual feels conviction from God. This conviction is the certain knowledge, the state of being convinced, that he or she is separated from Him, or lost. At this time, sometimes called the age of accountability, God gives each person the signal that it is time, spiritually, to begin to grow up.

Our first duty as spiritually aware beings, what actually starts us on the path to spiritual maturity, is to be saved, or reconciled to God. And it is an urgent duty because we know that our life "is soon cut off, and we fly away" (Ps. 90:10). However, being saved is more than a preparation to die. It is a preparation to live. As Matthew asks, "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mt. 16:26) Our happiness in life depends on a strong foundation in God's salvation. Only then can we continue to mature, growing closer to God.

SOLOMON'S SOLUTION

Solomon gives advice on growing close to God that can be summarized by part of our lesson text, in verse 12:1, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." What are ways to remember our Creator? As was mentioned before, we remember our Creator by honoring Him through the way we live. What better way to do so than through worship with God's people? Staying close to people who believe what you do will help to encourage you in your Christian walk. Another way to honor God is to be open about your relationship with God and what He has done for you. Tell your classmates, your friends, and even your neighbors. Maybe they too will desire the same relationship with God that you have. Pray and study your Bible. Go to church as often as you can. All of these are examples of remembering our Creator. What are the ways in which you remember Him?

Everyone has his or her own way of remembering God. One way we should all remember Him is by learning more about Him. In the next lesson, we will discuss receiving instruction. Here is a proverb to consider in preparation for tomorrow's lesson. "He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding" (Pr. 15:32).

LESSON 2

RECEIVING INSTRUCTION

LESSON TEXT
II TIMOTHY 3:14-15

WRITTEN BY
MIKE CARTER

2 Timothy 3:

14. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;
15. And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

INTRODUCTION

We all learn each day that we live. This knowledge comes from various sources ranging from life experiences to formal education. Knowledge may be both secular and spiritual. Part of our learning is acquired through instruction, or teaching. Instructing is the giving of knowledge; the gift of knowledge must be received. The focus of this lesson is receiving instruction.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RECIEVING INSTRUCTION

The first and most important spiritual instruction we can receive is the knowledge of our need for salvation. Verse 15 of the lesson text says that Timothy received instruction from the scriptures, which made him "wise unto salvation." Without this knowledge, we would all miss the gift of God -- eternal life. (Ro. 6:23)

How did you receive the knowledge of your need for salvation?

Wisdom is defined as the power of judging rightly and following the soundest course of action, based on knowledge, experience, and understanding. In the scriptures, the word "wisdom" often refers to Jesus himself, and a wise man is described as one who has come to know Him. Solomon was inspired to write, "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding." (Pr. 4:7) The second chapter of Proverbs contains the promise of God's protection, preservation, and deliverance from evil for those who receive His instruction.

In the parable of The House on the Rock (Mt. 7:24-27), Jesus taught that salvation provides a spiritual foundation upon which to build a fruitful and victorious life. Jesus said, "...whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock." The wise man's house withstood the storm because it had a solid foundation; we can withstand all trials by building our life upon our salvation and the teachings of Jesus.

RECIEVING INSTRUCTION

From whom can we receive instruction? Discuss with your class some sources from which you receive instruction. There are many possible sources. However, many of these are not the ones from which we should receive instruction.

What are some examples of "bad" sources of instruction? What makes these sources "bad?"

The means by which we receive instruction, through TV programs, music, the Internet, books, schoolteachers, and the advice of friends and family, are not what matters. What matters is the content of the instruction. In Mark 6, Herodias tells her daughter to ask Herod to kill John the Baptist. The girl trusted her mother and followed her advice, but were her actions those that God wanted? We must always pray and consider the content of the instruction we receive, and thus we can determine sources to be "good" or "bad."

What are some examples of "good" sources of instruction? What makes these sources "good?"

At times we look toward improper parties, but the source of instruction to be sought after is God. God is the reason we exist and God designed us to have a relationship with Him. It is important that we maintain an open channel of communication with God to receive His instructions. Jesus, the great teacher, promised that God would send the Holy Spirit to teach and remind people of His words. Our experience of salvation equips us with the ability to discern between good and evil instruction, between God's spirit and evil spirits.

How should we maintain an open channel of communication with God?

God often uses tangible means to give His instructions. For example, Timothy's mother and grandmother followed the scripture's admonition to train up children in the way they should go. After Timothy was called to preach, the apostle Paul instructed him to study the scriptures, and reminded him that "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable...for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good work." (2 Ti. 3:16,17)

Pastors, Sunday school teachers, deacons, and elders of the church are also used by God to instruct us. The Holy Spirit bears witness to the truth they speak.

It is possible to receive instruction without taking it. Knowledge only becomes valuable to us when we willingly accept it. Whatever means He employs, all instruction in righteousness comes from God. Would we dare to refuse His instruction?

FINAL WORDS

Although you are young, you too can be "an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Ti. 4:12). But first, you must establish a relationship with God through salvation. You must build your house on solid ground (Mt. 7:24-27) and listen to the word of God (Ps. 119:9).

LESSON 3

RESISTING TEMPTATION

LESSON TEXT
JAMES 1:12-16

WRITTEN BY
MITCH GLASSCOCK

James 1:

12. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.
13. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:
14. But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.
15. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.
16. Do not err, my beloved brethren.

INTRODUCTION

The study of "In The Days of Thy Youth" continues in this lesson on the subject "Resisting Temptation." Teenage years are very often a time when great temptations are faced. This time in life is a time of growing and maturing. With this growth comes the desire for independence and experimentation. There are many temptations faced by young people during this time. Using the right help to confront temptation is the key to resisting it. It is important to understand who the tempter is and how to recognize him and his deceptive ways.

As you study this lesson privately or in class, please use your Bible to look at the references given and to search for other scriptures which can aid you in confronting and resisting temptation, and to guide you in the days of your youth.

WHAT IS TEMPTATION?

Some of the definitions given for "tempt" in the dictionary are: "To try to get (someone) to do wrong, especially by a promise of reward; To be attractive or inviting to; to lure; To provoke or to risk provoking; To cause to be strongly disposed to some action." Temptation is the desire for that which is forbidden. It is inordinate affection. But temptation may come in other forms as well. Other examples of temptation may be the trial of right and wrong or persecution because of one's faith. Temptation can and does take many forms, but, rest assured, temptations will come to each person in some form.

WHO IS THE TEMPTER AND HOW DO WE RECOGNIZE HIM?

The Bible tells that the devil or

Satan is the tempter. Matthew 4:1 says, "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." In verse 3 of the same chapter the devil is called the "tempter." In the scripture mentioned above and in the account of the same events in Luke 4, the devil tempted Jesus with things that appeal to human needs and desires.

Satan is often described and is pictured by many people as a being with red skin, horns, a tail and a pitchfork. However, he is not like that at all. The Bible states that he makes himself appealing and beautiful. "And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14). It also describes him as being subtle or sly (Gen. 3:1), deceitful (1 Tim 2:14; 2 John 7; Rev 12:9), and a liar (John 8:44). He studies and knows much about humans and approaches them where they are weak and vulnerable. He uses things around people that appear innocent, harmless, or appealing to draw them into his snare of temptation.

WHO IS NOT THE TEMPTER?

God is not the tempter. He does not tempt anyone to evil. That is clearly stated in verse 13 of the lesson text from James. Verse 14 of the lesson states that we are drawn of our own lusts and enticed. As stated in the previous section, Satan takes advantage of these lusts to entice or draw us to sin.

THE DANGER OF TEMPTATION

Verse 15 of the lesson tells of the danger of yielding to the enticement of human lusts - "it bringeth forth sin, and sin death." A person has done no evil when he or she is tempted. The evil comes when the person yields to temptation and violates God's rules for our life. This violation of God's law, or rules, is sin and is very displeasing to God. As a matter of fact, God hates sin. So the danger of temptation is giving in to it, committing sin, and displeasing God.

THE RESULTS OF YIELDING TO TEMPTATION

As stated above, the result of yielding to temptation is sin. Sin separates us from God. If we are unsaved, it will keep us from coming to God and hence from coming to know God in the free pardon of sin, or salvation. If we are saved, sin takes us out of God's will and from fellowship and communion with Him.

Satan places obstacles before each person trying to keep him or her from God when he or she is not saved. He will tempt the lost person in various ways not to seek God for salvation. This will lead to eternal death (eternal separation from God) if Satan can keep the person from seeking and finding the Lord. After a person is saved, the devil tries to

take him/her out of God's will by tempting with enticing things. If he can get a person out of God's will and into sinful acts and activities, then that person's influence with others is damaged or destroyed.

Many young people may say they do not care about being saved now. Many also do not care about their present influence. They think and say such things as, "I want to have a good time, and I don't care what others think." This is a dangerous attitude to have. If you are lost and God stops dealing with you, you may never have another opportunity to be saved. If you are saved, then what about your influence? Are there people you care about, friends or relatives, whom you want to see saved? Will they believe you when you tell them about salvation if you are living a sinful life? Yielding to temptation causes spiritual suffering and loss to the child of God.

The Bible provides many examples of the results of yielding to temptation. Look at the example of David. David was a man after God's own heart. In Psalms 40 David gives an account of his salvation. He resisted the temptation to run from God and sought and came to know God in this account. Most of his life David sought to live close to God. But 2 Samuel 11 tells how David yielded to temptation and sinned against God. He committed adultery, attempted to deceive a woman's husband, and when he could not, he had her husband killed. David suffered both physically and spiritually for his transgression. Psalms 51 tells of his suffering and desire and seeking to get back into God's will.

THE RESULTS OF RESISTING TEMPTATION

"Resist the devil and he will flee from you" are good words of advice from the Bible in James 4:7. How do we resist the devil? The first portion of James 4:7 gives the answer "Submit yourselves therefore to God." Seeking first of all to know God or to be saved is essential to resisting the devil and temptation. After being saved, seeking the will of God for your life, learning about God, and desiring to serve God will help you to resist Satan and temptation. God allows people to be tempted and allows things to happen in their lives to test their faith. But there is a promise given in 1 Corinthians 10:13, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

One of the greatest examples in the Bible of the results of resisting temptation is that of Joseph given in Genesis 39-46. Joseph was tempted to commit adultery with his master's wife, but he

would not yield to this temptation. He was accused of wrongdoing by the man's wife anyway and cast into prison. It appears he received evil for doing right. But as the account continues, God delivers Joseph from the prison and he is made ruler over Egypt. In this position he is able to save his family from starvation during a great famine that occurred in the land.

When you resist temptation to sin and take a stand for what is right, you can expect criticism, ridicule, mocking and perhaps even persecution of some kind. However, if you resist in order to honor God and to do His will and what is right, it will not go unnoticed by Him.

CONCLUSION

No doubt there are strong desires for things, and to do and experience things, for teenagers. It is important for you to resist doing things that would damage your relationship with God. Many times young people seeking to be popular or accepted go along with and engage in things they know are wrong. It is also easy to be tempted and desire to be in company with people engaged in sinful activities, but not to partake yourself. Be careful of this temptation. You could be drawn into the evil if constantly exposed, even with the best intentions of resisting. There is an old saying, "You are known by the company you keep." Perhaps this is part of what Paul meant when he wrote in 1 Thessalonians 5:22 "Abstain from all appearance of evil."

It is important for you to learn to resist temptation while you are young. The temptations will not end with your teenage years. Satan tempts all ages. He works harder on those who are closer to God and want to live a Godly life. He does not need to work as hard on those who are away from God. Look at the example of Jesus. Jesus being tempted by Satan in Matthew 4 and Luke 4 was used earlier in this lesson. But the temptation of the Lord was not restricted to those forty or so days in the wilderness; it went on throughout His life. He no doubt was tempted in His teen years. In Luke 2:41-52, an account is given of when the Lord was twelve years old and He could have been defiant and disobedient to his parents. However, He was not disobedient; verse 51 states that He was subject or obedient to them. Satan tempted Jesus all the way to and on the cross but He never yielded; He always resisted temptation. Thanks be to God, that our hope is in Christ. Hebrews 2:18 states "For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." The word "succour" in this verse means to aid, relieve or help. Hebrews 4:15 says, "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are,

yet without sin."

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

Genesis 39:7-23; 2 Samuel 11:2-4; Daniel 1:1-18; Daniel 3:1-30; Romans 8:28 & Genesis 45:5; Romans 12:1; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 2 Peter 3:13-14; Genesis 3:6; Genesis 13:10-11; Genesis 25:29-33; Joshua 7:21; 1 Kings 11:1-4; Daniel 1:8-9Proverbs 1:10; Proverbs 4:14; Romans 6:13; Colossians 3:1-6

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION

How can the devil try to use your friends or family to tempt you?

Describe how the devil presents himself to people.

Name some ways the devil might tempt you.

Name some things he might tempt you with.

What are some things you can do to help you resist temptation?

What would you do?
Revival is scheduled at your church. You have a lost friend that has promised to attend revival services with you. Another friend has invited you to go on a vacation with his/her family the week the revival is scheduled. What would you do?

You are at a school activity. One of your most trusted friends invites you to go out and try something new. You are offered alcohol or drugs. When you decline the offer you are told, "Just one time won't hurt anything!" What would you do?

Discuss in class other temptations that you are faced with and discuss ways you can resist those temptations.

LESSON 4

REMAINING FAITHFUL

LESSON TEXT
Daniel 1:8-16

WRITTEN BY
TRAVIS TIMS

Daniel 1:

8. But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

9. Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs.

10. And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which are of your sort? Then shall ye make me endanger my head to the king.

11. Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah,

12. Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink.

13. Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat: and as thou seest, deal with thy servants.

14. So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days.

15. And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat.

16. Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink; and gave them pulse.

INTRODUCTION

The first lesson of this week established that getting saved is our primary duty, and that it should be done early in life. This lesson is designed to encourage saved individuals to remain faithful, or loyal, to our Savior. Faithfulness is our firm (constant, unwavering) adherence to the One to whom we are bound by obligation (indebtedness and duty).

In the fable "The Tortoise and The Hare," the two animals stage a footrace. The heavily favored hare loses the race because he doesn't stick to it. The scriptures compare our Christian life to a footrace and encourage us to "stick to it." (See: 1 Co. 9:24; He. 12:1, 2 Ti. 4:7,8) There are many benefits to running the "race" à la tortoise for "racers" and spectators, too.

FAITHFULNESS CHALLENGED

Daniel faced many challenges in his lifetime. But in all those

challenges, his commitment to God grew stronger. Daniel was determined to live by God's law. In moments of crisis, he turned to God in prayer. He had regular times to pray, and he allowed nothing to hinder him during those times (Da. 6). At the time of our lesson text, Daniel was among the Hebrew children in Babylonian captivity. Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were offered food like the king of Babylon ate. Daniel knew that the meat of the king's table was prohibited to a person of Jewish faith; the food might have been offered to idols as well. This was a severe test of Daniel's faithfulness to God. As a slave, he knew his life was in danger if he refused to eat what he was given. However, Daniel knew if he remained committed and faithful to God, he could meet the challenge. At the end of the ten-day testing period, God blessed Daniel for his commitment and faithfulness.

We are also challenged by Satan to waver in our Christian life. He may try to persuade us to take a break from God's service, or to only give half-hearted service. He may use our friends and family against us by tempting us to put them ahead of God in our hearts. How we meet these challenges has a great effect on our life and our influence.

FAITHFUL MEN

The Bible is full of people who were faithful to God. Joseph was sold into slavery by his own brothers and was then thrown into prison on a false charge. Like Daniel, Joseph courageously and prayerfully maintained his integrity.

God allowed Satan to test Job any way he wanted, except the taking of his life, to prove Job's faithfulness to God. Satan took all the blessings God had given Job in life. Satan took Job's land, and still Job remained faithful. Satan took Job's children yet Job still didn't forsake God. Finally, Job fell ill and his wife told him just to forsake God. Through it all, Job's faith remained strong in the God who had given him the land and the family that were suddenly taken away.

The apostles Peter and John were arrested and imprisoned for preaching the gospel. Their accusers, the Jewish elders, ordered them to stop preaching. They boldly answered, "...Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." (Ac. 4:19)

RESULTS OF FAITHFULNESS

God does not leave faithfulness without reward. Daniel and his companions not only overcame Satan's challenge, but also received God's blessing.

According to the verse following the lesson text, "...God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams." Joseph's faithfulness resulted in his promotion to governor. The Lord gave Job twice as much as was taken away, and also blessed the apostles with great power in preaching.

God's blessings serve a purpose greater than our own enjoyment. They also prepare us to face future challenges. God knew that Daniel still had to face the lions, that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were headed for a fiery furnace, and that Joseph's family would need to survive the famine.

The faithfulness of a child of God also affects those around him. Daniel's actions caused the king to say, "...Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings..." (Da. 2:47) When Peter and John spoke to the church in Jerusalem after their release from prison, "...the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness." (Ac. 4:31) Joseph was God's instrument for saving the lives of His chosen people during the great famine.

People tend to put a label on Christianity today -- that it is hard to be a Christian and live a good life. But it is harder to be a Christian and not live a good life. Double mindedness is the opposite of faithfulness, and according to James 1:8, "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways."

Many blessings come from serving God and remaining true and faithful. Christians live by faith in God not just on Sundays, but through a daily commitment. Christians should examine their commitment and faith levels daily. Christians are role models to the world. They should stand out in the world and should easily be noticed. When Jesus walked through this world, people knew he was different. People should be able to see by our lives that God is in our hearts. Remaining faithful isn't something to be frowned upon, but something looked forward to.

God has given a special tool to every saved person in giving him/her the ability to witness to the world. A person can sometimes say more to a lost person through testimony than in a sermon given by a preacher. God saves every person in the same way; he always has and he always will. Telling our salvation experience to others is a great tool in witnessing for God. However, it is only an effective tool if we "stick to it."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Discuss a situation where you knew you were supposed to say or do something with a group of people who were doing some-

thing wrong. What did you do? What could you have done differently?

Are you doing the best you can in telling people about God and what He does for you? Why or why not?

Is there ever a point you come to in witnessing to someone that you should stop because you feel it is doing no good?

Should faith grow as you grow, or is it at its highest level when you are saved?

LESSON 5

TAKING UP THE CAUSE

LESSON TEXT
I SAMUEL 17:25-29

WRITTEN BY
ASHLEY ATKERSON

I Samuel 17:

25. And the men of Israel said, Have ye seen this man that is come up? surely to defy Israel is he come up: and it shall be, that the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel.
26. And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?
27. And the people answered him after this manner, saying, So shall it be done to the man that killeth him.
28. And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle.
29. And David said, What have I now done? Is there not a cause?

INTRODUCTION

All week you have studied what young Christians are to do and what young Christians in Biblical times have done. Some lessons have dealt with inward struggles, battles with doubt or sin that take place in the individual heart and mind. Their instructions prepare your inward self to deal with the world around you. And in dealing with the world, one of the strongest instructions God gives us is to take up his cause. "Taking up the Lord's cause" means taking action and influencing other people through those actions. One of the better known stories from the Bible focuses on this cause - the story of David and Goliath.

How does David take up the Lord's cause?

What is the Lord's cause for us to take up today? How is it different from the cause in David's day? Is it different?

David asks, "Is there not a cause?"

In our lesson text, David speaks to the Israelites about what will happen to the one who defeats Goliath. Eliab, David's brother becomes angry with David because he thinks that David is, like most young men, excited just to see the battle. David, however, feels he has cause to be there. He asks his brothers,

"Is there not a cause?" It is not recorded whether Eliab responded, or what he said.

How would you respond if your younger brother or sister claimed to have a special task given by God?

Do you think David was interested in material reward?

THE CAUSE - VERSE 26

In this verse, David shows us what he thinks to be the issue - the Lord's cause, his reason to accept Goliath's challenge. He says that killing Goliath would take disgrace away from Israel because Goliath had defied its armies. Israel was God's chosen people. Throughout its history, Israel has known many different conquering masters. But God's will was for Israel to remain free from the Philistines. David saw an opportunity to serve God by defeating the Philistines and preserving the freedom of Israel.

FAITH - THE KEY TO TAKING UP THE CAUSE

David saw this opportunity, but how did he imagine he could do what God wanted? For so many, the task was overwhelming. Grown Israelite men all around him did not have sufficient faith in God to take on Goliath. However, David's faith was sufficient; he knew God would give him victory. In addition, he was able to convince King Saul to allow him to try. In other words, David's faith was so great that it overcame the doubts of many people, including the most powerful person in Israel.

Where did David get this kind of faith? In 1 Samuel 17:33-37, David details how God had helped him through many dangers in the past. David, therefore, had many reasons for his faith. God had shown him his protection in the past, so David believed God would protect him in the future. David's belief was not weak or uncertain. This is evident because David refused the armor that Saul offered; he did not need the protection that men rely on. He did not take the impressive weaponry that was offered, rather only a sling and some stones. To all who were observing, this probably looked foolish, or even suicidal. So it was not just a little faith that David had. David's faith allowed him to enter a situation of seemingly certain death and emerge victorious.

IS THERE A CAUSE TODAY?

Please think about and discuss this a moment with the class.

What do you see as the Lord's cause today? How can you take up the cause?

David knew there was a cause for doing God's will, and that tak-

ing it up was the work of God's chosen people. In David's time, those people were members of the nation of Israel. Is this still true today? In the New Testament it is clear that anyone who believes in God through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ is a child of God. Jesus says in Matthew 12:50, "For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." Therefore, God's chosen people may come from countless different geographical areas but they share the same belief.

What was your answer as to the Lord's cause today? Look at Matthew 28:19-20, probably a familiar passage, sometimes called the Great Commission. This cause, this job, was given to the Lord's people, specifically his church. The cause is to teach all nations (that is, everyone on earth, from third-world tribes to your next-door neighbors) about God, and to baptize them - and baptism can only be performed on those who truly believe (see Acts 8:36-37).

Discuss ways that your church is trying to fulfill the Great Commission.

This is the cause of the Lord's church. However, not every saved person belongs to a church. Individually, what is your cause for the Lord? In Mark 8:34, Jesus says, "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." This verse is a direct instruction to those who want to follow God. What does it mean to take up your cross? Jesus did not say, "Take up your pen and paper." He did not say, "Take up your suitcases." He did not say, "Take up your worldly wealth." When Jesus took up his cross, he was carrying it toward the sacrifice of his life on earth, and it is the cross he instructs us to take up. We are to symbolically sacrifice our lives on earth in order to follow him. Jesus did not mean we are to seek out death; as Paul says in Philippians 1:21, to live is Christ, that is, what Christ wants.

The life we must sacrifice is our worldly life. Everyone has excuses for not following Jesus. In Luke 9:59-62, one man needs to say goodbye to his loved ones; another, to bury his father. Jesus did not accept those excuses any more than he accepts ours today. In Matthew 10:34, Jesus says he did not come to bring peace, but a sword - his cause is not easy. But we are able to take it up. In Philippians 4:13, Paul says he can do all things through Christ's strength. Paul had that much faith; so must we.

Where does our faith come from? David knew that God would help him, because God had in the past. Our situation is no different. God has helped us in the past, as well; if you have repented and God has forgiven you, if you have felt the peace of

his salvation, therein lies the assurance you need, and the source of your faith. God did not let you down in your time of greatest need, the need of salvation from eternal punishment. Your needs in this world are far smaller, and God is both willing and able to provide for them.

GET READY

If you have the faith to take up the Lord's cause, you must get ready and go. David put off the armor of man, taking only a sling and stones. What armor will you take? In Ephesians 6:11-18, Paul describes the whole armor of God. Do you possess this armor?

What are you waiting for?