



Theme Thoughts

What makes a hero? Everyone, no matter what his age, seems to have a hero—someone he looks up to and admires. A great deal of a person's behavior can be traced to the figure he or she has chosen as a role model. Many of your students are in a period of transition. Some of them are facing the challenge of growing as a Christian. These lessons have been structured with the thought of helping them face this challenge head-on by giving them examples of people in the Bible who exemplified characteristics that would be good to pattern after.

We will be studying about heroes found in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, including our greatest Hero—Jesus.

These lessons will cover some of the women in the Bible as well as the men. Elisabeth's faith, Deborah's confidence, the self-denial of the widow of Zarephath, and the perseverance of the woman who touched the hem of Jesus' garment are wonderful examples of feminine heroes we will be learning about.

The other lessons will cover Zacharias' faith, the obedience of Joseph (Jesus' earthly father), John the Baptist's fearless witnessing, Gideon's example of courage, Caleb's determination to wholly follow the Lord, the persecution of Stephen, Ananias' determination to serve God, and Elisha's willing service.

Our aim is that with the concluding lesson, which summarizes this quarter on choosing the right kind of heroes, your students will have learned which character qualities make someone a real hero. We pray that they themselves will want to become good examples for someone else to follow.

Lesson 66

TEXT Luke 1:5-25,57-66

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES Jeremiah 32:17,27; Matthew 19:26; Mark 10:27

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to relate how a miracle took place in the lives of Elisabeth and Zacharias, and how this miracle was used to enlighten others.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER With God all things are possible. — Matthew 19:26

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH The things which are impossible with men are possible with God. — Luke 18:27

**ANSWER
TITLE:** **It Took a Miracle**

**SEARCH
TITLE:** **Elisabeth and Zacharias**

REFERENCE INFORMATION

Zacharias was of the tribe of Levi, of the lineage of Aaron. He was a priest of the course of Abia. During King David's reign the priests were divided into twenty-four courses for their duties in the Temple. The eighth course was given to Abijah, known as Abia. Zacharias served at the Temple in Jerusalem twice a year, for about a week each time. He was unsympathetic to the comfortable, power-loving Sadducee party of priests in Jerusalem.

Elisabeth was the wife of Zacharias, and she, too, was of the lineage of Aaron, the priestly tribe of Levi. They lived in the hill country of Judea. She was a woman of unusual piety, faith, and spiritual gifts. Luke, who alone tells the story, appreciated the significant role of women in the history of redemption, and emphasized the agency of the Holy Spirit in the life of Elisabeth.

YOUR OPENER

Elisabeth and Zacharias

TEXT: Luke 1:5-25,57-66

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: Jeremiah 32:17,27; Matthew 19:26; Mark 10:27

KEY VERSE: The things which are impossible with men are possible with God. — Luke 18:27

RESPONSES

1. Verse 6 of the text reveals that they were both righteous before God, and blameless. As your students discuss this, bring out why it is important to follow the commandments of God—because that places them in a position to receive the blessings He has promised.

2. He doubted the angel, and because of this his speech was taken from him. Develop this response by asking how the students should respond to instructions or promises from God, and what the consequences might be if they do not obey.

3. Zacharias received his speech. Discuss with your class how Elisabeth wanted the child to be called John. When Zacharias was asked about this, he wrote, saying, "His name is John." Zacharias' speech was restored immediately.

4. He praised God. The point to be developed in this discussion should be the importance of praising God in all things when He does the "impossible," be it salvation, healing, etc.

It was the evident intention of the writers of the Gospels to show that Christianity had a supernatural origin. Heavenly evidence was given to prove that the Event of the Ages was at hand. Jesus was born of a virgin. His forerunner, John, was born of a woman who had been barren and was past the age of childbearing. Both of these events are an impossibility with man, but as the Word declares, "with God nothing shall be impossible" (Luke 1:37).

1. In reference to our text, what do we know about the spiritual condition of Zacharias and Elisabeth?

2. What was Zacharias' reaction to the message from the angel? Because of this, what happened to Zacharias?

3. What was the miracle that accompanied the birth of John? What brought this miracle about?

4. What was the first thing Zacharias did when his tongue was loosed? How can we follow his example in this?

3

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

5. List some other Biblical instances where God did the impossible.

6. In verse 58, what was the reaction of those around Elisabeth when John was born? Draw a parallel between this verse and the reaction among church friends, families, etc. when God works a miracle among us. Name specific examples if possible.

7. What are some things that might seem "impossible" to man?

8. God works out even the little details in our lives. Describe a situation in your life where God intervened for you.

9. How can recognizing the smaller things that God has done for us help us when the bigger problems come along?

5. This list from your students could include: the closing of mouths of the lions in Daniel's time, helping David fight the lion and the bear, and also fighting Goliath. In the New Testament we could include the healing of the blind, restoring life to the widow's son, healing all that came unto Him. In the discussion it could be brought out that thinking and knowing these, we have a Biblical foundation for believing Jesus can do the impossible in our day also. Some references are Genesis 18:13,14; Mark 9:23; 10:27; Hebrews 13:8.

6. They rejoiced with her. The point of this question is to emphasize how believers rejoice together when they see God work a miracle. Allow students time to cite specific examples of recent answers to prayer.

7. Healing, salvation of a hardened sinner, cure of alcoholism or use of tobacco, and release from drugs, may be some of the answers you will receive. Point out that the instantaneous, miracle-working power of God does bring dramatic changes. This might be a time to bring someone to your class with a true story of God's intervention.

8. Help the students to recognize that even everyday situations in their lives can be miracles, and that God should receive the credit.

9. As your students talk over this question, help them to see how one experience can be a building block for another, increasing their faith.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

How would you feel if an angel appeared to you? How would you know it was an angel?

How are God's promises different from man's?

If we don't believe God's promises, does that mean they won't happen? Explain.

Have you ever had a miracle take place in your life? Tell about it.

In what way are God's promises contingent on faith and obedience?

What was God's purpose for the miracle in the lives of Zacharias and Elisabeth? Why do you suppose God chose them?

What second miracle did God perform at the birth of John—or immediately following?

What other incidents in the Bible can you relate where God did the impossible?

What is the biggest miracle in the life of every Christian?

In our ANSWER story, what was the miracle God performed?

Can you tell of any real-life examples of healing like the girl in our ANSWER story?

THINGS TO DO

Wrap or tie two or three of your fingers together. Then try to use a pencil, tie a shoe, or do some other simple task requiring dexterity of the fingers. Liken your difficulty to unbelief. It is difficult for us to be successful Christians if we are hampered by unbelief.

The Bible tells us that God cares for us. He knows the things we need: food, clothing, a place to live, love, etc. Some things seem impossible for us but with God all things are possible. Using the letters in MIRACLE as beginning letters (or have each student use his own name), list things that we might need that sometimes seem to be out of reach for us. Remember, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

Make a Hero Tree to be used throughout this quarter on Bible Heroes. You can use a real tree or make one from construction paper. Hang symbols on the tree that represent all the heroes you will be studying. You may hang the symbols on all at once and refer each week to the














person you are studying, or you may prefer to hang a new symbol on the tree each week. Suggested symbols:
 Elisabeth and Zacharias — Temple
 Joseph — Hammer
 Jesus — Manger
 John — Dove or locust
 Deborah — Bee (see meaning of name)
 Gideon — Fleece
 Caleb — Grapes
 Widow — Oil and flour containers
 Stephen — Stones
 Woman — White garment
 Ananias — Clean heart
 Elisha — Mantle

Bring a name book to class. Look up the name *John* and tell your students the meaning of that name—"Jehovah has been gracious." Try to find each of your students' names (or their equivalent) in the book and share the meanings with the class. In some cases you may want to expand on the meaning. Tell how their names can have a spiritual meaning. How did the choosing of this name, John, show that God had performed another miracle?

Answers for ANSWER

God Gives Light

God gives us light, or understanding, when we read His Word and follow Him. How much light did you receive from the lesson this week? Read these statements. If the statement is true, circle the lighted bulb; if it is false, circle the dark bulb.

	Herod was king.
	Zacchaeus was the name of the priest.
	Elisabeth was the priest's wife.
	Zacharias burned incense in the Temple.
	The angel of the Lord was standing on the altar.
	The angel told Zacharias to name the baby John the Baptist.
	The baby would be filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb.
	The angel's name was Michael.
	Zacharias could not see because he didn't believe the angel.
	When the baby was born everyone thought his name should be Gabriel.
	Elisabeth said his name was John.
	Zacharias wrote, "His name is John."
	After Zacharias wrote the name he could talk again.

Lesson 67

TEXT Matthew 1:18-25

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES 1 Samuel 12:15; Isaiah 1:19; Matthew 7:21; John 13:17; Acts 5:29; Revelation 22:14

OBJECTIVE The students will recognize that just as Joseph was obedient to God’s directions, we, too, must obey as we learn His will for our lives.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it. — Luke 11:28

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. — Proverbs 8:34

ANSWER TITLE: **An Example of Obedience**

SEARCH TITLE: **Joseph, the Earthly Father of Jesus**

REFERENCE INFORMATION

The word *espoused* refers to a marriage agreement similar to engagement, but it was as binding under Jewish law as marriage. Thus the virgin Mary’s pregnancy would appear as a breach or violation of her espousal to Joseph, when in reality she was with Child of the Holy Ghost.

Being a carpenter, Joseph undoubtedly taught Jesus the trade. In Mark 6:3 Jesus is referred to as “the carpenter.” Matthew 13:55 refers to Jesus as “the carpenter’s son,” and lists his brothers as “James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas.” Verse 56 includes “his sisters.” So we know that Joseph and Mary parented a rather large family.

At one point, John tells us that Jesus’ brothers did not believe in Him (John 7:5). However, James later became the distinguished leader of the Jerusalem church, and is believed to be the author of the Epistle which goes by his name. Judas (or Juda) was probably the author of the Epistle of Jude. Little is known of Joses and Simon.

Joseph was mentioned briefly during Christ’s public life, while Mary and Jesus’ brethren appear frequently. Christ, on the cross, deemed it necessary to commend her to the care of one of the disciples, which seems to indicate that Joseph was not living at that time.

YOUR OPENER

Joseph, the Earthly Father of Jesus

TEXT: Matthew 1:18-25

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: 1 Samuel 12:15; Isaiah 1:19; Matthew 7:21; John 13:17; Acts 5:29; Revelation 22:14

KEY VERSE: Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. — Proverbs 8:34

RESPONSES

1. Joseph was a just man (verse 19). Help the students to discuss the word *just*, and to see that in order to be just they must be justified. Romans 1:17; 3:23,24; 5:1

2. The students should see that by Joseph's obedience to God's Law concerning circumcision (Genesis 17:10), he was showing evidence of being a just man.

3. Encourage students to read the Scriptures they found. These will be Matthew 1:20,24; 2:12,13,19-21. In the discussion bring out how Joseph was prompt in his obedience. Continue with the thought that when one puts off doing what God has said, it sometimes becomes harder to do.

4. Have someone read Isaiah 7:14. Discuss with your students the fact that when the angel said, "thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins," Joseph realized the truth of Isaiah 7:14—Mary was the virgin spoken of, and Jesus was Emmanuel, meaning "God with us."

Obeying a stop sign may save your physical life. Reading and obeying God's Word will save your spiritual life. No doubt one of the reasons Joseph was selected out of a world of men to become Jesus' earthly father was that he could recognize and then obey God's command.

1. What Scripture in our text indicates that Joseph was a man of God? Explain.

2. Name one thing that was done which shows that Joseph honored the Law of God. See Luke 2:21-24.

3. The Scriptures record in Matthew 1 and 2 at least three times when Joseph heard God's directions and then was obedient. Name them.

4. When do you think Joseph understood what Isaiah 7:14 meant?

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

5. In verse 20, what, in the natural, might have made it difficult for Joseph to obey the command of the angel?

6. It would have been a different story if Joseph had not obeyed God. Give a situation of your own experience when obedience paid off. Now jot down and discuss the possible consequences of disobedience concerning the situation you have noted.

7. Which of the following prevented Moses from entering into the promised land? See Numbers 20:8,11.

- (a) speaking to the rock
- (b) not smiting the rock enough times
- (c) smiting the rock
- (d) disobedience

8. Which of the following saved Noah from the Flood?

- (a) his family
- (b) the ark
- (c) obedience
- (d) all of the preceding

9. In our daily lives, obedience is of utmost importance. What did Jesus say were the traits of a wise man? a foolish man? See Matthew 7:24-27.

5. Help the group to realize that by human understanding, it would have been a difficult situation for Joseph to have taken Mary as his wife, considering that not only was she already with child, but in addition, that child which was conceived in her was of the Holy Ghost. Encourage the students to cite specific examples of situations in their lives where it might be difficult to obey, but in obedience they receive God's blessings.

6. Allow students to cite the examples they have written, with the thought of comparing results of obedience with disobedience.

7. Some of your students may respond with answer (c), which is the action Moses took. However, (c), or smiting the rock, was actually only an outward manifestation of (d), disobedience. The result of this action, the fact that Moses was unable to go into the Promised Land, should reveal to the students the seriousness of disobeying God's commands.

8. Again, this question may elicit a response of letter (b). However, it was (c), or obedience, which really saved Noah. With this question your students should realize that obedience always brings God's approval.

9. Help the students to understand that "hearers" must be "doers." These words of Jesus show the results of obedience and disobedience, and in the discussion it should be brought out that God demands obedience in our lives today.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

How does this lesson show that Joseph believed God's Word?

Why are you happier when you obey your parents? Is this the same as obeying God?

What is the difference between hearing and obeying?

Why is it so vitally important to learn to obey parents, teachers, ministers, officers, and others, even when you may not understand the reason?

What does the word *just* mean? Relate that to being justified.

What is the meaning of the name of Jesus? Why was He sent to this earth? Describe what you think may have been the feelings of Joseph when he realized the magnitude of what the angel told him.

What was the difference in the appearance of the angel to Joseph, and Gabriel's appearance to Mary? do you think God gives visions or dreams to people today? Why or why not?

What might have been the outcome had Joseph not obeyed the instructions given by the angel? How does this reveal the importance of obedience?

In the ANSWER story what question did Jon ask of his father regarding Joseph, and where did his father find the answer? What does that tell us about finding answers to our questions, or solutions to our problems?

THINGS TO DO

Tell the class that if they are asked by their parents not to touch a hot stove and they disobey, it may leave a scar on them. Liken this to the sins of the world and how they can leave scars on their lives. How much better it is to obey in the first place.

Disobedience doesn't always mean something terrible will happen. Many times though, it does mean we will miss out on a blessing. In Joseph's case, God could have found another man to become the earthly father of His Son but Joseph would have lost that blessing. What about the servants at the Marriage at Cana? Or any of the other happenings we read of in the Bible? Ask your students to remember times they disobeyed. What might have happened if they had obeyed?

Have a question and answer period with your students. You write out situations that pertain to obedience on different colors of paper, fold them in half, and put them in a wide-mouthed jar or another clear container of your choice. Have your students draw the situations from the

jar and tell you the correct response to the situation and what the results might be if they choose wrong.

Simple examples:

Red light — cross anyway — accident

Told to be home early — decide not to obey — miss surprise party.

Cinquain (sin-cane) is a type of poetry. It is written in this form:

1st line — one word — topic

2nd line — two words — description of topic

3rd line — three words — action by topic

4th line — four words — feeling or statement of topic

5th line — synonym for topic

Have your students write or help you write a Cinquain about obedience. It can be on the subject itself or about an obedient person. Below is an example of Joseph:

Joseph
Mary's husband
Obeyed the Lord
Reared God's only son
Nazarene

Give a sandbox object lesson on Matthew 7:24, illustrating that the obedient one stands in testing times because he hears and obeys.

Answers for ANSWER

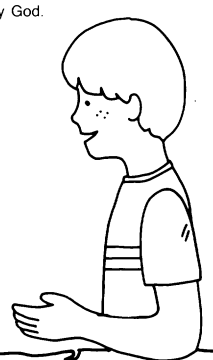
Obedience Brings Happiness!

Are you happy to obey God's directions? Joseph was! Use the secret code and fill in the blank spaces. You'll find a promise for those who obey God.

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Luke 11:28

Lesson 68

TEXT Isaiah 9:6,7; John 1:1-5,14; Hebrews 13:8

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to explain who Christ was, is, and that He always will be, using the Scriptures as their authority.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. — John 1:14

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. — Revelation 1:8

ANSWER TITLE: **Why Can't Christmas Last Forever?**

SEARCH TITLE: **Jesus, the Infinite Son of God**

Reference Information

Jesus is included in the opening words of Genesis where we read, "In the beginning God created . . ." John 1:1-4, 14 bear witness that Jesus has always been (existed), and that He had a hand in the creation of the universe. In John 17:5, Jesus refers to the glory He had with the Father before the world was. Jesus is called the Word. He is God, the son.

The life of Christ, as ordinarily understood, embraces the years our Lord spent on this earth, as described in the four Gospels. His full career spans the ages and invites reflection on its several aspects. Fundamental to the various "I AM" sayings of Jesus is His assertion of absolute existence. Therefore it is reasonable to think of Him as belonging to eternity. Scripture, in fact, affirms His preexistence, and does so in terms of fellowship with the Father.

By the incarnation, Christ was made in the likeness of man in order to reveal God to men in a way they could grasp, to become their Savior by ransoming them from their sins, and to deal sympathetically with their needs.

The present ministry of Christ is being carried on in Heaven, where He represents the saints before the Throne of God.

One purpose of the incarnation was not achieved during the earthly ministry of our Lord, but is reserved for His second coming. His kingly rule will then be introduced following His work as judge. After the Millennial Kingdom, Christ will enter with His people upon the blessedness of the eternal state which will be unmarred by the inroads of sin or death.

YOUR OPENER

Jesus, the Infinite Son of God

TEXT: Isaiah 9:6,7; John 1:1-5,14; Hebrews 13:8

KEY VERSE: I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. — Revelation 1:8

RESPONSES

1. By reading the verse in 2 Peter, your students should conclude that the Holy Ghost revealed to Isaiah the events that he prophesied. You might wish to bring out to your class that Isaiah was not the only prophet who prophesied regarding the birth of Christ. There were over 60 prophecies concerning Christ's birth, His life, and His resurrection. More than 12 prophets spoke these prophecies, and their predictions all meshed, even though they were said at different times.

2. "In the beginning" refers to the beginning of this world. Bring out in the discussion that before anything was formed, Jesus was there as part of the Godhead. Our text states that "without him was not any thing made that was made."

3. Give time for the students to give their explanations. In discussion point out the fact that the world as a whole did not recognize Him as the "Light of the world" at the time of His birth. The world still is in darkness because of the sins of the people.

4. To doubting Thomas, the way and the truth; to Martha in her bereavement, the resurrection; to the multitudes He promised everlasting life. Guide your students' thoughts to incorporate these attributes into their understanding of who Christ is. Help them realize that these promises were more than a code of teaching for the early disciples, but also a bright hope for our future.

In a few days we will be commemorating the birth of Jesus. To the one who really understands what that means to the world, it is a special time of rejoicing as eternal salvation depends on that wonderful Gift of God (John 3:16). Our text brings out some other remarkable truths concerning Jesus, in that He existed prior to His birth (John 1:1-3), and that one day He will establish a Kingdom that will never end. See Isaiah 9:7.

1. The Child spoken of by the Prophet Isaiah in our text was the earthly manifestation of the Second Person of the eternal Trinity, Jesus. How could the prophet know about the birth of this Child over 700 years before it came to pass? See 2 Peter 1:21.

2. In the first verse of the Gospel of John, to what do you think "In the beginning" refers? What part did Jesus actually have in the creation of the universe?

3. Explain in your own words the meaning of John 1:5.

4. When Jesus said, "I am . . . the life," what other attributes did He add to that statement in the following Scriptures?

John 14:6

John 11:25

John 5:24

7

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

5. In our key verse, the statement is made that the Lord is, was, and is to come. We have explored Biblical references to the fact that He was with God at the time of Creation, thus establishing that He was. Name some ways that it can be proved that Christ *is* alive today.

6. Having established that Christ is and was, on what can we base our belief that Christ *will* be in the future? Use Mark 16:19, Revelation 1:4-7, and any other Scriptures you can find to substantiate your answer.

7. According to Romans 1:3,4 Jesus Christ "was made of the seed of David according to the flesh," but was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness." What stated truth in the verses mentioned gives additional proof of Christ's being eternal?

8. In our text (John 1:14) we read that the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. Explain what this means to you.

9. In reading our text we have learned the truths concerning Jesus prior to His birth, and of His presence with us today. What promise do we find regarding His coming Kingdom?

10. In knowing by the authority of God's Word that Jesus Christ was, is, and always will be, how should we act or react to this knowledge? See Hebrews 1:10-14 and 2:1-4.

11. In what ways has the Lord been these things to you?

- (a) Wonderful
- (b) Counsellor
- (c) The mighty God
- (d) The everlasting Father
- (e) The Prince of Peace

5. Your students should be able to come up with a number of suggestions. Their ideas will likely include the fact that He is still saving souls and transforming lives, He is still working miracles of healing, answering prayers in other details of daily living, etc.

6. Your students should be able to see that Scriptures give clear evidence that Christ **will be** in the future. Mark tells us that He sits on the right hand of God. John received the revelation from Jesus Christ himself that He will come in the clouds and every eye shall see Him. If we believe in the veracity of the Scriptures, we are assured in our hearts that Christ is eternal.

7. The truth is recounted that Jesus was resurrected from the dead. Jesus told His disciples that He had power to lay down His life and power to take it up again. See John 10:18. No other person in all of history could make and fulfill such a claim. Does this not prove His eternal nature? Whenever Jesus raised one from the dead, the people recognized that the power of Deity was being manifested. Does not the fact of Jesus' resurrection demonstrate that He was the son of God while He ministered on earth and that He ever lives in Heaven above? Our Christian hope is: "Because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19).

8. As your students give their answers, help them to realize the greatness of God's love in sending Christ to this world, and bring out that our eternal salvation depended upon His coming.

9. Our text in Isaiah reveals that the lord will establish a Kingdom that will never end. In discussion, the knowledge can be brought out that this Kingdom shall be a time of peace as well as the right judgment and justice even forever.

10. Your students should come to grips with the fact that it is the responsibility of each one to worship and serve God when the knowledge of who Christ is comes across his pathway. The knowledge of this fact is not enough, but how one applies this knowledge to his life is what makes the difference.

11. Allow students to share their answers. Conclude the lesson by bringing out that He wants to be all of these in each life today.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

Did Jesus exist before His birth in Bethlehem? Explain.

How could Jesus have taken part in the Creation when He wasn't born yet?

How long does the Bible say His Kingdom will last?

Why do you think He came as a baby?

When do you think He will set up His Kingdom on earth?

What are some names given to Christ in the Bible? How do they relate to His personality?

Why did Jesus come to earth?

In our ANSWER story, Josh decided it was good that some things don't last forever. Do you agree? Why or why not?

How could the prophet Isaiah know about the birth of Jesus hundreds of years before He was born?

What is the meaning of "the Word" in John 1:1?

What is the importance of Christ's being unchanging? How do you feel about people who say one thing today and something else tomorrow, or one thing to you and something else to another? How important is stability? In God? In people?

THINGS TO DO

Have a pretty bassinet or a picture of one to show things needed for a tiny baby. Show a wooden manger with straw and white cloth to portray Jesus' humble birth. Bring out the point that He could have come with wealth but chose a humble birth.

Jesus is the Word. He has always been and will forever be. Help your students to learn and recite many of the names in the Bible that refer to Jesus. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament are full of them. Have a list made up before class and be sure to include the text where the names can be found. You can usually find a complete list at any Bible store or in a Thompson Bible. Here are a few examples to start with: Prophet (Deuteronomy 18:18), Cornerstone (Psalm 118:22), A Branch (Isaiah 4:2), Rock of Offence (Isaiah 8:14), Be-

loved Son (Matthew 3:17), Messiah (Matthew 11:3), Messenger (Matthew 21:37), Master (Luke 5:5), The Word (John 1:1), True Vine (John 15:1), King of kings (1 Timothy 6:15), Morning Star (Revelation 22:16).

Have your students help you make a time line of the life of Jesus. Include major events such as:

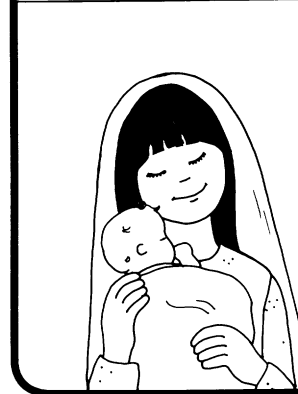
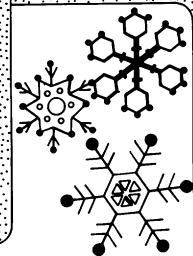
Birth
Talking to the priests in the Temple
Baptism by John
Sermon on the Mount
Five thousand fed
Christ transfigured
Raising of Lazarus
Ride into Jerusalem
Before Pilate
Crucifixion
Ascension

Answer for ANSWER

What Is Christmas?

These squares will help you find out what Christmas is. Choose a number from one to three. Start with the squares on the top row. On the lines provided, print all the letters in the squares with that number.

1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	
TH	GO	A	E	D	SA	BI	SE	VI	
2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	
N	OR	RTH	T	WA	DA	JE	S	Y	
3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	
BO	O	SU	RN	-	F	S	CH	JE	DO
1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	
SU	WN	RI	S	T	ST	CH	O	TH	
2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	
E	E	R	AR	LO	IS	TH	RD	T	



CHRISTMAS:

1: The birthday of
Jesus Christ

2: God sent Jesus
down to earth

3: A Savior was
born - Christ
the Lord

Lesson 69

TEXT John 1:15-30

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES Proverbs 11:30; Daniel 12:3; James 5:20

OBJECTIVE The students will be made aware of and be able to tell why one of the greatest responsibilities of a Christian is to point sinners to Christ.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord. — John 1:23

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear. — 1 Peter 3:15

ANSWER TITLE: A Witness Without Words
SEARCH TITLE: John the Baptist

Reference Information

This lesson takes place in the summer of 26 A.D., the year John began his ministry at the age of thirty. Tiberius was the Caesar (Caesar being the title taken by each of the Roman emperors).

John the Baptist was ordained to be a Nazarite from his birth (Luke 1:15). A Nazarite was a man who made a vow to do some special service for God. They were not to drink wine, cut their hair, or come into contact with a dead body.

He dwelt by himself in the wild and thinly-populated region west of the Dead Sea. His dress was that of the old prophets, a garment woven of camel's hair (2 Kings 1:8 and Matthew 3:4) attached around the body by a leather girdle. A girdle was worn by both men and women to hold the looser garments. The common girdle was made of

leather, a finer one was made of linen, embroidered with silk and frequently studded with gold, pearls, or other precious stones. Today we would compare a girdle to a wide sash or belt.

His food was of the desert, locusts (Leviticus 11:22) and wild honey (Psalm 81:16). Locusts have been used as a food source from the earliest times. Some people dried their locusts in the sun and ate them with milk. The most common method was to pull off the legs and wings and roast them in an iron pan. Then they were thrown into a bag, and eaten like parched corn. Sometimes they were ground and then mixed with flour and water and made into cakes. They could be eaten roasted with salt, smoked, boiled, stewed, or fried in butter. They resemble shrimp in taste. At the present time they are eaten only by the poorest of people.

(continued on page 22)

YOUR OPENER

John the Baptist

TEXT: John 1:15-30

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: Proverbs 11:30; Daniel 12:3; James 5:20

KEY VERSE: But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear. — 1 Peter 3:15

RESPONSES

1. Gabriel announced John’s coming birth. John’s mission was to announce the coming of the Messiah. The point of this question is to bring out that John the Baptist was a special man with a special call.

2. While John preached repentance, within our text he was pointing to Christ as the Lamb of God (verse 29). Hopefully, the students’ responses to the second part of the question will bring out that because Jesus bore the sins of the world upon Himself on the cross, our sins are forgiven and taken away when we repent of them. Deeper study could include a discussion of the two goats offered by the Children of Israel (Leviticus 16:5-22). This discussion should bring out that Christ fulfills the offering of both goats—one was made the sin offering and the other became the scape-goat. The priest laid both his hands upon the head of this second goat and confessed all the iniquities, transgressions, and sins of the Children of Israel. The goat was then taken into the wilderness and let go, thus becoming a symbol of taking away the sins of the world.

3. John the Baptist’s chief mission on earth was to **tell of the coming of Jesus**. In other words, he was to be a **forerunner** of Christ. John even witnessed unselfishly to **his own disciples**, etc. The point of this exercise is to emphasize that John’s desire to point people to Christ was so strong that he would even subjugate his own personal feelings in order to do this. Discuss with your students that, contrary to natural human inclination, John discouraged his disciples’ attachment to him, and encouraged them to follow Christ instead. See also John 3:28-30.

4. Who art thou? What then? Art thou Elias? Art thou that prophet? What sayest thou of thyself? The discussion stemming from these questions can further develop the thought presented in question 3. John would not even say his name, and pointedly avoided any type of personal recognition. He characterized himself only as a “voice of one crying in the wilderness.”

The time—God’s time—had arrived! The Messiah, Jesus, was about to be revealed to the world. People everywhere were groaning for deliverance from sin and God had now sent His “only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in his should not perish, but have everlasting life.” But all the smallest details foretold in God’s plan were to be accomplished. Isaiah 40:3 and Malachi 3:1 had spoken of a specific person who was first to come on the scene as the forerunner of Christ. He was John the Baptist.

1. Six months before Mary was told she was to give birth to the Son of God, who announced to Zacharias the birth of John the Baptist, and what was John’s mission in life to be? See Luke 1:13-19.

2. Within this lesson’s text, what was the theme of John the Baptist’s remarks? Relate this theme to Isaiah 53:4-7, and tell in your own words what taking away the sin of the world might mean.

3. John the Baptist’s chief mission on earth was . In other words, he was to be a of the coming Christ. John even witnessed unselfishly to and said, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” See 1:29 and 36.

4. What are the five questions the priests and Levites from Jerusalem asked John, and what answer did he give to each?

9

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

5. What did Jesus say about John the Baptist? See Luke 7:28

6. The word “witness” occurs at least seventeen times in the Gospel of John. Using a dictionary, define the word *witness*. How did this apply to John the Baptist? See John 1:34.

7. How does witnessing apply to Christians today? See Acts 1:8; 2:32.

8. What lesson could we learn concerning our witnessing for Christ from the fact that John said he was just a “voice”?

9. Think of several People you know who need a Christian witness. Then pray and purpose to seek the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit in witnessing to them and leading them to the Lord.

Thought Provoker: If you were to be paid \$10,000 for each soul you helped to win for Christ, how much harder would you be working at witnessing for Him?

5. Jesus said there was no greater prophet than John. Discussion of this question could profitably bring out that Jesus said that John’s ministry, great as it was, was still under the dispensation of the Law and the prophets. However, those who believe the message of Jesus Christ have a greater advantage, being members of the Kingdom of God. In the Book of Hebrews we are told of some of the greater privileges and opportunities the New Testament saints have: better revelation, better hope, better Priesthood, better covenant, better promises, better sacrifices, better possessions, and better country.

6. Among the definitions of the word *witness* are: “attestation of a fact or event: testimony”; “one who has personal knowledge of something”; and “to bear witness to one’s religious convictions.” John the Baptist was very faithful to bear record to all who would listen, that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God.

7. Allow time for the students to give their answers. These will probably express the importance of witnessing for Christ, which is one of the greatest responsibilities that a Christian has. How important is the baptism of the Holy Ghost in helping people point sinners to Christ? Discuss that while they receive a measure of the spirit when they are saved and sanctified, it is vital to receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost in order to become more effective witnesses.

8. The answers to this question will probably be varied, but the discussion should center around the thought that John was not interested in being seen or honored, but that he wanted people to repent and to know that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand. This should be the goal of all Christians— not to be seen of men, but rather that Christ might be seen through them. It is important that the life we live speaks of Christ. At the same time, we should be ready always “to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you” (1 Peter 3:15).

9. This could be an opportunity for the entire class to indicate, perhaps by raised hands, that they have someone on their hearts whom they wish to see saved. The class could join together in a few moments of quiet prayer for those on the hearts of the class members. This hopefully will create a burden for those who need salvation.

YOUR WRAP-UP

Reference Information (continued from page 19)

John came to the banks of the lower Jordan River to be the Elijah of the prophecy in Luke 1:17. The whole land was stirred by the preaching of this strange, rugged, fearless man of God proclaiming the Messiah and repentance for everyone. About a year after he baptized Jesus at Bethabara, a place near the Jordan River and about twelve miles south of the Sea of Galilee, he was imprisoned by Herod, Tetrarch (or ruler) of Galilee. Assuming that John began his ministry shortly before he baptized Jesus, it lasted about a year and a half. Thirty years of seclusion. A year and a half of public preaching. A year and four months in prison. Then the curtain. This is a brief summary of the man who ushered in the Savior of the world, and of whom Jesus said there had not been born a greater (Matthew 11:11). John did no miracles (John 10:41).

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

- What kind of man do you think John was?
- Name one outstanding spiritual trait of John. How would development of this trait help you in your Christian witnessing?
- What does this word *witness* mean?
- What are the spiritual requirements for becoming an effective witness for Christ?
- What did Jesus say that tells us of the greatness of this man of God?

- Why was John sent to the world?
- What were some things John taught the people?
- In the ANSWER story, how did Brad show that he was a Christian?

THINGS TO DO

Take a stopped watch to class. Point out that it looks fine, all parts are there. It has only one problem—it's not running. Those who are not saved are like this watch. They are not fulfilling the purpose for which they were made. It is our duty as Christians to tell others about Christ.

Role play the events of Luke 3:3-14, choosing class members to portray John the Baptist, the Pharisees and Sadducees, the publicans (tax collectors), and the soldiers.

Bring a newspaper to class. Read several headlines illustrating that most of the news of the day is not good news. Point out that *Gospel* means "good news," and it is our duty to publish it.

Using the blackboard or overhead projector, compile a

class prayer list. With the aid of the students, determine methods of witnessing to some of these people. Perhaps some are ill and can be visited in the hospital or at home. Pray for the direction and power of the Holy Spirit in motivating the class to witness.

What we do as Christians should be to point people to Jesus and not be building ourselves up in the eyes of others. John was this sort of man. Being a witness for Christ was John's goal. Make an acrostic puzzle for your class to complete. (An acrostic is an arrangement of words in which certain letters line up to make a word.) Use the word WITNESS as your main word. Think of words that describe ways of witnessing and fit them into the main word. Sample puzzle:

W o r s h i p
 w i l l i n g n e s s
 t e s t i f y
 p e r s o n a l w o r k
 l o v e
 g o o d d e e d s
 v i s i t a t i o n

Answers for ANSWER

Witness for Jesus

Follow the arrows to solve this maze. When you make a poor choice you will run into a dead end. When you come to THE END you will have made a complete story and some good choices.

START

So I quit.

I told her my name.

I smiled at her.

A new girl came to school today.

I felt horrible.

The other kids made fun of me for being nice.

I asked the Lord to help me.

I wouldn't talk to her.

I didn't talk to her anymore.

She didn't say "Thank you."

I loaned her a pencil.

I had a bad day.

We went outside to take a walk.

I decided she was shy.

I asked her to have lunch with me.

She said, "Yes."

I told her what a nice kid I am!

I told her to ignore them.

The other kids pointed and laughed at us.

I ate as quickly as I could.

I lost a friend before I made one.

I asked her about her family.

She didn't go to Sunday school so I asked her to go with me.

Then I left her alone.

She told me she wanted to be my friend.

I asked her to come to my house.

She's coming to Sunday school with me next Sunday!

THE END

Lesson 70

TEXT Judges 4:4-15

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES Judges 4:1-3,16-24; 5:1-31; Psalm 3:6

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to explain why it is true that “if God be for us, who can be against us?”

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid. — Isaiah 12:2

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. — Isaiah 12:2

**ANSWER
TITLE:** **Win the Victory**
**SEARCH
TITLE:** **Deborah**

REFERENCE INFORMATION

After Joshua’s death in about 1426 B.C., God himself was the direct ruler of the twelve tribes, but the people kept turning away from God and going into idolatry. God appointed a total of fifteen judges to rule the Israelites at different times, Deborah being one of them. Her name means “a bee.” She was called “a mother in Israel” (Judges 5:7). She was the fourth judge, and she judged Israel for forty years. Deborah was married to Lapidoth (of which there is nothing written) and held court under a palm tree between Ramah and Bethel in Mount Ephraim (Judges 4:5). She is thought to be more of a prophetess than a judge. She encouraged Barak and together they saved Israel from the tyranny of the Canaanites. (These Canaanites were the same people that Joshua had conquered, but they had become powerful again.)

The battle against the Canaanites was fought along the shores of the Kishon River, which maintains its year-round flow for only the last seven miles. That portion of

the river is watered from the springs at the base of Mount Carmel and from streams of the northeast that enter the Kishon in the plain of Acre. In the rainy season this river becomes swollen and very dangerous (Judges 5:21). It is possible that the iron chariots of the Canaanites became mired in the mud and had to be abandoned, for we read, “Sisera lighted down off his chariot, and fled away on his feet” (Judges 4:15). Thus the Israelites won a decisive victory.

Sisera was a general or captain for King Jabin. He lived at Harosheth which is a town on the northern bank of the Kishon River. He was finally killed by a woman named Jael (Judges 4:17-21).

Barak was the son of Abinoam of Kedesh, who was incited by Deborah to deliver Israel from King Jabin. His name means “lightning.” One reference book calls him a Hebrew chieftain.

YOUR OPENER

Deborah

TEXT: Judges 4:4-15

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: Judges 4:1-3,16-24; 5:1-31; Psalm 3:6

KEY VERSE: Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. — Isaiah 12:2

RESPONSES

1. Deborah was a prophetess and judge in Israel. This means she was God’s spokesperson to the people and settled disputes among the people. Discuss with the class that the judges in early Biblical times were more than just ones who listened to and decided problems, but were responsible for guiding the affairs of the people, by the direction and appointment of God. Their duties included selecting men for warfare, teaching the Law to the people, and acting as leaders in a military capacity. They settled religious and judicial disputes, as well.

2. The students’ responses will probably mention Deborah’s faith in God’s Word, and her courage. Discuss with the class that these attributes were demonstrated as Deborah went with the army into the battle. Her faith and courage were instrumental in the victory that God gave Israel.

3. The students, while reading verse 9, should see Deborah’s courage revealed. This was an inspiration to Barak, as shown in verse 8. Discuss with the students that when one wholly follows the Lord and His Word, that person becomes an example and inspiration to others. A Christian’s willingness to completely perform God’s will often influences others to do likewise.

4. These verses tell a person how to rid his heart from the fear of the Judgment, by receiving the love that God has made possible for us. Your students should see that this does not necessarily mean that one with the love of God in his heart will never experience a moment of anxiety when faced with a fearsome situation. Rather, this knowledge gives a person confidence in the many promises that God has given. “The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?” (Psalm 118:6).

True confidence in God is based upon following God’s Word. False confidence brings defeat, and is based upon an unwarranted use of sacred things, such as the name “Christian.” This actually is the name given to those who wholeheartedly follow the Lord. Today many suffer defeat and have no victory over sin because they are Christians in name only. Just because Israel was Israel did not guarantee their victory over their enemies. They had to wholly follow the Lord in order to have victory, and this is what Deborah did.

1. What was Deborah’s occupation? What did that mean in terms of her civic responsibilities?

2. What characteristics of Deborah made her outstanding? How did the Lord use these characteristics?

3. Which verse shows Deborah was an inspiration to Barak?

4. The opposite of confidence in God is fear. Using 1 John 4:16-18 as a reference, explain how to rid your heart of fear.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

5. In Romans 8:35-39 we read of many things that we might face as we go through life, yet we can be more than conquerors through Him who loves us. How many of these experiences have you gone through? Give an example from your experience.

6. There are things that we must do in order to have a victorious life in Christ, without fear. Using God's Word as a guide, finish the following verses:

When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh . — Proverbs 16:7

Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall . — Psalm 119:165

Be careful [worried] for nothing; let your requests be made know unto God. And the of God, which passeth all . — Philippians 4:6,7

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, : because he . — Isaiah 26:3

7. Listed below are the names of several man and women of the Bible. How does your experience compare with theirs?

Adam and Eve temptation

Cain hatred

Samuel answering the call

Job affliction

Daniel purpose

Paul thorn in the flesh

8. In this lesson we see God intervening for Israel against another nation, and giving them a physical deliverance. Today we do not wrestle against flesh and blood (Ephesians 6:12). What kind of deliverance can God give us? See Ephesians 6:13.

5. Encourage students to cite specific instances, keying in on the thought that none of these circumstances need separate them from Christ. However, probably few students will say that they have actually gone through many of these things. Discussion may lead some to say that they have gone through some sort of distress or persecution or even peril. Some may tell of someone who has had a triumphant death through God's grace. In our country, the saints of this generation have not had to face the hardships of the Early Church. However, God's promises are sure and His grace sufficient if one is called upon to go through any of these situations.

6. The purpose of this exercise is to help the students to realize, through the Scriptures, that there are things they must do in order to have a victorious life in Christ without fear.

7. Encourage your class to talk about the experiences that they have had, compared with those listed. Discussion should be directed toward the positive effects of responding correctly in each of the situations. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Even in Cain's instance, if he had listened to God's admonition, he would have avoided the problems that came upon him.

8. Allow time for students' responses. The discussion should focus on the fact that God gives us spiritual victory over our adversaries. Use this question, combined with the objective, to wrap up the class session.

YOUR WRAP-UP

Supplemental Questions

How can you tell if God is for you?

Why do you think Barak said to Deborah, "If thou wilt go with me, then I will go: but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go"?

Would you say Barak was fearful, brave, young, eager, or willing?

What does "The LORD discomfited Sisera, and all his chariots" mean?

How can we prove that God will still deliver today?

What characteristics of Deborah made her outstanding? How did the Lord use these characteristics?

Which verse shows Deborah as an inspiration to Barak?

In this lesson we see God intervening for Israel against another nation, and giving them a physical deliverance. Today we do not always wrestle against flesh and blood. What kind of deliverance can God give us?

How can each one of us be effective for the Lord?

THINGS TO DO

Stump the Teacher: You become the "student" and let your class ask you questions about this lesson. Your students' questions can and may reveal some areas of misunderstanding.

Explain to your class that although we may never have the opportunity to prove that God will be with us in battle, we can be sure that God will be with us in situations we will face. Have someone come to your class and give a testimony of a dangerous or troublesome time in which the Lord was with him, giving protection or deliverance.

Read to the class our Tract No. 66, Rescued by God From a Watery Grave, Brother Alba Green's testimony.

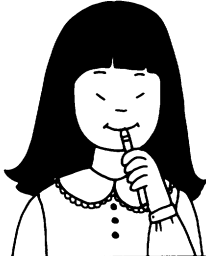
Bring a number of small items to class that people often carry with them for one reason or another: money in case you need to make a phone call, an umbrella in case it rains, a small flashlight in case you need a light somewhere, a pair of folding scissors in case you want to cut out something, etc. Bring out that although people often prepare themselves for little emergencies or problems by taking something with them, many neglect to prepare themselves for the large problems or crises in life by making sure that God is with them. If God is with us, we can face any situation.

Answers for ANSWER

Deborah Trusted God

All the words listed below are from our lesson this week. Find a place in the grid for each of them.

ARMY
IRON
TENT
BARAK
RIVER
ISRAEL
CHARIOTS
PALM TREE
THOUSAND
JUDGEMENT
PROPHETESS



I	S					J	U		C				
A	R	M	Y			D	E	B	O	R	A	H	
A	E					G			R				
P	A	L	M	T	R	E	E			I			
R						M				I	R	O	N
O						R	I	V	E	R			
P						N				T	S		
H						T	E	N	T				
E							B						
T	H	O	U	S	A	N	D						
E										R			
S										A			
S										K			

Lesson 71

TEXT Judges 6:36-40; 7:1-8

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES Psalms 23:1-6; 37:1-17

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to give Biblical proof that if we put our trust completely in God, He will reinforce our courage to face any circumstance.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour. — Judges 6:12

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. — Deuteronomy 31:6

**ANSWER
TITLE:** **On the Way to Victory**
**SEARCH
TITLE:** **Gideon**

Reference Information

Israel had once again forsaken God and was being terrorized by the Midianite robbers (Judges 6:1-5). As before, the people “cried unto the LORD” (Judges 6:6). The Midianites were descendants of Midian, a son of Abraham and his second wife Keturah (Genesis 25:2). They are described as true Arabs and possessed cattle, flocks, and camels. They lived by plunder.

Gideon means “destroyer.” Another name for him was Jerubbaal: “Let Baal plead against him” (Judges 6:32). He was the youngest son of Joash, an undistinguished family from the tribe of Manasseh (Judges 6:15). They lived at Ophrah, a town probably west of Jordan. He was the fifth judge of Israel following Deborah, and thought to be the greatest judge. He judged Israel for forty years and the people wanted to make him their

king which he refused, saying, “I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the LORD shall rule over you” (Judges 8:22,23). It is thought that when the angel of the Lord appeared unto him, he was a grown man with sons. At this time the nomadic Midianites along with the Amalekites were oppressing the Israelites and had been doing so for seven years. The Midianites and Amalekites robbed Israel of everything, thus the reason Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites. He judged Israel about 1222-1182 B.C.

The well of Harod was a spring near Mount Gilboa on the eastern side of the plain of Esdraelon. It is in the same vicinity where King “Saul leaned upon his spear” (2 Samuel 1:6).

(continued on page 30)

YOUR OPENER

Gideon

RESPONSES

1. There were 32,000 men in the original army. God told Gideon to tell those who were fearful and afraid, to return home. As a result, 22,000 men departed from the army. This proclamation was according to the Law of Moses (Deuteronomy 20:8). Discuss with the class that fear, terror, and faintheartedness are as contagious in the ranks of Christian soldiers as they are in any other walk of life. God will remove them. Continue the discussion to include the other reason for God dismissing these men of Gideon's army—that they might be prevented from taking credit unto themselves for the victory that God would give. Men who do not have the moral courage to face the enemy in combat would have no scruples in claiming the victory to themselves after the combat was successfully ended. God wanted the honor of this battle reserved for Himself.

2. Though there were only 10,000 men remaining, God told Gideon there were still too many. After God put the soldiers through another test there remained 300 men. Ask the class if this is the way they would have gone about winning the battle. Most will answer in the negative. Develop the thought with class participation that God's ways are not man's ways. He often works in an opposite way from what man would think or expect. See Isaiah 55:8,9 as a reinforcing Scripture.

3. The test was on how the men drank water when they came to the brook. Of the 10,000 men, there were 9,700 who knelt to drink directly from the brook. The enemy was virtually before Israel's army, yet these soldiers could seemingly forget everything else for the moment to take their refreshment. That was not so with the 300 men who scooped water with their hands, putting it to their mouth. This signified their awareness of the situation that confronted them. Before them was a chance for deliverance, and they were eager to be about God's business. There was no time to drink leisurely. They were keeping their thoughts and eyes upon the action that would soon engage them. Discuss with your class how it did not appear to be a great thing that marked the separation between the band of 300 men who were chosen and the 9,700 men who were rejected. It does not always take a great misconduct to separate a person from God's choice

TEXT: Judges 6:36-40; 7:1-8

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: Psalms 23:1-6; 37:1-17

KEY VERSE: Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. — Deuteronomy 31:6

There are vast armies of religious people in the world today, and all claim to be a part of God's army. What a wonderful thing if every professing soldier of Christ were of the stamp of Gideon's band! The sad truth remains that the ratio between the true soldier who is willing and ready to venture all that he has for the cause of Christ and those who are fearful and afraid, or those who want to take the glory and credit to themselves, or those who would rather take their ease than face the enemy, is still the same as it was in Gideon's day. One out of a hundred passed the exacting test that God put them through. What a startling thought!

1. How many men were in Gideon's original army? How many returned from Mount Gilead, and for what reason?

2. Why were not all the remaining men allowed to go to the battle? How many men did Gideon eventually take with him into the camp of Midian?

3. What was the final test that brought Gideon's army down to such a small number? What did the test signify?

13

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

4. What lessons can be learned from the fact that God chose so few men to fight the battle?

5. Define *trust*. Find a Scripture which uses the word.

6. Could there be such a thing as trusting "halfway"? Explain your answer.

7. We probably will not be called upon to take our stand before an angry king, to slay a giant, or be thrown into a den of lions. But we will meet circumstances in our daily lives where it will require courage to take a stand for Christ. Read Matthew 24:12; James 5:14,15; and 1 Peter 5:8; then write the dangers to a Christian from which God promises deliverance.

8. What are some ways we can increase our courage?

band. "The little foxes . . . spoil the vines" (Song of Solomon 2:15).

4. God does not need great multitudes to do His work. Ask the class how many men God used to deliver the Children of Israel from Egypt. How many men did it take to slay the giant Goliath? How many men did Jesus choose to be His Apostles, and what was their commission? The discussion should bring out that when people put their trust completely in God, He can and will bring about His desired result. It should not matter to the people involved, the method that God uses to work out His will. Without doubt, God would use more people in His harvest fields if there were more who would yield completely to His will.

5. Among the definitions of the word *trust* are: "assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something"; "to place confidence"; "to depend." The word is found in the Supplemental Scriptures: Psalm 37:3,5 as well as Psalm 118:8; Proverbs 3:5; 29:25; Isaiah 26:4; 1 Timothy 4:10, etc. These are just a few Scriptures that emphasize trust. After discussing the definition of the word, share with the class the meaning of some of the Scriptures the students have found, and possibly discuss situations in the life where trust in God was put to the test. Gideon trusted God completely, and he found that God reinforced his courage to perform what seemed to be an impossible assignment.

6. There is no such thing as trusting "halfway," especially when it comes to trusting God and His Word. A person might debate as to whether he trusts another person fully or not. A decision of full trust might be put off for a period of time, but eventually the decision is made one way or the other. The point should be emphasized that when it comes to the promises of God, "conditional" trust is no trust at all.

7. Abounding iniquity, diseases and sicknesses, and a roaring adversary, the devil, are mentioned in these verses. Ask the students to express a successful remedy for each problem. Have the class mention other problems (some of which they may have faced personally) in which trust in God has brought the courage to stand until the victory has been given.

YOUR WRAP-UP

8. Take time to receive and discuss the students' answers. Further discussion could include the fact that as Gideon obeyed God in each step that He commanded, Gideon received more confidence and courage to go forward. God-given victory in a test or trial will give greater courage to face the next trial, but a person needs to be willing and obedient to do or face whatever God allows. Condemnation for sin will rob a person of spiritual courage (1 John 3:20,21). Close the lesson by asking the students when the disciples felt the most courageous. Was it not when Jesus Christ was close to them? We have His promise today: "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you" (James 4:8).

Reference Information (continued from page 27)

Mount Gilead is a mountainous region bounded on the west by the Jordan, on the east by the Arabian plateau, and on the south by Moab and Ammon. It is called "Mount Gilead," or "the land of Gilead," and sometimes "Gilead." The elevation is 2000 to 3000 feet. The country was noted for its balm, a pale yellow fragrant gum or resin taken from the trees. One reference book states this balm was worth twice its weight in silver.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

How many men were in Gideon's army originally? Why did God want only a few men to fight the battle?

Name one trait about Gideon you admire, and tell why?

If we are trusting God in our daily lives, how should we react to the outcome?

What is courage?

Why do you suppose God didn't want any who were "fearful and afraid" in Gideon's army? How may one overcome fear?

In the natural it might have appeared foolish to go to battle with just 300 men. Why was it not for Gideon?

What do you suppose were the feelings of the men chosen to fight the Midianites? Why do you think they were not afraid?

Do you think God tests people's faith today by asking them to do something that in the eyes of some would appear foolish? Explain.

Are there any circumstances where it might be better not to follow God's leading if doing so would seem unwise? Explain.

THINGS TO DO

The word "fleece" has common usage in our church. But do your students visualize the right thing when they hear the word? Take something to class which could show what a fleece was like: car seat covers that look like lamb's wool, or fleecy-looking car-wash mitts. Then you can show why Gideon made his test twice. It is remotely possible that the fleece could have collected water and the land felt dry. But the fleece could never have been dry while lying on wet ground.

Material needed: Two blindfolds. Blindfold a volunteer, pointing out that now the blindfolded person needs someone to lead or guide him. Choose a leader but blindfold him also. This illustrates that the leader must see to lead just as Gideon looked to God for guidance when fighting the enemy. Also bring out the we MUST trust only God to lead us through life.

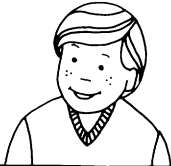
Material needed: A glove. Use this to illustrate that Gideon was just like this empty glove until the angel of the Lord visited him. After that he was full of the spirit and could be used of God.

Material needed: A penny and a dollar—to illustrate that it is God who makes us important, not what we do ourselves. Gideon was like the penny, small but willing to trust and to be used of God. Though small, God can use us.

Answers for ANSWER

Gideon's Courage

We don't have to be afraid when God is on our side! God was on Gideon's side and he wasn't afraid. Using Judges 7:1-15, learn about Gideon as you do this acrostic puzzle. The letters at the beginning of the phrases should match the letters given in the boxes.



Q

M What the people of Midian are called (verse 1)

I Jerubbaal was also known as ... (verse 1)

G The mountain mentioned in verse three

H Gideon's servant (verse 10)

T A place of shelter (verse 8)

Y A cake of _____ tumbled into the tent of the enemy (verse 13)

M A Midianite interpreted this (verse 15)

A Another name for Gideon (verse 1)

N Three hundred _____ lapped the water (verse 7)

O Small animal in story (verse 5)

F Some men were fearful or ... (verse 3)

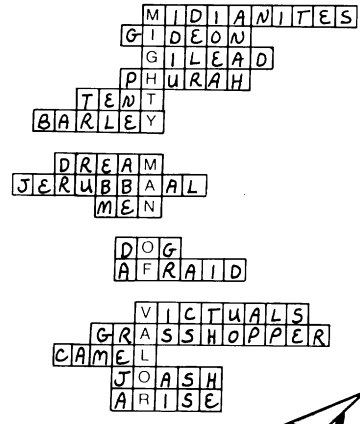
V Another word for food (verse 8)

A The enemy was like this insect (verse 12)

L Large animal in story (verse 12)

O Gideon's father (verse 14)

R Gideon told the men, "_____ for the LORD hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian." (verse 15)



Lesson 72

TEXT Joshua 14:6-13; Numbers 13:17-33

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES Numbers 14:24,30,38; 32:12; Hosea 6:3; Matthew 10:22; John 8:31

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to use the example of Caleb to explain that benefits will come to those who follow the Lord wholeheartedly.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. — Mark 10:28

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH To him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children, because he hath wholly followed the LORD. — Deuteronomy 1:36

**ANSWER
TITLE:** **A Total Commitment**
**SEARCH
TITLE:** **Caleb**

REFERENCE INFORMATION

Caleb was the son of Jephunneh, the Kenezite, the prince of Judah who represented his tribe among the twelve chief men whom Moses sent from the wilderness of Paran to spy out the land. Most of the spies brought back a pessimistic report. Their names are almost forgotten. But two heroes of faith, Caleb and Joshua, who encouraged the people to go up and take the land, are still remembered. Caleb was 40 years old when the spies were sent. At the age of 85, at the distribution of the land of Canaan, he asked for Hebron and the hill country where lived the fearful Anakim who had terrorized ten of the spies, and Joshua gave it to him because “he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel.” Caleb and Joshua were

the only two original adult members of the tribes permitted to go into the Promised Land. Later Caleb became father-in-law of Othniel, the first of the judges, by giving him Achsah his daughter.

In Abraham’s day, the city of Hebron was called Kirjath Arba. It was named after Arba, the ancestor of the Anakim, a race of giant men who lived in the area.

The city of Hebron still exists today, resting in a high valley about 25 miles southwest of Jerusalem. The nearby valleys are rich in fruits and vegetables of all kinds including figs, melons, grapes, pomegranates, and plums.

YOUR OPENER

Caleb

TEXT: Joshua 14:6-13; Numbers 13:17-33

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: Numbers 14:24,30,38; 32:12; Hosea 6:3; Matthew 10:22; John 8:31

KEY VERSE: To him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children, because he hath wholly followed the LORD. — Deuteronomy 1:36

RESPONSES

1. Caleb said, "Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it" (Numbers 13:30). After someone gives the answer, discuss with the students both sides of the situation. Help the students realize that even though in the natural, things look impossible, if God promises something He will see that they receive it. The promise is contingent on their faith and trust in Him.

2. They believed the evil report, and as a result had to remain in the wilderness for forty years. This might be a point where you would wish to ask for examples, bringing out how, even in our day, there are positive results if a person believes God and puts that belief into action. Disbelief will bring negative results!

3. Caleb was promised that he would go into the land and that his seed would possess it because he had followed the Lord "wholly." Direct students' attention to the word *wholly*, and help them consider what that word means in this context. Then relate their conclusions to how they must follow God.

4. In Joshua 14:7,10 we read that Caleb was 40 when he was promised his inheritance, and 85 when he claimed it. The point of this question is to discuss with your students the fact that the reward for belief may not always be immediate. Caleb had to hold on in faith for 45 years. Ask your students to cite some examples from their own experience when an answer to prayer was delayed but did come eventually.

In 1 Corinthians 10:1-15 the apostle Paul recounts some of the things that happened to the Israelites because of their unbelief, disobedience, murmuring, etc. These things were written as a warning to us that we might not be caught in a similar snare of Satan. It is encouraging to read of a man who lived among these people, and yet retained his purpose to walk with the Lord! We, too, can be kept by the power of God if, like Caleb, we determine to wholly follow the Lord.

1. Caleb was one of a group of men who had been selected as spies for Israel. Ten of the spies told of a good land, but felt that the land would be impossible to take. What did Caleb say? Numbers 1 : 3 0 ; 14:6-9.

2. Whom did the Children of Israel choose to believe? What was the result? See Numbers 14:1-4,33,34.

3. What promise was made to Caleb and why? See Numbers 14:24.

4. How old was Caleb when Moses sent him to spy out the land of Canaan and how old was he when he came to Joshua to receive his inheritance?

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

5. What did Caleb have to say of his own physical strength?

6. What had the ten spies said about the people who lived in the area Caleb desired? See Numbers 13:33.

7. Before we come into our inheritance we face many “giants” today. Name some.

8. We can use Caleb’s “secret weapon” against the giants and their fenced cities that we face. What was the secret weapon?

9. Explain the difference between the words *holy* and *wholly*.

10. List some things one must do to wholly follow the Lord. Be specific!

5. Joshua 14:11 shows that Caleb was still strong and vigorous. The point could be made that his unabated physical strength was one of the blessings God gave because Caleb trusted in Him. Ask students to discuss some of the benefits that are promised to the one who trusts God.

6. They said there were giants. Your students’ responses to this question should lead you directly into the following question.

7. The students’ list may include: persecution, trials, physical afflictions, monetary setbacks, accusations, or false brethren. After allowing time for students to give their responses to this question, discuss the various ways one could respond to the “giants” they mentioned.

8. You may have various answers to this question. Accept answers, and then point out that many of these can be weapons used to fight battles in their daily lives. Direct students to the key verse; Caleb’s “secret weapon” was that he “wholly followed the LORD.”

9. *Holy* — “pure.” *Wholly* — “completely.” It might be interesting to discuss what relationship these two words have to each other. Can they follow the Lord “wholly” without being “holy”? Can they be “holy” and not be “wholly” His?

10. Some possible suggestions offered may be complete obedience, denial of self, submission, keeping a humble attitude, and willing service. As each idea is offered, help your students zero in on how their daily lives will be affected if they do these things.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

What characteristics would you look for in a person who is wholly following the Lord?

When and why should a person start to wholly follow the Lord?

If a person is determined to wholly follow the Lord, does that mean he won't have any more hard things to experience?

If we should find ourselves in the midst of a difficult time, should we immediately decide that we were not following closely to God? Hebrews 10:35,36; 1 Peter 4:12,13

In your own words explain the difference between *holy* and *wholly*.

Was Caleb superhuman because he was so healthy at 85 years of age?

Can we expect God's blessing if we follow Caleb's example? Why?

How does the ANSWER story relate or compare with Caleb's experience?

What was the greatest benefit the person in the ANSWER story experienced when she finally said yes to God's will?

THINGS TO DO

To show examples of the two words with the same sound, bring a piece of paper with holes in it and a piece of paper without holes. Use these to explain the "whole" that God wants us to be like.

For a current-day example of following the Lord, rehearse the story told in the book, "In His Steps," for your students. This man's story shows the results of applying this principle to the everyday affairs of our lives.

Caleb's reward for wholly following the Lord was the mountain he requested as an inheritance for him and his

children. With your class, make a list of benefits or rewards we will receive in this life or in the hereafter if we wholly follow God. Then use this list to make an acrostic with your group.

Cut a large heart from construction paper. Mark the heart into a number of pieces, marking each piece with something in our lives that should be consecrated to God. Some possibilities: time, finances, family, plans for future, friends, recreational activities. Cut apart the puzzle and then reassemble it with your students to illustrate the importance of a "wholehearted" commitment to Christ.

Answers for ANSWER

Follow the Lord!

Caleb wholly followed the Lord and was blessed by Him. Starting at CALEB, follow the path in this puzzle to find a promise God has for you. The first I is circled for you. Now circle every third letter or symbol on the path. Then write the circled letters on the lines provided.

IN ALL THY WAYS ACKNOWLEDGE HIM,
AND HE SHALL DIRECT THY PATHS.

Proverbs 3:6

Lesson 73

TEXT 1 Kings 17:8-16

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to tell how the widow exercised faith. They will further be able to explain why faith is a necessity in our lives.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. — Hebrews 11:1

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. — Hebrews 11:6

ANSWER TITLE: **An Example of Faith**

SEARCH TITLE: **The Widow of Zarephath**

Reference Information

Widows in the Old Testament were regarded as being under God's special care. From early times they wore a distinctive garb. The Hebrews were commanded to treat them with special consideration and were punished if they did otherwise.

Zarephath was an Old Testament town remembered chiefly because Elijah resided there during the latter half of the famine caused by the drought. Its Greek equivalent, Sarepta, it mentioned in the Book of Luke where it is described as being in the land of Sidon. Here God miraculously sustained the prophet through the widow's

kindness. Ruins of the ancient town survive south of the modern village of Sarafand, about 8 miles south of Sidon, 14 miles north of Tyre.

There had been no rain in the land for some time. Jesus spoke of this incident to the Jews (Luke 4:24-26), noting that He had to go outside Israel to find one for whom He could perform a miracle during the drought. The Jews to whom He spoke understood that He was implying the same to them. God rewarded this faithful widow later in life by raising her son from the dead.

YOUR OPENER

The Widow of Zarephath

TEXT: 1 Kings 17:8-16

KEY VERSE: But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. — Hebrews 11:6

At the center of the Christian's experience is that seed of faith whereby he first entered, and now continues in the Christian walk. Should a time of testing rob him of that faith, he is a pauper, and will remain so until it is regained. But the one who guards his faith as a treasure beyond value will persevere and triumph in every trial of life.

RESPONSES

1. As the scenario is developed, discussion should lead the students to sympathize with the widow and understand that this was, no doubt, the lowest point in her whole life.

2. Either obey through faith in God and in the prophet and live, or return to the same hopelessness that prevailed before the prophet stepped on the scene. Ask your students what indication the prophet gave to the widow that if she obeyed his request, her needs would be met until the rains came. Discussion should bring out that God rarely requires us to step out in faith without giving us any support or assurance that He will sustain.

3. The sinner must choose to believe that Jesus really is the answer and turn his whole life over to Him or return to his own way and suffer the consequences. Even though the benefits promised to the sinner make his response to God's call seem obvious, still mankind will often harden his heart to his own destruction.

4. Allow your students time to discuss their responses to this question. They should reach the conclusion that faith must be followed with works or it is of no value. Is this still true in our Christian experience? Ask your students to support their answers with specific illustrations.

1. Describe the situation that the widow of Zarephath was in when the prophet came to her.

2. While the widow went to fetch water for Elijah, he called to her with another request which elicited a pitiful response from the widow. What options did his request leave her?

3. What parallel can you draw between this woman's decision in how to respond to Elijah's demand and the decision facing every sinner who hears God's call?

4. Verse 15 brings out what very important truth concerning faith?

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

5. What might the consequences have been had the characters in the following verses not exercised faith?

Genesis 6:13-18

Jonah 3:4,5

Matthew 15:22-28

6. Give an example from your own life that illustrates how faith sustains a person.

7. Luke 18:8 poses a very piercing question. How does it apply to the world in which we live?

8. How can we guard against the onslaught of the forces which would destroy or diminish or faith?

5. Noah: Loss of his own and his family's life and possibly the whole human race.

Ninevites: Certain destruction.

Syrophenician woman: No healing for her daughter.

Summarize the responses to these Scriptures by discussing what some of the consequences would be in our day if faith is not exercised: no salvation, healings, etc.

6. Allow time for your students to share some examples. It would be good to point out the effect their lives and their faith have on those around them. One's personal experience of faith rewarded can be a powerful encouragement to another who is going through a similar test or trial. This is the basis for testimonies given in Gospel services.

7. Discuss the falling away from the true faith in much of Christendom and the growth of humanism which is the very antithesis of faith. The gradual erosion of such doctrines as divine healing among Christians is startling evidence of a watered-down and declining faith.

8. Your students' responses to this question should bring out that seeking to always retain a love for the truth and attending to the many means of grace such as prayer, Bible reading, and fellowship with other believers will serve to keep the hedge of God's protection high around us and our faith strong. Also, we should never shrink from situations that might demand us to walk by faith alone, since faith grows with use.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

What would have been the destiny of the widow and her son if normal events had happened? Why was it different?

Why did God send Elijah to a widow for sustenance when she had so very little herself?

Might this not also have been a test of Elijah's faith? why or why not?

Can you tell how God provided for Elijah before he came to the widow? Do people today have to trust God for their daily food? Explain. How do such experiences strengthen one's faith?

Do you know the story in the New Testament of another poor woman who had very little but was willing to give it to Jesus? Is there ever any need to think that what we have is of no consequence or too little to count?

Explain the importance of faith and obedience as revealed in this lesson.

Why do you suppose God didn't just send the widow all of the oil and the meal at once?

What do you think this lesson teaches us about sharing and hospitality?

How important is faith in your life? What has it done for you?

THINGS TO DO

Take a small barrel with a little cornmeal and a vinegar cruet with oil in it. Show how it runs out when you pour. But still, day after day, there was meal and there was oil. God promises to provide for those who have faith to believe.

Have a little play. Give one child a candy bar and have him take the whole thing and say, "Well, there's only one so I'll eat it all." Then do it again to another child. That child breaks it into pieces and gives to the others and then takes what is left for himself. Reward him with another candy bar for himself and explain that God's blessing comes from giving to others first, and not from thinking of ourselves first.

To illustrate the need for faith in our everyday lives, bring to class small items which show we all have a degree of faith in the things we use every day: a letter ready to be mailed, a box of cake mix or a recipe, the key to our house or car, a camera. Or bring pictures of things too large to bring—electric lights, appliances. The choice is

almost unending. Then explain that if we can have faith in man-made things, how much more should we have faith in the God who created all things. He never fails those who put their trust in Him.

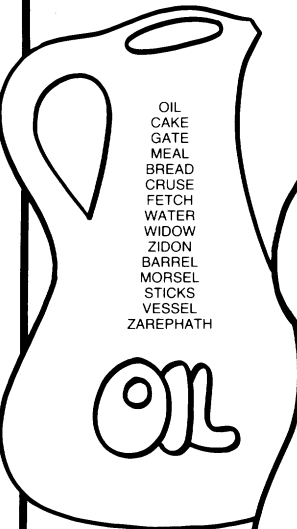
Do a little play or skit, letting the students act the parts to illustrate family happenings: (a) some member of the family is sick and an anointed handkerchief or tract is brought to him. Or family gathers around to pray for him. (b) Several days yet till payday, the grocery money gone, and almost no gasoline in the car, but it is meeting night. Should we go, or stay home so Dad will have the gas to go to work? He said, "Let's put first things first," and they go to church. That night someone gave the mother an envelope with money, which likely would not have been received had they not gone to church. Emphasize that faith coupled with obedience—doing what we can—is always honored by God. (This was an actual happening.)

Make three posters, one for each word—Others, Yourself, and Jesus. Let the students decide in which order they should be. (Have the J, O, and Y a different color from the rest of the letters so they will stand out.)

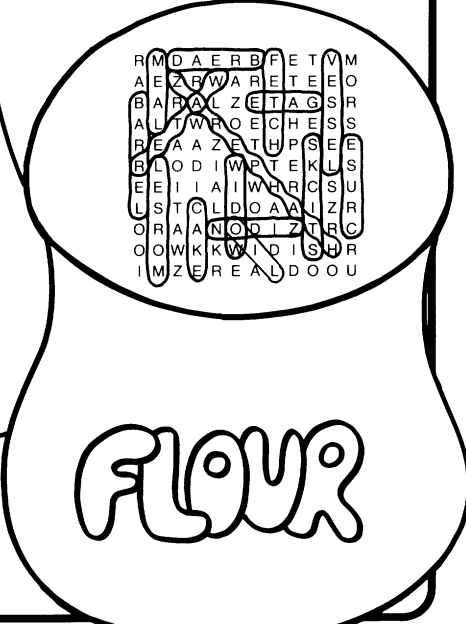
Answers for ANSWER

Faith in Action

The widow of Zarephath is an example to us of faith in action. In this Word-Find are some words used in this lesson. Find and circle each one.



OIL
CAKE
GATE
MEAL
BREAD
CRUISE
FETCH
WATER
WIDOW
ZIDON
BARREL
MORSEL
STICKS
VESSEL
ZAREPHATH



R	M	D	A	E	R	B	F	E	T	V	M
A	E	A	B	W	A	R	E	T	E	E	O
B	A	R	A	L	Z	E	T	A	G	S	R
A	L	T	W	R	O	E	C	H	E	S	S
B	R	E	A	A	Z	E	T	H	P	S	E
B	L	O	D	I	W	P	T	E	K	L	S
E	E	H	I	A	I	W	E	R	C	S	U
L	S	T	O	L	D	O	A	A	I	Z	R
O	R	A	A	N	O	I	Z	T	R	C	
O	O	W	K	K	W	I	D	I	S	H	R
I	M	Z	E	R	E	A	L	D	O	O	U

Lesson 74

TEXT Acts 6:1-15; 7:54-60

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to tell how Stephen is an example of withstanding persecution. They will further be able to explain how the Lord will be with and reward those who withstand persecution in our day.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it. — Matthew 10:39

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. — Matthew 5:11

**ANSWER
TITLE:** **A False Accusation**
**SEARCH
TITLE:** **Stephen**

Reference Information

The Libertines were Jews who had been captives at Rome, but being freed, had returned to Jerusalem where they had a synagogue.

The Cyrenians were people who lived in a city along the northern coast of Africa and gave their name to one of the synagogues in Jerusalem.

Stephen was the first Christian martyr. The speech and death of Stephen mark the transition of Christianity from its earliest Jewish form to its extension among the Gentiles.

Stephen's ministry was not limited to providing for the

poor of the Early Church. Another aspect of his ministry engaged him in bitterest conflict with the adherents of Judaism. He taught in the synagogue of the Libertines (i.e., freedmen) and there debated with Diaspora Jews from Cyrene, Alexandria, Cilicia, and Asia. When it was evident that they could not refute Stephen's arguments in open debate, these Jews hired informers to misrepresent his arguments. These accusations were such that the council could be assured of the support of the people of Jerusalem. Since they were largely dependent upon the Temple for their livelihood, any threat to it constituted a threat to them.

YOUR OPENER

Stephen

TEXT: Acts 6:1-15; 7:54-60

KEY VERSE: Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. — Matthew 5:11

RESPONSES

1. Our text shows that Stephen loved the Lord, was not afraid to stand up for what he believed, had wisdom, was full of the Holy spirit, was a man of faith, etc.

2. In discussing this question, the students should see that these men had the choice of either accepting what Stephen said, or in some way negating his preaching. They chose to reject his words and accuse him of blasphemy. Discuss with your students how our teachings or testimonies must also call forth a reaction—either acceptance or rejection.

3. As your students discuss the characteristics brought out in the first question, they should conclude that the Christian attributes Stephen exhibited no doubt were the very qualities that helped him withstand the persecution which came to him. His faith in God (Acts 6:8) surely gave him the strength to know God would bring victory out of this trial. The fact that he was “full of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 6:5) gave him the power he needed. His wisdom (Acts 6:10) gave him the insight that God was with him. His forgiving spirit (Acts 7:60) helped him stay true to the very end of his life. Responses you receive should be summarized by pointing out that Stephen did not receive persecution because he was unjust or sinful—rather the opposite.

The outpouring of God’s Holy Spirit in Jerusalem had stirred the whole city and in just a few months the new church had grown to the point where the Jewish leaders remarked that these people had “filled Jerusalem with their doctrine.” When God works, Satan seeks to oppose! At issue was the miraculous resurrection of Jesus Christ: If Jesus had risen, then the Jewish rulers had crucified the Son of God, their Messiah. They—the religious leaders of their time—were not about to admit to having murdered the Son of God! Because of this conflict, the Apostles had been imprisoned and warned not to teach or preach in the name of Jesus. About this time, Stephen appears on the scene.

1. Give a short analysis of Stephen’s character.

2. Why did the Jews of the synagogue of the Libertines, Cyrenians, and Alexandrians charge Stephen with “blasphemous words” in Acts 6:11,13, and 14?

3. Look back at your characterization of Stephen in question 1, and at the Scriptures in our text which brought out his attributes. What part did these attributes play in Stephen’s ability to withstand persecution? Could he have withstood without them? Explain your answer.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

4. Stephen's God-given wisdom did not keep him out of trouble in witnessing for Jesus. When we can foresee difficulties or persecution arising from our testimony, what should we do?

5. Why would some think Stephen did not use "wisdom" in his stinging condemnation of his listeners in chapter 7, verses 51-53? Is the course he took in this situation always appropriate? Why or why not?

6. Name several possible reactions to conviction for sin. In our text, how does this relate to persecution?

7. Paraphrase Matthew 10:39, placing yourself in the verse.

8. In Matthew 5:11, what are the three words which give us the clue to receiving the blessing of God with regard to persecution?

4. The main thought evolving from your discussion of this question should be that they should not hesitate to take their stand for fear of persecution. It might be interesting to divide your class into groups and have one side present a hypothetical situation, and the other a solution—then reverse. For example: What do you do when the boss asks you to lie for him? When he asks you to buy him a pack of cigarettes? What if you were a checker at a supermarket and had to sell liquor? What if you were asked to participate in a regular activity that would limit your availability in God's service? What if you were offered a promotion that would require working on Sundays?

5. Some of the people undoubtedly felt that Stephen should have been more moderate in speech and less aggressive in his denunciation. Discussion revolving around this question should be guided carefully so the students will see their manner of witnessing must always be guided by the Holy spirit. While Stephen's tactics may have been blunt and forceful, they were God-directed at this place and to these people. That does not mean this method would always be appropriate. Your students should see the necessity of looking to God for direction.

6. Answers you receive may include: rejection, acceptance, delay, disbelief, or ridicule. After accepting students' responses, help them to see the tie between conviction and persecution in our text: that Stephen's persecution was undoubtedly a result of the conviction his words brought to his hearers. Your class should recognize that often persecution may stem from conviction.

7. Ask for a volunteer to give his paraphrase, and tell what he thinks this verse means. Could it encompass things other than just physical death? Encourage your students to cite some examples of how they might find the blessing in this verse even if they are not called on specifically to give up their physical lives.

8. The words are, "for my sake." Using this verse, summarize the lesson by zeroing in on the objective, discussing what rewards they as Christians can expect if they withstand persecution.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

What does it mean to be persecuted?

When you are persecuted or made fun of because you believe in God, what do you do?

Why do you think the Lord would allow persecution to come to you? What does this teach you?

How should you feel toward those who persecute you?

What should you do for those who persecute you?

Why doesn't God judge the persecutors immediately with punishment?

Why does God allow persecution of believers, including martyrdom?

Explain the difference between keeping quiet in your own defense and being willing to speak out for Jesus.

If he had recanted or even agreed to keep quiet, how would Stephen have fit back into the community or congregation?

Discuss how you have faced a particular situation involving persecution and how you felt about it. Did the end result convict the persecutor?

THINGS TO DO

Have the class go through the church hymnal and find songs pertaining to persecution and have them read a verse or two. How do they end?

What are some of the persecutions or trials young people of today might have? Have your students help you make a list of some of them. Then talk about the positive ways to react to them. What are some of the rewards of standing for Jesus?

Put a heavy object in a small paper sack. By shaking it until the sack tears, show how easily our bodies can be destroyed, but also show that we have a soul that cannot

be destroyed by man. If a person withstands persecution, after his body dies his soul will be in Heaven.

Stephen was not the only one who was persecuted because he believed in the Lord. Set up a contest to see who can name other disciples who withstood persecution.

Ask your students to pretend they have a chance to enter Heaven and interview Stephen. Help them compose a list of questions they would like to ask him. Then discuss what his probable reply would be to each question.

Answers for ANSWER

What Should I Do?

Here are three letters from some Christian friends who need advice on how to handle persecution. Using the Bible verses given, can you give them the advice from the Lord?

Dear...

While I was at school the other day some kids called me names and made fun of me because I was reading my Bible. Do I still have to love them and include them in my prayers?

Tom

Matthew 5:44

Dear...

Last Saturday when I went shopping with my friends I found that they were taking some things without paying for them. I told them it was wrong, but they laughed at me and made fun of me. I feel just awful. Can you give me some encouragement?

Linda

Matthew 5:12

DEAR...

I AM SO AFRAID TO TELL MY FRIENDS ABOUT THE LORD ANYMORE AFTER WHAT HAPPENED. I TRIED TO TELL A GOOD FRIEND ABOUT JESUS AWHILE AGO NOW HE WON'T EVEN TALK TO ME. HE EVEN SAYS BAD THINGS ABOUT ME TO OTHER PEOPLE. I JUST CAN'T UNDERSTAND. PLEASE HELP!

MARK

1 Peter 2:20

Lesson 75

TEXT Mark 5:24-34

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES Luke 18:1-8; Ephesians 6:18; Hebrews 12:1

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to use the example of the woman who touched the hem of Jesus' garment to illustrate that through perseverance we gain the blessings and benefits God has for us.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER He that endureth to the end shall be saved. — Matthew 10:22

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. — Galatians 6:9

ANSWER TITLE: **Sticking With It!**

SEARCH TITLE: **Woman Who Touched the Hem of His Garment**

Reference Information

At the time of this incident, Jesus was well known in the villages around Galilee. He had just been across the Sea of Galilee to the area called Decapolis and had healed a demoniac. He was asked by the people of that country to depart from their coasts. How it must have grieved the Lord, but He was gladly received upon His return to the western shore of the Sea of Galilee.

Decapolis was a region east of Jordan; a league of ten cities. People still dwell in the cliff tombs around Gadara where the demoniac was healed.

According to the Law of Moses, every Jewish man was

supposed to wear a fringe or tassel at each of the four corners of his tallith, the rectangular or square outer garment worn over the upper part of the body. Two fringes hung at the bottom of the cloak, and two hung over the shoulders where the cloak folded over him. The woman probably touched one of these fringes of Jesus' cloak at He passed through the crowd.

The Talmud says physicians had at least 11 remedies for chronic hemorrhage, and the woman had evidently tried them all, but not one worked. She tried to be healed secretly by touching Jesus' cloak, but He wanted her to tell her story publicly.

YOUR OPENER

Horizontal lines for writing.

Woman Who Touched the Hem of His Garment

TEXT: Mark 5:24-34

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: Luke 18:1-8

KEY VERSE: Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

— Galatians 6:9

RESPONSES

1. The press (or crowd of people) hindered her in reaching Jesus, but her persistence resulted in her healing. Allow some time for your class to discuss the second part of the question. Some of the obstacles mentioned might be: negative pressure from family or peers, lack of faith, and slacking off.

2. With such a large crowd of people around Him, even Jesus' disciples were surprised by His question. But the woman knew what had happened to her and gave her first public testimony, at that time. Thus, many witnessed what Jesus had done because of her faith and perseverance. This incident lets us know that no act of our faith will pass unnoticed by Jesus.

3. They removed a portion of the roof to put him down before Jesus. This demonstrates to the students that external obstacles may be in the way. Discuss what some of these could be in their daily lives. It should be brought out that as they overcome these obstacles, they can be assured of spiritual victory.

The woman mentioned in our lesson exhibited perseverance and determination. The crowd that surrounded Jesus would have been an obstacle to a well person; how much more to one weakened by illness! She did not expect Jesus to lay hands on her, speak to her, or any such thing. She simply believed that she would be healed if she could just touch the hem of His garment, and because of her persistence she was healed.

1. What obstacles did the woman face which might have discouraged her perseverance, and what were the results of her determination to reach the Lord? What obstacles may appear when we desire something from God?

2. Take special note of Jesus' question tot he crowd (verse 30) and his reply to the woman (verse 34). How does this incident encourage us?

3. Four men carried a man who was sick with the palsy to a place where Jesus was speaking. How did they demonstrate their perseverance in bringing this man to the Lord? See Mark 2:3,4.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

4. How did Jacob show perseverance and what did the angel tell him? See Genesis 32:28.

5. Jesus told the Jews that believed on Him that they should “continue in my word.” Explain what you think is meant by this phrase. See John 8:31.

6. What are some areas in our daily Christian lives where we may need to practice perseverance?

7. We equate conversion with being “saved.” Use Matthew 10:22 to find when we are really saved.

8. There is a goal—something to be obtained through perseverance. Look up Revelation 3:11. What things should we “hold fast” in order to retain our crown?

4. Jacob wrestled with the angel for the blessing he desired. Help your class see the victories that are won by “holding on” in prayer. Discuss the meaning of the phrase, “praying through,” a phrase often used in testimony.

5. The students will recognize the need of “continuing in the Word” to be one of His. The point should be made that before they can “continue,” they must have a start. By continuing they prove to those observing their Christian life that they truly are followers of Christ. How does this apply to our lives today? Encourage your class to support their conclusions with specific illustrations.

6. Allow time for students to give examples. Some suggestions may include: in our prayer life, in study of God’s Word, in faithful church attendance, in faithful performance of the duties given us in God’s work, in giving the Lord our tithes, and in Christian witnessing.

7. The students should know that to be saved one must continue, or endure to the end.

8. Allow time for your students to discuss this. After they have brought out the fact that they should treasure and guard the benefits and blessings God has given them, ask them to name some specific ways this can be done. Point out that their greatest benefit is gaining Heaven—certainly a goal worth persevering for.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

What does it mean to persevere?

By persevering, what did the woman with the illness gain?

Sometimes when we ask for something from the Lord He does not answer us right away. What must we have in our hearts that will keep us waiting for that answer?

Why are we likely to limit God?

Why is perseverance usually easier in the physical world?

From the ANSWER story what quality did Kevin have that was also portrayed by the woman in our Bible story? Explain.

What were some of the physical limitations this woman faced that could have hindered her obtaining what she needed?

Think of something that is needed in your life or the life of someone close to you and what might stand in the way. How might these hindrances be overcome?

What might we learn from the fact that the woman in our lesson had exhausted every means to obtain healing before she came to Jesus? Could Jesus have healed her before she spent all that time and money? If so, why not come to Jesus first? Is there any use going to God if we have already waited until our case appears hopeless?

Will perseverance without faith gain anything from God? Explain.

THINGS TO DO

Even animals and insects have perseverance. Show what perseverance is by using examples (pictures would help) such as a spider weaving its web, or a beaver building a dam. Ask the students to give other examples.

Share an experience in your life which is an example how God rewards those who wait upon Him.

Cut out some paper hearts and have students write on one side anything they have been praying for and are waiting for the Lord to answer, and on the other side write "I will persevere because I believe God will answer." Make a mobile out of them.

Bring an intricate piece of needle work, a detailed painting or model to class. Discuss the fact that perseverance

is needed to complete the project, but the end result will justify the time spent. Just so, persevering in prayer will bring results.

A simple object to use in illustrating perseverance would be a Rubik cube or similar puzzle.

Examples to illustrate trying until you succeed might include threading a needle or opening a stuck jar lid.

Print PRAYER on heavy paper. Have students add a phrase about perseverance. Example:

- P — Persevering in prayer
- R — Revealing to God the problem
- A — Accepting help and direction
- Y — Yielding self
- E — Effort
- R — Result: Receiving the blessing

Bring a pay check to class. Explain that a pay check is the reward for faithfully applying oneself to a job. Liken the rewards for earthly effort to the rewards we can receive by persevering in seeking the Lord.

Answers for ANSWER


How Should We Pray?

The code on the tag will help you find out what this verse says about being persistent. Remember, each number represents a letter.


A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Y	Z						
25	26						

P R A Y I N G always with all prayer and
S U P P L I C A T I O N in the **S P I R I T**,
 and **W A T C H I N G** thereunto with all
P E R S E V E R A N C E and supplication for
 all saints.

E P H E S I A N S 6:18



Supplication is to ask humbly.



Perseverance is to keep on keeping on.

Lesson 76

TEXT Acts 9:10-19

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES Acts 26:9-20; Romans 12:1; 2 Timothy 2:21

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to describe that Ananias was available to serve God and that he let nothing interfere with that service.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land. — Isaiah 1:19

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. — 1 Corinthians 15:58

ANSWER TITLE: **A Message in the Night**
SEARCH TITLE: **Ananias**

Reference Information

Ananias greeted Saul with “Brother Saul.” It is scriptural, as seen here, for Christians to refer to each other as “Brother” and “Sister,” inasmuch as we believers are adopted into the family where God is our Father. Ananias also referred to Christians as saints (verse 13). According to Adam Clarke, the original meaning for the word *saints* signified not only “holy persons,” but also “consecrated persons who are separated from all earthly uses and consecrated to the service of God alone.”

Saul was a Pharisee, a rabbi, the representative of the

Sanhedrin. He was held in the highest respect by the Jewish religious orders. His authority to have the Christians killed was upheld by the highest Jewish authorities.

Ananias was a Jewish disciple at Damascus, of high repute, who sought out Saul during the period of blindness which followed his conversion, and announced to him his future commission as a preacher of the Gospel. Tradition tells us that he later became bishop of Damascus, and died by martyrdom.

YOUR OPENER

Ananias

TEXT: Acts 9:10-19

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: Acts 26:9-20; Romans 12:1; 2 Timothy 2:21

KEY VERSE: Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. — 1 Corinthians 15:58

RESPONSES

1. Your students should note from the text that Ananias was a disciple or follower of Christ. He was apparently in close communication with God, for he readily responded when the Lord appeared to him in a vision. He was obedient. Acts 22:12 confirms that he was a “devout” man, and “of good report.” Apparently, his Christian witness was well known, and he was respected among the Jews who knew him.

2. Allow time for your students to discuss their answers. The point of this question should be to establish what type of person God can use. Discuss what a *devout* person is. Also what it means to be of *good report*.

3. Some examples that could be mentioned would be through a still, small voice (to Elijah); through a dream (to Joseph); through angelic messengers (to Lot); through the word of a prophet (to Ahab). Discuss the various responses to God’s messages. Your students should recognize that the spiritual condition and receptivity of the one receiving the message obviously played a great part in how they responded. Refer back to Ananias’ response and subsequent obedience.

The dictionary definition of *available* tells us that one who is available is one who “can be used.” God has chosen the instrumentality of man to spread the truth of His Gospel. But it is up to the individual to make himself “available” to God—ready to be used by the Lord in whatever capacity or location he deems best.

1. To be used of God, our spiritual condition must be in order. What was the spiritual condition of Ananias? Search through the text for clues as to his character. Then read Acts 22:12 and add that to your description.

2. Look carefully at each of the attributes or characteristics you have discovered about Ananias. Give a reason why each would be necessary for a Christian in our day.

3. God spoke to Ananias through a vision. Tell of some of the other ways God communicated His words to those in Biblical times.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

4. Saul had quite a notorious reputation in Israel among the followers of Christ. Ananias must have felt some anxiety when God asked him to go and see Saul, yet he did go. Many people worry about what they may be asked to do in the Lord's service. Tell of an experience in your own life where you were asked to do something for the Lord which you thought was beyond you. How did you feel at that time? How do you feel now when you look back on the incident?

5. With what words did Isaiah answer God's call (Isaiah 6:8)? Write down a word which describes the attitude of both Isaiah and Ananias.

6. According to Scripture, what does it take to be great in God's Kingdom? See Matthew 20:26,27.

7. The key verse lists three specific instructions for the believer. Write down the three, and give a short description of what you think the word or phrase means relative to the life of a believer in our day.

4. Allow time for your students to share their experiences. In looking back on past experiences, the student should become aware that God does not let us down or forsake us when we do something He has called us to do. Fear and anxiety are not necessary if we are obedient to His call. 2 Timothy 1:7 says, "For God hath not given us a spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

5. Compare the words offered by your students. Some words offered may be: willing, submissive, consecrated. Could God have used these men if they had not exhibited this spirit? Ask your students to contrast their responses to that of Jonah's.

6. Ask a volunteer to read these verses aloud. The students will realize that to minister or to be a servant to others is opposite of the general feeling prevalent in the world. But Christians are not of the world even though in the world. Ask your class to enumerate some of the ways they might be called to minister to others. Encourage them to list some specifics that might not be positions greatly desired. The Christian who is truly willing to be used by God in any capacity will do whatever the Lord calls him to do, even though the task may seem difficult (Nehemiah); be dangerous (Ananias, Paul and Silas); be unspectacular (Philip in the desert), etc.

7. As your students discuss their meanings for *steadfast*, *unmoveable*, and *abounding in the work of the Lord*, conclude your lesson by reinforcing once again the necessary qualifications for one who wishes to be used of God.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

Witnessing seems easy to only a few. Was it easy for Ananias to witness to Saul? How can we witness effectively? How can fears be overcome? When the Lord called Ananias, how did Ananias answer to show that he was ready to do what God told him to do?

How would you answer the Lord if He called you today to work for Him? Name some jobs that the Lord might call you to do.

What could have happened if Ananias was not ready to answer the Lord's call? Will you be an effective worker? Will God's work be accomplished?

In the ANSWER story we learned that Ananias finally felt a great love for Saul because he realized the Lord had chosen him. How did Ananias address Saul after this realization, to show his love? What spiritual lesson can we learn from Ananias' example?

THINGS TO DO

Bring a board and nail to class. Explain to the class that you wish to put the nail into the board. Attempt to push it in with your fingers, or to jab it in. Finally ask your students what you need. When they say that you need a hammer, point out the need for a tool to do the job. We must be "tools"—usable instruments—for the Lord so that His work can be done.

Arrange a circle of different-sized chairs, stools, and step stools. Have students take turns trying them out. Make a point that all are usable. No person is too old, too young, too sick, etc., for God to use if they are willing.

Bring a pen without ink, scissors that are dull, pencil that is broken, etc., to show these objects must be usable as well as available to be used.

Get the students to imagine that they are firemen or doctors in an emergency ward at a hospital. Ask them what might happen if they are not ready to perform their duties when an unexpected call comes in. It is the same way with the Lord's service.

Answers for ANSWER

Can You Help?

Fill in the missing letters in the circles on the file cards. Next, write the circled letters on the matching numbered lines on the MEMO. Read the memo and put a check on the file cards that show your response.

MEMO

I am

A V A I L A B L E

7 1 4 8 5 6 3 2 9

to:

9. GIVE
whatever time I have to help the church grow.

8. SING
a special song for Sunday school.

7. CLEAN
up the church.

6. HAND
out invitations to church activities.

5. TELL
a friend about the Lord.

4. PLAY
an instrument.

3. BRING
someone to church.

2. HELP
my Sunday school teacher.

1. VISIT
the sick.

Lesson 77

TEXT 1 Kings 19:19-21; Matthew 10:37-42

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES Exodus 35:29; Isaiah 1:19; 2 Corinthians 8:12

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to describe Elisha’s call and will understand that our service to God should be offered with a willing and uncomplaining spirit.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men. — Colossians 3:23

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest. — Ecclesiastes 9:10

**ANSWER
TITLE:** **A Willing Helper**
**SEARCH
TITLE:** **Elisha**

Reference Information

Elisha was a disciple and successor of Elijah; he held the prophetic office for 55 years. At Horeb God directed Elijah to anoint Elisha who was to aid Israel in taking vengeance on the enemies of God. Elijah left Horeb and on his way north found Elisha plowing with twelve yoke of oxen. (The number of oxen indicated the wealth of the family.) Elijah cast his mantle on Elisha, who understood the significance of the act. He was chosen to succeed the older prophet.

Elisha was like his teacher in many ways. Both men parted the waters of Jordan, brought rain in times of

drought, increased a widow’s supply of food, raised a boy from the dead, pronounced doom upon kings, and destroyed their enemies with supernatural power. But the “double portion” Elisha received, no doubt, accounted for many of the differences between them. While Elijah fell under times of depression, Elisha had an attitude of triumph and confidence. He never seemed to complain or lose courage. The Scriptures show that he performed more miracles than any other prophet of the Old Testament.

The name *Elisha* means “God is Savior.”

YOUR OPENER

Elisha

TEXT: 1 Kings 19:19-21; Matthew 10:37-42

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: Exodus 35:29; Isaiah 1:19; 2 Corinthians 8:12

KEY VERSE: Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest. — Ecclesiastes 9:10

RESPONSES

1. He cast his mantle on Elisha. As the students give the answer, help them realize this was the "call of God" on Elisha's life. Ask students to list ways that God calls Christians to service today.

2. He told him to go back, asking, "What have I done to thee?" Elijah's response might have caused some to feel a rejection. But Elijah's reaction was only to test the depth of Elisha's response. No doubt the human reaction would have been to feel "rebuffed." Does a Christian ever run into obstacles while answering God's call? Bring out that sometimes God allows obstacles to test our willingness and determination.

3. The students will see in Elisha's "burning his bridges" behind him (burning the plow, sacrificing the oxen, saying goodbye to the family), and his willingness to be a servant, that this is the attitude they should have today. They must be willing to give up material things, and consecrate their present and future to God.

4. Have different ones read their remarks, then discuss in depth what it means to give all to the Lord and what results may be if one does this. You may wish to develop the thought that the results may not always be immediate benefits in an outward or material sense. Elisha filled a humble place of service, perhaps for as much as ten years, after he left his home and family.

In the first portion of our text we see the willingness of Elisha to follow the man of God, Elijah. Elisha burned his plow, made a sacrifice of his oxen, said goodbye to the family, and was on his way. Let's take a look at how important it is to have a willing and uncomplaining spirit in the service of God.

1. What did Elijah do when he passed by Elisha? What was the significance of this?

2. How did Elijah respond when Elisha followed after him? What would the natural human reaction be to the response Elijah gave?

3. Elisha proved his willingness by his actions. What were these actions? What do they tell us about how we should respond to God's call for service?

4. Paraphrase Matthew 10:38-40.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

5. What was Moses willing to give up and what was he willing to do? For what reason? See Hebrews 11:24-26.

6. What was Ruth willing to do to serve the Lord? See Ruth 1:15-17.

7. What do you think is most important in our service to the Lord?

8. We not only need to be willing in our service but also uncomplaining in our attitude. The Children of Israel often complained in the wilderness. What does it mean to be uncomplaining, and why is it so necessary?

9. There are rewards connected with service for the Lord. What does Isaiah 1:19 tell us about this?

10. How do our attitudes toward God's service affect those around us? See Colossians 3:23.

5. Moses gave up the pleasures, prestige, and power of Egypt, to be counted as one of God's chosen people, and to be in a position to help their plight. The students will ascertain the final results of giving up temporal things of life. Even having to go through hardship is nothing compared to the reward that awaits the one who is true and faithful.

6. Help the students recognize the determination in Ruth's heart to make the sacrifice of leaving all, including her home. Ask students if the same type of commitment Ruth made is ever required of people today.

7. Answers to this question could go in several different ways. As different answers are given, help your class realize that "willingness" is a vital factor in acceptable service to God. Unless one is willing, he will not even make the initial step of responding to God's call. Furthermore, if one is engaged in doing service for the Lord but does so unwillingly, he is in danger of losing his reward (1 Corinthians 9:17). See also 1 Peter 5:2-4.

8. To be uncomplaining is to show our willingness. A person may have accomplished a task, but if he did so with a complaining attitude, he was actually unwilling. Ask the class if a person can complain and still receive the blessing. The class can be shown that to complain about their service to God is to lose the blessing they could have received.

9. Ask for a volunteer to read the Scripture, and relate this to the aspects of service mentioned in verse 17. Students will know the Lord recognizes willing service, and gives rewards. But also, as in verse 20, the result of refusing is eternal damnation.

10. Help your class see that those around them can recognize a service that is done willingly and heartily unto the Lord. What is their responsibility? Conclude your lesson by discussing how they can guard against causing someone else to be discouraged in the Lord's work.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

How do everyday duties prepare us to do greater things for Christ?

Why is it important to do our everyday duties efficiently and neatly?

From the ANSWER story, what valuable lesson did Sam learn from his Uncle Bill in regard to doing his homework? What lesson can we learn from this story?

Who was Elijah? What was the “mantle” he cast upon Elisha?

What was implied by Elijah’s action? Was he merely looking for a manservant?

What did Elisha leave behind when he went to follow Elijah?

Are people today ever called upon to leave their homes to follow the Lord? Explain.

Is there any service to God that does not entail some sacrifice? Explain.

How might one’s commitment to God affect others? Does this sometimes bring opposition? Explain.

What examples in the lesson indicate that “working for the Lord” may include some very small, seemingly unimportant acts?

As long as you do what you are asked to do, does it matter whether you wanted to or not?

How important is attitude and faithfulness in the work of the Lord?

THINGS TO DO

Make a list of things that we can do for the Lord at home, on the job, or at school. We know that we can’t do them all, but have the students circle ONE that they will try to work on this week, and report next week how it went.

How does what we do for the Lord at church affect others? Describe what a Sunday morning service would be like if . . .

- the pastor stayed home.
- the usher refused to attend the door.
- the violin players played the horns.
- the janitor went on a strike.
- you didn’t show up.

Work may sometimes be considered too hard or too heavy. Fill a shopping bag (with two handles) with heavy

objects and label each one with a task: chores, homework, music practice, etc. Have one of the students try to carry this heavy bag by himself, then help him by taking one of the handles to show him that the load is no longer heavy. Show the class that Jesus shares our loads.

Make a mini “trivia” game for your class, with questions concerning various duties around your Sunday school. Some questions might be: Who teaches the fourth grade boys? Who leads the singing? Who gave the review last Sunday? Then discuss what would happen to your Sunday school if these people had not been willing to perform these duties. Stress the importance of being willing to do whatever God calls us to do.

Bring a toolbox to class, with a number of tools in it. Explain that these are all good tools, capable of accomplishing the job they were designed to do—but someone must use them to make them effective. The worker must be willing. Then pick up the tools one at a time. Have taped to each tool something one could do for the Lord: for example, pray for one in need, sing in the youth choir, testify. As each tool is examined and the message read, reinforce the thought that the worker must be willing to use each of these tools.

Answers for ANSWER

Are You Willing?

Read each statement and decide what your reaction is. Color the happy face if it is willing. Color the sad face if it is complaining.

If I react like this . . .	my service is . . .
It’s my night to wash dishes again. Why do I always have to do them?	
I’m going to finish my homework as best I can because I want to please the Lord.	
There goes my Sunday school teacher. I’d better run to ask her if I can help with the lesson for next week!	
Boy, I can’t wait to finish raking the yard. Maybe I’ll just hide the leaves under the bushes. No one will ever know.	
Well, I’m going to offer to do a song for next Sunday because I love to do the Lord’s work.	

Write the Key Verse for this week on the blank lines. Unscramble the circled letters to complete the statement below. The last letter is already in place.

**AND WHATSOEVER YE DO, DO IT
HEARTILIY AS TO THE LORD
AND NOT UNTO MEN. Colossians 3:23**

I am **WILLING**, Lord!

TEXT Hebrews 11:32-40; 12:1,2; 1 Peter 2:21

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES Psalm 1; Philippians 4:9

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to identify the character qualities that cause them to designate a person as a “hero.” They will learn that patterning their lives after the lives of godly Bible characters will help them become good examples in this present world.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright. — Psalm 37:37

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. — 1 Timothy 4:12

ANSWER TITLE: **Choosing the Right Hero**
SEARCH TITLE: **What makes a Hero?**

Reference Information

Information for the individual lessons in this quarter may be referred to as individual Bible heroes are discussed. It is important to note that of the many godly characteristics the Bible heroes shared, one is common to all. That is faith. One could not qualify as a true hero without faith, for without faith it is impossible to please God.

Considering the examples given in our text of real heroes of faith, those who would follow their examples are urged

to keep their eyes on the goal, run the race with patience, and earnestly contend for the faith until the crown of life is won.

It was faith in God that supported all those eminent men and women, who in different parts of the world and in different ages, took a heroic stand for righteousness and truth. That same stand taken today by young or old in whatever circumstances God places them is still making heroes of the faith.

YOUR OPENER

What Makes a Hero?

TEXT: Hebrews 11:32-40; 12:1,2; 1 Peter 2:21

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: Psalm 1; Philippians 4:9

KEY VERSE: Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. — 1 Timothy 4:12

RESPONSES

1. Your students' answers will possibly include the following:

Elisabeth and Zacharias — Believed all things are possible.

Joseph (earthly father of Jesus) — Was obedient.

Jesus — The eternal Son of God and full of love for all.

John the Baptist — A soul winner.

Deborah — God would fight their battles.

Gideon — Had courage through God to do anything.

Caleb — Wholeheartedly followed God.

Widow of Zarephath — Faith brought her sustenance.

Stephen — Looked to God for help, even in persecution.

Woman who touched the hem of Jesus' garment — Her perseverance paid off.

Ananias — Was available to do God's bidding.

Elisha — Served God willingly and didn't complain.

The above list gives possible answers. The purpose of six-word answers is to give several students the opportunity to respond without getting into lengthy discussions on any one character. Keep in mind that although we studied one particular aspect of these Bible characters' lives, your class may give other attributes that are equally important. This question will help review the character qualities studied during this quarter.

2. Help the students discuss the idea that it is not the "big names" that are important, but the life lived. A godly example may not be well known but God takes note of his life. Encourage students to look past the well-known names and look at godly examples for their inspiration. Help the class reflect on the names discussed in the

As we have studied during the past twelve weeks, we have considered the question: What makes a hero? The answer to that question depends, to a great extent, on who is asking the question. To a child, a hero would be someone entirely different from that of an adult. Similarly, a Christian's criterion for designating a hero is dramatically different from that of a sinner's. A person becomes a hero to someone else when a certain quality, ability, or attitude is admired so much that it would be imitated by the admirer.

During this course of study we have seen particular qualities exemplified by the lives of twelve of God's faithful servants. These people can be considered heroes because all Christians desire the same qualities and attributes that their lives portrayed.

In considering these heroes, we should be challenged to ask ourselves the question: How can I have a greater measure of these Christian qualities? As we assimilate and grow in Christian graces we will be better able to do as the Apostle Paul commanded Timothy, "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers . . ." (1 Timothy 4:12).

1. In six words or less describe the Christian character quality that we admire for each of the following people:

Elisabeth and Zacharias

Joseph (earthly father of Jesus)

Jesus

John the Baptist

Deborah

Gideon

Caleb

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

Widow of Zarephath
Stephen
Woman who touched the hem of Jesus' garment
Ananias
Elisha

2. Must a person have a well-known name to qualify as a hero?
3. The eleventh chapter of Hebrews is known as "The roll call of the heroes of faith." Note that verse 36 of our text begins with the words, "And others," referring to some heroes who were not even names. What one quality was universal among all of these heroes?
4. Explain the relationship between two phrases found in our text in Hebrews 12:1, "... we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses . . ." and "... let us lay aside every weight. . ."
5. Who is the leading example, both in this quarter's study and throughout the Bible? Explain.
6. Using Psalm 1 as reference, explain why associating with the ungodly more than is necessary can be spiritually dangerous.
7. What was the most important point you have learned during this quarter?
8. After studying about several heroes this quarter and looking closely at their lives, read 2 Corinthians 3:2 and explain the responsibility of every Christian concerning the example they portray.

previous question. They were not all well known. Some of their names were not even recorded in the Bible.

3. The students' thoughts may vary. Direct the discussion to verse 39, "... these all, having obtained a good report through faith, . . ." Help the students to realize that "without faith it is impossible to please him . . ." (Hebrews 11:6). These people, as well as all the characters that were studied this quarter, pleased God. Pleasing God through faith is a prerequisite to becoming one of God's heroes.

4. Students' responses should point out that God uses the lives of successful Christians to inspire others to walk closer to God and "... run with patience the race that is set before us." Ask the students to offer the names of Bible characters and contemporary Christians who have especially inspired them in their Christian walk.

5. The answer to this question should be rather obvious: Jesus. Use Hebrews 12:2, "Looking unto Jesus . . .," and 1 Peter 2:21, "... ye should follow his steps." Ask the students to explain the difference between the example that Jesus left and that of the other characters studied this quarter. They will probably note that Jesus had all of the good qualities exemplified by the others, and more.

6. Psalm 1 does not give a detailed explanation as to why a Christian should not associate with sinners but it does warn against such action. Students may point out that while associating with sinners, a person is continually having a bad example set before him. Point out that although God has the power to keep a Christian unspotted from the world and its influence, a person should be careful not to choose the company of sinners or those who are spiritually "lukewarm," anymore than necessary. "Follow not that which is evil, but that which is good" (3 John 1:11). Proverbs 22:24,25; 2 Peter 3:17

7. Allow students to respond. What was important to them may not be what was the most important point to you, but encourage them to give their thoughts. You might use their responses as a gauge as to how well you kept within the overall objective of the quarter—to address the question of "What is a hero?"

8. Discuss with the students the importance of living a life that is above reproach and is an example of godliness. No person lives unto himself. What he does or does not do may have an effect on those around him. If a Christian's life is open like a letter, as Paul said, to be known and read by all, sinners and fellow Christians will examine his life. Challenge the class to be like the characters studied this quarter—people who will please God. In doing so, they can be modern-day heroes.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

In this quarter we have been studying Bible heroes. How many of them can you name without checking back through your lesson book?

What attributes do you think make a hero? Do you think that in the eyes of God a person might be a hero and still not be considered so in the world? Explain.

Could a student your age ever be considered a hero in God's eyes? Explain.

Do you see the comparison, and can you explain how it takes the same kind of courage to stand against classmates who would urge you to do wrong as it took Caleb to stand against the other spies?

Why do you suppose the poor widow who provided for Elijah was listed as a hero?

When you considered attributes that make a hero, did you list faith? No matter how famous one might be in the world today, can he truly be a hero if he lacks faith in God? Why or why not?

Who was your favorite Bible hero listed in this quarter? Why? What trait or attribute did he have that you would like in your life?

Describe someone you know or have heard about (you need not give a name), and tell why he would qualify as a hero in God's eyes.

THINGS TO DO

Choose students, or ask for volunteers, to act out an incident in the life of a Bible hero. Class may guess who the hero is.

Review the characters and qualities studied this past quarter with a Bible Tic-Tac-Toe game. Divide your class in half, one side being the X's and the other side the O's. Ask questions concerning the lessons, alternating sides. If the question is answered correctly, that team may place a marker on the Tic-Tac-Toe grid.

Give each student two pieces of paper with a piece of carbon stapled between. Discuss the characteristics exemplified by each of the Bible heroes studied this quarter. Have the students draw a large heart on the top sheet

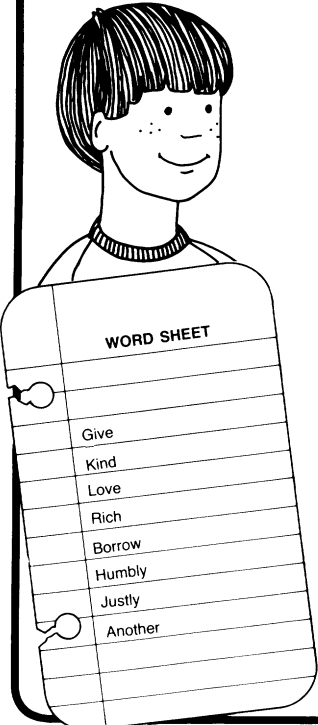
of paper, and then write each characteristic as it is mentioned. Bring out that we want to follow the example and have these virtues in our Christian life too. As you make this point, have them look under the carbon at the second sheet—an exact copy of the first. Have them write the words "My Heart" on the top of this sheet.

Talk about what a "pattern" is with your class. Explain that a pattern is used to make a copy of something. We are to pattern our lives after the Bible heroes we have studied this quarter. Show your group a simple crown pattern cut from cardboard. Allow them to trace around it onto a piece of paper. Explain that the Bible characters you have studied won a crown in Heaven, and if we pattern after them we can also have a crown. Review the characteristics studied, and as you do, have your students write the names of the examples onto their crowns. Have them include their own names too.

Answers for ANSWER

Be a Hero!

If we want to be one of God's Heroes, we have to obey Him. Write the words from the word sheet in the blank squares to discover some of God's commands.



1. **GIVE** to him that asketh thee, and from him that would **BORROW** of thee turn not thou away. Matthew 5:42
2. Be ye **KIND** one to **ANOTHER**. Ephesians 4:32
3. What doth the LORD require of thee, but to do **JUSTLY**, and to **LOVE** mercy, and to walk **HUMBLY** with thy God? Micah 6:8
4. Labour not to be **RICH**. Proverbs 23:4