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# Lesson No. 1

## CAIN AND ABEL

### *The First Crime*

#### INTRODUCTION

Good morning, everyone! We have a good lesson for you this morning. It is about something you hear about all the time and see on television. I want you to also know that ever since Adam sinned, this thing has been present in the world. I am not saying there is nothing we can do about it because we can, but I am saying that sin is the root of this thing I want to talk about today. Have you guessed yet? Some of you have probably guessed right or come pretty close. Our lesson today is about crime. Crime is defined in the dictionary as an act committed in violation of a law prohibiting it. Let me give you an example. If there is a law that says no stealing and you steal something, then you have committed a crime. In the terms of nations in the world, any wrong that breaks one of their laws is called a crime.

God has some standards and laws, too. When a person breaks one of God's laws, do we call that a crime? No. We call it sin. God calls it sin, too. There are many laws nations have created that are the same laws of God. They have just changed the wording to make it seem different. If someone breaks one of these laws, they call it a crime, but God still calls it sin. May has always tried to hide the word sin when he disobeys God by calling the act committed something else. That is probably why so much lying, stealing, cheating and killing still goes on in the world. Sometimes one person will commit the same crime over and over again. Do you know why? Because man does not treat sin like sin. As I already said, man calls sin a crime. It doesn't sound as bad, does it? But it is. If sin were treated as sin, the offender would repent and ask God for forgiveness and live for God instead of against Him.

It all boils down to one point. Either we serve God and honor Him or we ignore Him. That choice is ours as humans. This morning I hope that each of you will make this the day you said "Yes" to God in your life. The choice is yours.

#### BIBLE STORY

The first two babies ever born in the world were Cain and Abel. They were the sons of Adam and Eve and their first and second children. Cain was the older of the two boys and when he grew up he became a farmer while Abel became a shepherd. Now before I go on, let me tell you that this story can be found in Genesis, chapter four.

Cain and Abel were probably no different growing up than some of you. They fought, got spanked and were jealous of each other at times. They were two typical boys; two typical brothers; two typical children. But there is something you should know about being a child. When you grow up and become an adult, you will still have some of the traits you had when you were a child. You will still have fights with people only mostly with words. You will still feel hate and jealousy and all the other things you felt

when a child. As an adult, however, you learn to overcome them and be bigger than your feelings. Some people never do, but many overcome these feelings. It is important that you be bigger than your feelings.

When Cain and Abel became adults, they still tried to worship and please God as they had been taught to do. They learned and set an example for all of us that we are never too old to worship God. As long as we are alive on earth God wants us to worship Him. One day it was time for Cain and Abel to offer a sacrifice to God. Cain brought God something from his farm, and Abel brought God one of his best and youngest animals. But God did not appreciate Cain's sacrifice. It seems that Cain brought his out of a sense of duty and not out of love. Abel's sacrifice was accepted because he was a righteous man and because he offered it in faith.

God told Cain to cheer up, and that all he needed to do was change his attitude to one of love. His sacrifice would be acceptable then. But Cain became jealous of Abel and killed him. He felt that he could get rid of all his problems with God if he got rid of his brother, but it actually caused him a lot more trouble.

God took away Cain's success as a farmer. His final place of settling was in the land of Nod, east of the garden of Eden. Cain had committed the first crime. His crime was discovered and he was punished. The first crime was caused by a bad attitude, jealousy and then murder. Today, I hope you understand why you must be bigger than your feelings. When you grow up you must also outgrow childhood.

#### MEMORY VERSE

**"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin."  
1 John 3:9**

#### OBJECT LESSON No. 1

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate maturing.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A toy saw, a real hand saw or skill saw and a 4 ft. 2x4.

**PREPARATION:** You will need to consider the kind of floor covering you have and what you must do to protect it from the saw dust as you cut the 2x4.

**PRESENTATION:** I shared with you in our Bible Story that it is important for you to be bigger than your feelings. What I was saying was that you need to learn self-control as you grow into an adult. You will not always act or think like a child. One day you will be an adult and people will expect you to act like one. That includes doing the right things at the right times. When you become an adult, people should not have to tell you when to take a bath, go to work or to obey all the laws of the land. You should do those things because by the time you are an adult you should know to do them.

I have a 2x4 that I want to cut. When I was a little boy the only thing my dad would let me cut with was a little toy saw like the one I have here. But it did not cut the wood. I could only pretend that I was cutting wood. I was too young to use a real saw. *(As you tell the preceding portion, hold the wood in one hand and try to saw with the toy saw in the other hand.)*

After I became an adult I was allowed to use a real saw. *(Cut the 2x4 with the real saw you have.)* I had learned to use one and how to be safe with it, so I could now cut wood with a saw. I have gone from a toy saw to a real saw. I was no longer a child but someone who learned more, and was more alert to my surroundings than when I was a child.

Cain had never fully understood all he needed to understand as an adult about offering sacrifices to God. When Cain killed Abel he was acting in a child's way concerning a problem. He did not think his problem out and it resulted in murder. He had not fully matured in life.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 2

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate a natural and healthy progression of growing up.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A baby shoe, a child's shoe, one of your shoes, a baby belt, a boy's belt and one of your adult size belts.

**PREPARATION:** Have these in the order you will talk about them to speed up your presentation. As you follow the presentation you will see the cues as to what to do.

**PRESENTATION:** This is not my baby shoe but I had one just like it when I was a baby. I am going to take off one of my shoes and try to put this little shoe on. My foot won't fit in there anymore. I'm lucky to get my toe in there! Let's take this second shoe I wore one like it when I was a little older. No, I can't get it on either. I must have outgrown that shoe size. I have one more shoe so I might as well try it on. Hey, it fits! I can wear this shoe because it is the correct size for this time in my life. I probably will not ever wear another size again but this one because I am a full grown adult now. I have matured physically.

Not only have my feet grown but perhaps other parts of my body have as well. I wore a belt like this when I was a toddler. It doesn't even come close to fitting me now. The second belt is like the one I had when I was in 3rd or 4th grade, but it won't go around my waist either. The large belt I have here will fit because it is mine. It is an adult's belt. It is the size for a mature adult.

I hope you noticed that as we grow into adults our bodies change size, don't they? It is a natural part of life to go from small to larger. But as our physical bodies grow so should our mental and spiritual lives grow, too. When we become adults we should quit acting like children. We should no longer respond in an immature manner because that is not what an adult should do. An adult should be bigger than his childhood emotions and actions. Cain had trouble being the kind of adult God wanted. His attitude and jealousy led him to kill his brother. Cain needed to be a bigger person on the inside than he was. If he had been, he would have pleased God.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 3

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate the awfulness of murder.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A potted plant you can destroy and a pair of scissors.

**PREPARATION:** Have a plant large enough for everyone to see, yet tender enough it can be snipped with the scissors.

**PRESENTATION:** Everyday we are around plants and animals that are living and healthy. The plant I have can be grown in the pot or it can be transplanted to a garden. In the pot it can only grow to a limited size, while in the garden it can grow to its fullest possibilities. But what would happen if I cut the plant off? *(Take the scissors and snip the plant.)*

When I cut the plant I cut off all of its future possibilities as a plant. I kept it from maturing. I actually took its life away from it. I took away a part of my life as well. The plant exhales oxygen into the air which is what we breathe. My life is dependent upon the plant.

Whenever one person takes another person's life he has broken one of the Ten Commandments which says, "Thou shalt not commit murder." He has also cut off a person's right to reach his full potential. Instead of collaborating with the person to work a compromise, murder takes all the person's rights and future from him.

Cain thought that getting rid of Abel would get rid of all his troubles. Instead, Cain was to lose some rights and possibilities to coincide with those he was taking from Abel. Murder, or any type of harmful action toward another person, is not the answer to any problem we might have in life. It is an awful action. The first crime was murder and it was as ugly then as it is today. In your lifetime, never attempt to settle a problem with violence. Instead, pray and ask God to tell you what to do to resolve your problems. That is the way God would have you do it.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 4

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate Cain's lack of control over this situation.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** Two bottles of ketchup, some tin foil.

**PREPARATION:** Water down one bottle so it will flow easily and have a new bottle of ketchup that will be slow flowing out. Place a large piece of foil on the table to catch the ketchup and a knife to help the ketchup flow if you have to.

**PRESENTATION:** One of the most unpredictable things we encounter in life is a bottle of ketchup. We never know if it is going to come out slow, fast, just right or not at all! It is a food item that is messy if it gets on you, yet tasty when it is on our food. Ketchup has to be poured from a bottle usually and it is hard to control the flow and amount that comes out.

I am going to take one bottle and turn it upside down and see what happens. *(Take the newer bottle and try to get some ketchup to flow.)* It is quite slow, isn't it? It isn't even coming out. I have a knife here and I am going to try and help it out a little. There, the ketchup is coming out now and notice that it is still slow. We could say it has self-control.

Now, I'll take the second bottle and turn it upside down. Whoa! It came running out! The only way I could stop this bottle's fast flow would be to tilt it back a bit to make it run even or back into the bottle. We could say that this bottle did not have self-control.

What you saw with these two bottles of ketchup is a good example of people who think and those who do not. The slow bottle represented the kind of person who would not plunge into a problem and react on emotions. The slow bottle represented a thinker. The fast bottle represented a person who would just try to do something to answer a problem. This person would waste all his energy and talents foolishly, not realizing he might be risking his own future in the process.

Cain had not thought out his problem with God. He blamed his problem on his brother Abel. When Cain could not discover his answer to his problem, he reacted foolishly and killed his brother out of jealousy. He did not have self-control.

Boys and girls, you will always hurt someone else or yourself when you lose your self-control. Sometimes you will hurt a person's feelings or hurt someone who loves you very much because of a lack of self-control. You must always think before you act and always talk to God before doing something important in your life. You will be glad you did.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 5

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate self-control.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A plastic whiffle-ball bat, a thick pillow and a small box of cereal.

**PREPARATION:** Place the cereal on the table and the pillow over the box.

**PRESENTATION:** I want to take this whiffle-ball bat and hit the pillow to see if it will harm the cereal. The pillow should protect the cereal but let's check to make sure. (*Take the bat and hit the pillow in the center two or three times.*) Now I'll take the pillow off and see what has happened to the box of cereal. It is dented a little but it is still in one piece. The pillow protected the box of cereal from any serious damage.

Now I am going to hit the box of cereal with the bat with the pillow out of the way. Before I do, let me warn you that some of the cereal may come flying out of the box. Please do not get up or move from your seats. It will not hurt you. If you will cooperate in this part, we will be able to see the point a lot better. Good, I knew you all would cooperate. Okay, here goes. (*Hit the box of cereal several times and break the box open.*) Hey, the cereal went all over the place, didn't it? Thanks for not getting up out of your chairs. When there wasn't some kind of bumper pad like the pillow in between the bat and the box of cereal the bat did a lot of damage. It destroyed the box and ruined its further use.

Kids, this is what self-control is all about. When you learn to have self-control you will not lash out at another person and hurt them in any way. You will have a special built-in bumper pad, like the pillow, that will take away the impact of the bad feelings you will have about someone or something.

Cain could not hold in his jealousy or evil feelings

about his brother Abel. He did not know how to please God, so he blamed his failure on his brother. God had given him the answer to his problem. If Cain had changed his heart attitude towards God, he would have solved his failure to please God with his offering. If he had prayed and asked for forgiveness and tried to change, he would have been exercising self-control.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 6

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate God's refusal of Cain's offering and His approval of Abel's.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A new shirt, still in the package or a shirt that is still nice-looking. An old shirt — either a T-shirt or a buttoned shirt.

**PREPARATION:** A local store may allow you to borrow a packaged shirt. If they do not, just make sure your two shirts are opposites — one in good shape and the other one soiled and old.

**PRESENTATION:** I want to show you why God did not approve of Cain's offering. If it was our pastor's birthday today and I brought him this new shirt, he would feel pretty good about it. In fact, he would be very pleased because the shirt is so nice-looking.

If I had brought the pastor this shirt (*hold it up*), how do you think he would feel? He would be at a loss for words, wouldn't he? He would look at that shirt and wonder why I would want to give it to him. He would know that I did not try as hard to please him with this gift as I did with the good shirt.

There was nothing wrong with Cain's offering so much as there was something wrong with Cain's attitude and heart. He gave his offering out of duty rather than out of his love for God. When Cain appeared before God, his heart was as visible to God as the good shirt and bad shirt was to us. God knows when we really try to please Him because we love Him and when we just go through the motions of love. Cain went through the motions of love while Abel's sacrifice was with the right attitude and heart. It made a difference to God.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 7

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate Cain's inability to properly identify his problem.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A waste basket, a stapler, a roll of scotch tape, and several sheets of paper that have been typed on, written on, or printed on that you can use to pretend you need collated and stapled.

**PREPARATION:** Empty the stapler but have some staples to put in it later.

**PRESENTATION:** On the table I have some papers I am going to put together so excuse me just a minute as I do. (*Arrange the papers the way you want them, then try to staple them.*) There, that is the order I want. Now I'll staple them and we'll be ready to go on with the lesson. Oh, my stapler won't work! What in the world could be wrong with it? (*Act as frustrated as you can. Pound on it a little and try to get it to work.*) Well, that is enough with this stapler. I'm going to get rid of it. (*Toss it in the waste can.*) I have a piece of tape. That will hold it until I am

through today and can get a stapler that works. (*Tape a corner to hold all the sheets.*)

Do you know what was wrong with the stapler? It really wasn't broken. It was out of staples. (*Get the stapler out and fill it with staples.*) See, I can staple these papers now with no problem. I figured out my problem and took care of it.

Cain could not do this. When he ran into a conflict with God he blamed his problem on his brother, just as I blamed mine just now on the stapler. The real problem was with me. I didn't even try to solve it correctly. I just threw the stapler away. I thought that was the answer. I blamed my lack of staples on the stapler, not me or the person who used it prior to me but did not fill it. Cain was doing the same thing. He never saw himself at fault. He only saw Abel as being wrong and killed him. Cain saw only what he wanted to see and you can never please God or serve God that way.

## PUPPET SHOW

### Title: TAKE IT ANY WAY

Puppets: Mary, Perry, Mr. Harry (*the teacher*)

Teacher: Okay class, tomorrow you are to bring in your papers or projects you have been working on all month. Our annual Project Fair will be Friday and all the items must be in by tomorrow so they can be judged and put on display. Now don't forget that your projects must be according to the official rules, or they won't be accepted. If you are doing a paper, it must be at least four pages and with no smears. You may have pictures and sketches with the paper project as well.

Mary: Teacher, do the projects that aren't research papers have to be painted?

Teacher: Well, they should be as colorful as you can get them, but they do not have to be painted.

Perry: What if we are sick tomorrow? Do we still have to turn in a project? I'm not feeling well today.

Teacher: Perry, you seem to be ill on all our big events. If you do not turn in a project tomorrow I am going to have to tell the principal, write or call your parents, and give you an "F" for projects this quarter.

Perry: Yes, sir. I'll have a project tomorrow.

Teacher: Also, class, I think we have one of the best classes in school. All of our projects in our class should receive at least a C+. I believe each of you can do that.

(*Bell rings and the class is dismissed.*)

Next Day: (*Mary carries a boat and Perry has a paper.*)

Mary: Hey, Perry. What is your project? Mine is on the different parts of a boat. I even made a model. What do you think?

Perry: That's really good, Mary. My project is a paper. I wrote on ducks. It was very interesting.

Mary: But Perry, you only have one page. Mr. Harry said it had to be at least four pages long! What are you going to do? And that page is all smeared up. He isn't going to like that.

Perry: That's too bad. He's going to take it any way, because that is all I am going to do. I'll get a C+ just for handing it in. He'll take it. He has to. I've not turned anything in in the past so this should get me something. Don't worry, he'll take it. I'll leave it here on his desk. See you tomorrow at the awards class, third period.

Next day, next scene (*Mary and Perry enter the class and wait for Mr. Harry to speak.*)

Teacher: Well, class everyone turned in a project yesterday. I am very proud of you. Everyone in our class got a C+ or better on their projects, but one. Also, Mary, you received a blue ribbon for first place. Will you come up here and get it? Thank you.

Perry, you received the worst grade in the whole school for projects. I want to see you after class. Class dismissed.

Perry: What was wrong? I handed in a paper, Mr. Harry.

Teacher: Perry, it was messy and only one page. If you correct it I'll try to let the judges grade it again. You may go now.

(*Perry goes to the side of the stage and thinks.*)

Perry: I'll fix my grade tonight.

(*Enter Mary before Perry leaves.*)

Mary: Perry, did you get in trouble?

Perry: Sure I did. You are so perfect the rest of us don't have a chance. How about fixing up my paper for me and getting me out of trouble?

Mary: No way, Perry! See you tomorrow.

Next Scene: (*Perry sneaks into the class and wrecks Mary's boat.*)

Perry: Good, no one saw me, I'll just take care of "Goodie-Two Shoes" boat. We'll see how she does in the second round of judging now. Hee, Hee, Hee. There, that should ruin it.

Next Scene — Next Day.

Mary: (*sobbing*) Who could have broken my boat, Mr. Harry? Who?

Teacher: Well, I have an idea and here he comes. Perry, will you come over here, please?

Perry: Yes, sir. What do you want?

Teacher: Take a look at this boat, Perry. It's Mary's.

Perry: Boy, someone sure messed that boat up. Mary won't be able to enter the finals now. It sure is . . .

Teacher: Perry, that's enough. You did it, didn't you? We found your handkerchief beside the boat.

Perry: *(Hangs his head.)* Yes, sir. I just wanted to show Mary her project wasn't so perfect. I always seem to lose.

Teacher: Mary's project was good, Perry, and we all know it. If you had worked a little harder you might have turned in a first prize paper. Your attitude and poor project brought you exactly what you earned.

Perry: Huh, too! You always give the best grade to Mary. What's so hot about her?

Teacher: It really makes me sad to hear you talk like that, Perry. You are blaming your failures on Mary and your lack of self-control has hurt Mary personally as well. You are going to have to be punished.

Perry: Can't I just leave school?

Teacher: That is part of it, Perry. I am sending you to the principal. We are sending a note home to your parents, giving you that "F" you deserve, and suspending you from school for the next three days. Now go on to the principal, Perry.

Perry: *(sobbing)* Why didn't I try to change? I've ruined everything. I lost when I thought I had won. I'll never be this dumb again. *(Exit stage slowly.)*

Teacher to audience: Boys and girls, Cain's problems with God and Abel were the same kind Perry had with his teacher and Mary. Cain's lack of self-control was taken out on Abel while Perry's was taken out on Mary. Cain and Perry both ended up losers. I hope you have learned your lesson today. Crime never pays, and a lack of self-control almost always leads to some type of crime. It's not worth it.

## SLIDE STORY

### ANOTHER CHANCE FOR SCOTT

No. 1 — Scott and his younger brother Ryan argued over which video they wanted to watch. At last Scott was tired of it. He was there first and he intended to watch his favorite video. He told Ryan to leave him alone. But Ryan was not ready to give in. He wanted to watch something else. Scott reminded Ryan that he knew wrestling and that he was getting angry because Ryan would not let him put his video on.

No. 2 — In a few moments, Scott put an arm lock on his brother. Ryan, who could not get away, screamed from pain. He struggled but was unable to get free. His arm hurt terribly. Ryan yelled that Scott could watch whatever video he wanted, if he would just let him go.

No. 3 — When Mom rushed into the room, Scott still had a grip on Ryan. She broke them up and checked to see if Ryan was all right. She was very upset that the boys had gotten into a fight.

No. 4 — After Ryan was in his room resting, Mom talked

to Scott about what he had done. Scott admitted that he had hurt Ryan on purpose. He was very honest with his mom. He told her that he was there first and that Ryan would not let him put the video on. He said that wasn't fair, but Ryan wouldn't listen. He told his mom that he warned Ryan but it didn't help. Finally, he hurt Ryan. Then Ryan gave in.

No. 5 — Mom looked very concerned. She talked to Scott in a sweet voice, but he could tell that it was serious. She told Scott how Jesus came to earth because of His love for men who had turned away from God because they wanted their own way. She explained that Jesus didn't want His own way — but He came to help others. She reminded him of how Jesus finally went to the cross and died — not because of anything He had done. Scott listened carefully as Mom told him that Jesus died because she and Scott were wrong — not because He was. Then she asked Scott if he could love his brother the way Jesus wanted him to love.

No. 6 — Scott looked at the floor for a while. He thought about it and was a little embarrassed. Yet he wanted to be honest with his mom. At last he said, "Mom, I can't love Ryan when he is acting that way. I don't know how."

Mom understood what he meant. She asked, "Are you willing to let Jesus help you love your brother?" Scott nodded his approval and his mom continued. "Jesus can help you love Ryan even when he is being mean and stubborn. Let's ask Him to help you."

No. 7 — They bowed their heads and Scott prayed together. First Scott told Jesus that he was unable to love Ryan at times. They asked God to forgive Scott for that. Then they asked that Jesus would help Scott to never forget that Ryan was his younger brother and needed his help. They asked Jesus to help Scott love and be an example to Ryan.

No. 8 — Afterward, Scott was so glad that Jesus had forgiven Him. He knew that Jesus was going to help him do what he had never been able to do. Scott was so glad that he had God's help. He even wanted to ask Ryan's forgiveness.

No. 9 — Ryan was quick to forgive. So, the two boys played in the back yard for the rest of the day. Scott was glad that he had another chance to be a good brother. He knew that with God's help, someday he would be the best brother that he could be.

## CLOSING

This morning we called Cain's act the first crime, but in reality it was sin. It was not the first sin but it was sin. A lot of people try to call sin other names but we know and God knows sin when it is committed. We cannot fool God. I am confident you have learned that self-control is very important. Putting the blame for our failures on someone else is not the answer to our problems in life. It only adds to our troubles by hurting someone else. It is a lesson we need to learn. Let's close our lesson today by asking God to put more love into our lives. In that way, our lives will be controlled by God, not us.

# Lesson No. 2

## ABRAHAM AND LOT

### *A Split Decision*

#### INTRODUCTION

Good morning kids! We are going to have a good time today, aren't we? Amen? Amen! After a word of prayer, let's say our pledges and get ready for the lesson today.

You know every week we try to give someone a prize or reward for winning the quiet seat. We also try to reward those of you who can answer our review questions. because it shows that you have listened the week before. Did you know you can give yourself an even bigger reward? If you listen to what is being taught, and then try to apply it to your life, you will be giving yourself a gift. You will be giving yourself the gift of a life that is based on Biblical principle. What you learn in Children's Church can make you a better person. It is possible that the things we teach can help you make a commitment to Christian service. It may help you become a better brother or sister, student, or even a better parent some day. But we cannot give you that gift you receive from Children's Church unless you want it. You must make the decision to learn and accept the things of God before you will do it. As we begin our lesson this morning perhaps you need to make this day your new day of decision. This could be the day you decided to learn all you can from Children's Church and to give God first place in your life.

#### BIBLE STORY

If you wanted to discover the origin of the people of Israel, you could find it in Genesis, chapter 12. It is recorded in that chapter the calling of Abram, whose name would be changed by God to Abraham. It was through this man's lineage that God would begin the nation of Israel and the people we call Jews today.

Abraham left the land of Ur on faith and took his wife with him plus all he owned plus Lot, his nephew. After a while Abraham and Lot realized that all of their animals and servants were too many for the amount of land they had between them. They decided the best thing they could do would be split up. Abraham let Lot choose the land he wanted and then he took what was left.

We do not know the kind of person Lot was, but we do know that his choice led him into nothing but trouble. The land Lot chose included the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. These two cities were the center of wickedness at that time and God would one day destroy them. Lot seemed to choose the land that led away from the things of God.

Abraham, however, would be blessed by God. Once Lot chose his land and left God, God told Abraham to look all around him in all four directions because that land would be his. Abraham's choice brought blessings while Lot's choice took him away from God. It appears that Lot's decision to separate from Abraham also separated him from God. His life took a different direction in relation to God. Lot's wife would be lost as she turned

into a pillar of salt and Lot's communion with Abraham would be no more. It is a good example to us today that anytime we separate our lives from the things of God we will be going in a direction that leads to trouble. It always has and always will be that way.

#### MEMORY VERSE

**"A faithful man shall abound with blessings."**  
Proverbs 28:20

#### OBJECT LESSON No. 1

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate going in separate ways.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A 6 foot rope and two volunteers.

**PREPARATION:** Pick two equally-sized kids whom you can trust to obey your instructions.

**PRESENTATION:** Okay, before the program this morning I chose two fellows to help me out, and I want them to come on up here on the stage. Thank you. On the floor here I have a rope. I am going to have each boy grab one end of the rope and without looking back begin to walk in opposite directions. Let's watch and see what the results will be. That's enough boys. We can see what happened when they pulled in opposite directions, can't we? When one person pulls one way, and the other person pulls in the other direction the result is conflict and a lack of cooperation. Each boy's force was pulling against the other.

When Abraham and Lot split up, Lot began to pull against Abraham and the things of God. He began to go in the opposite direction of Abraham, and it got him into trouble because Abraham's direction was always in the way God wanted him to move. Lot proved that anytime we go our own way in life it can only lead us into sin and trouble. It is a lesson we need to learn.

#### OBJECT LESSON No. 2

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate going a wrong way.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A box of cereal, a pan to catch it in, a knife and a cereal bowl.

**PREPARATION:** The knife should be sharp enough to cut through the box at the middle of the package.

**PRESENTATION:** We talk about obeying all the time so everyone knows what it means to follow instructions. Sometimes instructions come on packages, too. They tell us how to open or use them. On this package of cereal it says to "Lift Tab to Open," but that's kid's stuff to me. I'll open it the way I want to.

I am going to lay the box on the table, take my knife, and cut this box open in the middle. (*Begin to do this while still talking.*) After all, I know what I want, and what is best for me. Now I can pour myself a bowl of cereal. (*As*

*you pour the cereal make sure you are sloppy with it as you should be naturally with the opening in the side.)* Oh boy, the cereal won't pour right! I think I know why this isn't working, too. I tried to open it my own way and went against the instructions for opening the cereal the right way. I got myself into trouble, because not only does the cereal pour sloppily, but it will be impossible to seal the package back to keep it fresh. Doing the opening my way was the wrong way.

Lot acted in much the same manner. Instead of getting with Abraham to look at all the alternatives available to them, Lot decided that his way was the best way. When he went in the direction he chose, he was ignoring God's instructions to Abraham which were to follow God. His direction led him into trouble while Abraham's was blessed of God.

### OBJECT LESSON No. 3

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate why Lot needed to get out of Sodom.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A candle, large clear pitcher or fish bowl or aquarium, matches and a container of water.

**PREPARATION:** Inside the pitcher secure the candle to the bottom by melting a little wax and then sticking it to the base. The candle needs to be short enough to get covered with water as the pitcher gets filled.

**PRESENTATION:** I hope everyone can see that I have fastened a candle to the bottom of this pitcher. I am going to light it so that everyone can see it is in there. Now we all know that pitchers hold water or other liquids, don't we? So is it safe for the candle to be in the pitcher? Not really. The candle might be safe from the wind, but if it remains in the pitcher, it is in danger of being overcome by rising water or some other liquid as the pitcher is filled. *(Add water to the pitcher until it finally does cover the candle and puts it out.)* I'll just add a little at a time to get the reaction of the candle. It is so stuck to the bottom that it can't get away from the rising water. It can't float to the top or stop the water around it from rising. Eventually it will be put out like I just did to it with the water.

This same thing was happening to Lot. When he chose to go towards Sodom and Gomorrah he was putting himself and his family in surroundings that would eventually overcome him. You see, if you stay around sin long enough, pretty soon it will snuff out your light for Jesus. It will defeat you and make you a part of it. Lot was dangerously close to losing his life in Sodom and Gomorrah when God destroyed them. When you choose to be near sin and away from God, you are coming close to being defeated by sin. When you choose to be associated with sin, you are asking for your light for Jesus to be put out.

### OBJECT LESSON No. 4

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate how separation can be costly.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A broom, an old glove and a pair of scissors.

**PREPARATION:** Cut only the thumb off when you cut on the glove.

**PRESENTATION:** I want to show you how some things continue to operate even if they lack a part. For instance, look at my broom. I am going to take a bristle from the broom and lay it in the table here. *(Pick the broom up and sweep with it.)* My broom still functions even with the loss of one bristle. It would do so even if I lost several. But the bristle has lost its usefulness. Once it was separated from the main broom, it lost its power and protection. With the broom the bristle fits in, but apart it does not.

Now let's look at this glove. I am going to take my scissors and cut the thumb off. I have marred the glove but I have not ruined it. See, I can put the glove on and still use it even though the thumb has been cut off. The loose thumb sleeve, however, ceases to have the same value and use.

When Lot separated from Abraham he became as the bristle and thumb sleeve. He did not fit into the sinful ways of Sodom and Gomorrah. Instead of Lot fitting into their ways, those people were going to make Lot fit into theirs. Lot discovered that separating from Abraham, who had the blessings of God, was very costly. He gave each of us a lesson. Any time we depart from the stability and value system of God, we will find our value to decrease and the experience costly. Lot's cost was his wife.

### OBJECT LESSON No. 5

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate how God pulls those nearest to Him closer to Him and how He blesses them by caring for them.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A canister style of vacuum cleaner with a hose, an empty filler bag, and some objects you can suck up and some that will not budge. *(For example: paper clippings, paper clips, a drinking glass, salt shaker, book, a pot lid, and a couple of pennies or small toys.)*

**PREPARATION:** Put all the items on the table and remove all the items you do not want to be sucked up. Have enough electrical cord to plug the sweeper in near the table.

**PRESENTATION:** I know all of you know what this machine is. It is a vacuum cleaner. This morning I want you to pretend that the suction from the sweeper is like the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit sort of pulls us toward God. It does this by convicting us of sin when we commit it so that we might turn to God for forgiveness. The Holy Spirit also teaches and guides those who know God. They are drawn closer to God as they continually obey Him and the Holy Spirit's wooing.

Watch as the sweeper pulls those things that want to be pulled. *(Turn the sweeper on and let the hose get close enough to pick up all that it can.)* Notice that those items that held onto their position would not let the sweeper suck them at all. Some items ignored the power of the sweeper and held their ground. They did not get swept up into the protection of the sweeper.

*(Turn the sweeper off, open it, and take the bag out. Expose the items.)* We didn't lose a single item. Each one ended up in the collector bag in the heart of the sweeper. They were not just out of sight, they were protected within the bag. All those items swept up into the sweeper

and bag received the blessings of being united and protected.

Here is the difference between Lot and Abraham. Lot refused to be pulled by the Holy Spirit, so he never got close to God nor did he receive the blessings God wanted him to have. Lot's choice kept him outside the protection of God, because Lot did not want it. It makes a difference what you want. You can look for God and meet Him plus receive all He has for your life, or look in another direction and end up like Lot.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 6

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate why God wanted Lot out of Sodom and Gomorrah.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A hand mixer, a glass mixing bowl, a box of chocolate instant pudding and milk.

**PREPARATION:** Here is an object lesson you can use after Children's Church. Find out the amount of milk you will need, mix it all together for this lesson and then enjoy it later!

**PRESENTATION:** You must realize at your age that associating or playing with sin will get you into trouble. I'll try to show you my point with a little illustration. I am not a cook but I can follow instructions. I have a box of instant pudding and some milk. The milk is all that is needed to finish making the pudding. Once these two items are mixed, you can no longer tell which is which. They have mixed. They have become as one because they got so close to each other they became something we call pudding.

God knew the kind of heart and character that Lot had. God wanted to give Lot an opportunity to get out of danger so he sent some men to tell him about the dangerous situation he was in. All around Lot was sin, yet Lot had ignored it and was close to mixing with it. If he had, no one would have known Lot to be any different than those who were living in sin already, as Abraham's nephew, Lot was to be set aside for God, too. He left Ur with Abraham, and he understood God's plan for Abraham. What Lot did not try to understand was that God cared for him, too. God cared so much that He did not want to see Lot get lost in the shuffle of the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 7

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate Abraham's blessings.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A good clump of plumber's putty, three pennies, three paper clips, three little pebbles and three buttons.

**PREPARATION:** Use plumber's putty or window putty because it will work up softer than clay. Make sure you have enough to work all the objects into it.

**PRESENTATION:** If any of you have ever watched a plumber, painter, or window repairman work, you probably have seen them use some stuff that looks like this. It is called putty. It looks a little like clay or play dough, but it is different. On the table up here I have three buttons, three pennies, three paper clips and three little rocks. *(Hold these up so the kids can see them.)* I am going to

take my putty and work all 12 of these things into it. I'll roll it over some and pick them up and some I'll have to stick in there. But I am going to get them all in this ball of putty. *(Work each one in until they are all within the clump. Some can stick out but make sure each one is held by the putty.)* Hey, I did it! It doesn't look too bad and all those things are part of one mass. The putty let us add and add to it so long as we did not destroy the putty's usefulness.

Abraham learned that sticking close to God was where he started getting blessed. His blessings from God seemed to keep on coming and he never questioned God's intent for his life. Like the lump of putty, God was able to add more and more to Abraham's life, because Abraham never tried to do his own thing or go his own way, and that was why his life received blessings and Lot's did not.

## OVERHEAD STORY

### CLARA CLOCK'S FAITHFUL WATCH

No. 1 — I see that Clara clock and some of her friends are listening to the school principal. It must be something about the new gymnasium. Let's drop in on them and pick up the latest news.

"So boys and girls," said the principal, "I am going to need someone to watch the building from after school Friday until Saturday morning. We will have one watchman on duty, so you will not be alone. Our new door locks have not come in and we need help making sure no one breaks in."

"Will the doors that aren't locked be fastened somehow, anyway?" asked Clark.

"Yes they will," said the principal. "We'll have them roped shut."

No. 2 — "Do we need notes from our parents?" asked Clara.

"Yes, yes you will," replied the principal. "I forgot to tell you. Thanks for reminding me. Also, you will need to bring a sleeping bag. If we have enough kids help then we'll watch in shifts. Our grand opening and dedication is scheduled for 10:00 A.M. Saturday."

"I'll volunteer," said Clara.

"Me too!" added Ticky.

"And me!" said Karl.

No. 3 — "Good, good," said the principal. He had hoped for more volunteers, but he would gladly take what he could get. He was hoping that by Friday more of the clocks would be able to help him.

Clara, Karl, and Ticky huddled around Clark to see why he had not volunteered.

"Hey, what's your deal, Clark?" asked Ticky. "Are you afraid to face the responsibility of having to watch the building?"

No. 4 — "No!" Clark yelled. "Who wants to give up their Friday night? Besides, I don't want to help the school out. I want to do what I want to do."

"Clark," said Clara, very surprised. "I can't believe you feel like that. You have usually been a supporter of the school and all of our activities. What's wrong?"

No. 5 — "I'll tell you what's wrong," interrupted Ticky.

"It's crystal clear to me. Clark doesn't want to be a part of our group anymore."

"No, no it's not that," pleaded Clark. "I just have things to do."

With that the clocks did not discuss the matter anymore, but headed for their homes to spring the news on their families.

No. 6 — The next day was Friday. The principal was anxious to see who would be staying the night to help his watchman guard the building. It wasn't long before he discovered Tickey's parents would not let him stay. Karl's parents would only let him stay until midnight. Only Clara's parents agreed to let their child stay all night.

"Well," said the principal, "We do not have a big group staying, but like I said, we will take and appreciate all of you who volunteered. Be at the gym at 3:30."

No. 7 — After school all the clocks met at the gym to see what Karl and Clara had to do. The principal explained their duties and told Ticky and Clark they were still welcome to join the watch crew if they were able to do so.

"How about it, Clark?" asked Karl, one more time.

"No thanks," replied Clark. "I've got things to do."

No. 8 — So Clara and Karl began their watch. It was really pretty easy. At midnight Karl's parents arrived, and he clocked out. Now, only the watchman, Mr. Hands, and Clara were left to watch the new gymnasium. But about 4 A.M. two policemen arrived with Clark in their grasp.

"Do you know this boy?" asked one of the officers to Clara.

"Yes I do. He's my friend," replied Clara. "What's wrong?"

"Well, he was with some kids who had been breaking some store windows and when we caught them they said he was innocent. He had only been watching," explained the officer. "If he's your friend, we'll let him go, because we've heard what a fine thing you are doing."

"Yes, he's my friend," answered Clara.

No. 9 — The policemen let Clark go, and then Clark thanked Clara and went on home. He had wished he had not gotten involved with the wrong crowd. If he had volunteered to watch, like Clara, he would have been safe. Clara continued the watch and kept the building safe. The next morning at 10:00 A.M. the principal and several other men gathered on the gymnasium stage to initiate the grand opening.

No. 10 — "We are glad to have our students' parents and our friends of the community here today," said the principal. "Our gym has been watched faithfully by Clara clock. In honor of her faithfulness, we are going to present her with some prizes donated by Sammy's Sporting Goods Store. Clara, you will receive a new ball glove, ball, a doll we had, some shoes and a gift certificate for \$25.00. All of this because you were faithful to stay all night, watch all night and care for our building. Your faithfulness has brought all these good things your way. Congratulations.

The gym was officially dedicated that day, and the new locks were installed. But at the same time, all the clocks discovered through Clara that being faithful could bring blessings. It did for her.

## CLOSING

Clara's faithfulness brought with it some gifts she did not expect. Her main desire was to make sure no one broke into the gym, not the gifts she received. Clara was much like Abraham today because she stayed with the school system as Abraham remained with God. Whatever Abraham did he did because he loved God. It appears that whatever Lot did he did to please Lot. Lot's choices got him in trouble while Abraham's brought him blessings. It matters how you use your power of choice.

Lesson No. 3  
**JACOB AND ESAU**  
*The Big Deal*

## INTRODUCTION

Boys and girls, this is a great day! We are all in the house of the Lord and have a wonderful opportunity to learn about Jesus! I can't think of any other place I would rather be today than right here in Children's Church. I mean that with all my heart. I always want to be in a place where I can worship the Lord on His day. I don't know about you, but I do not go to church because I have to or I want to feel good. I go to church because I want to, because I love Jesus, and because I know I need to have a time to say thanks to God for all He has done for me. Now, aren't you glad you came today?

We are going to be studying what it feels like to lose something or to lose out on something. Every once in a while, we all have a time in our lives when we make the wrong decision about something and lose something in our lives. We may lose a thing of value that we can't get back, or we may lose an opportunity for our lives that we dearly wanted. Our decision making is important. We need to learn to make the right decisions at the right time if we do not want to lose out in life. To lose out on a special something just because we were not careful is an awful feeling. As we study our lesson this morning perhaps you will learn how not to lose out in your life and in your decision-making, too.

## BIBLE STORY

In Genesis 25-37 the story of Jacob and Esau is told. They were the children of Isaac and Rebekah. Esau was born first and Jacob second. Esau had skin that was hairy while Jacob's skin was smooth. As the boys grew, they developed different interests and talents just like you or I. Esau's interest was in hunting and he became a skillful hunter. Jacob was more tame in his nature and preferred to tend sheep and live in his tent rather than in a field as a hunter might do. The two boys were different, to say the least.

Another thing different about the boys was the blessing they would receive from their father. The oldest boy always received the best blessing. He was to be the new family leader when the father died. It was Esau, however, who would lose the blessing. Here is how it happened.

One day Esau had come in from hunting, and he was very tired and very hungry. He asked Jacob for some of the stew that he had cooked, but Jacob demanded that Esau sell his birthright to him in return for the stew. Esau was so hungry and so inconsiderate about his birthright that he agreed. He gave Jacob the privilege of being blessed first just so he could get fed.

The day finally came for the blessing from Isaac, their father, and Jacob tricked his father into believing he was the hairy, older brother, Esau. He was able to do this because Isaac had almost become deaf and blind. When Esau found out for real that he had lost his father's

blessing, he cried and from that day on held a grudge against his brother. Isaac could not take back his special blessing he had given by mistake to the second son. Esau learned the hard way that being careless over the things of God can be costly. It cost him a special blessing.

## MEMORY VERSE

**"But if any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him." Hebrews 10:38**

## OBJECT LESSON No. 1

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate losing out on a blessing.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A piggy bank, some coins, and a pan of dirt.

**PREPARATION:** The dirt should be sandy soil and only partly covering the bottom of the pan.

**PRESENTATION:** A person who puts his money in a bank, savings account, or even a piggy bank is saving their money. When I was a young boy my mom or dad would give me a few coins, and I would put them in a piggy bank. (*Drop some coins in the piggy bank.*) As my bank filled, I had money to buy something I wanted but could not have bought with the few coins I would receive from mom and dad each time. I had to collect them until I had a large amount.

If I had spent every coin my mom and dad had given me it would have been like throwing my money in the dirt. (*Throw some into the dirt.*) I would have been wasting my opportunity to buy something of value later on. Once money is thrown away, spent, or wasted it cannot be recovered. The only way to recover it is by hard work or another gift of money to make up the difference, but that does not often happen.

Esau wasted his blessing for some stew. He sold his birthright to his brother and lost the special blessing from his father. If he had not been in such a hurry to feed his stomach for the moment, he would have received the blessing due him. The way we handle the things of value God gives us can bless us or hurt us. Esau hurt himself by not caring for his birthright seriously enough.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 2

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate the loss of something special.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A coffee can, Kool-ade, a pan and a pitcher.

**PRESENTATION:** God had given the people of Israel a special way to pass on their inheritance from generation to generation. He let them pass on their wealth and belongings with a blessing from the father to the oldest son. The first boy born into a family was to become the new head of the family. It would then be his job to make

the important decisions for the family and to enforce any discipline that needed to be dealt out. All the other brothers and sisters were to obey the one with the blessing, just as if he were the father. The oldest son was always careful to obey the one with the blessing, just as if he were the father. The oldest son was always careful to obey his father and learn what he could while he was young so that he could be a good leader someday. The oldest son in all the families of Israel did not want to lose the opportunity of the special blessing from their fathers.

I am sure you all have seen a coffee can before. As you can see, it is empty. In a way, that can represent the eldest son before his blessing. As he grows and his father gets older, he begins to watch his life fill with the qualities of leadership he will need. (*Pour all the Kool-ade into the can.*) But if the oldest son was not careful or had a bad attitude about the blessing, he may lose everything. As you can see, the Kool-ade has found a hole to run out of. It has found the part of the can that was weak and non-protective of the contents inside. It lets the Kool-ade pass out unhindered as if it didn't care, and of course, the can doesn't care.

This is how Esau lost his blessing too. He gave his birthright away because, hungry and tired, he was weak. He let the birthright slip out of his life as if he did not care. At that time, he did not.

### OBJECT LESSON No. 3

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate the difference between the two boys, Esau and Jacob.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A football, a softball, and a two liter plastic pop bottle.

**PREPARATION:** Set the bottle up a certain distance from a line you put on the floor. You will throw from that line. You will be trying to knock the bottle down. Set the bottle small end down.

**PRESENTATION:** I am going to play a little one-pin bowling today. I set the lone pin up down there at the end of our table, and now I am going to roll my softball at the pin and see if I can get it down. (*Roll the ball and hit the pin. Keep trying until you do.*) Hey, I got it. That wasn't too bad. The softball rolls straight. Now let's try the football. I'll set the pin up again and try to hit it with the football. (*Hold the football on its end and send it towards the pin but not very forceably or exactly straight so it will naturally roll funny.*) A football is a little harder to control when it comes to rolling. I guess that is why they throw and kick a football instead of rolling it.

Jacob was much like the softball. He never did anything strange. He was a boy who stayed on a straight line for his parents and never wobbled around like his brother. Esau was like the football. He was in the woods, in the desert, in the fields, and in his home at all times of the day and night. You just couldn't tell where he was going. He might be headed towards one thing, but then you would find him off somewhere else.

Jacob and Esau were boys, yet they were different, just like our balls were balls yet different. One was round while the other one was oblong. It made a difference in how they rolled. Jacob's make-up made him react differently to life than did Esau. Jacob was concerned about

family life and tradition while all Esau seemed to care about was his hunting and self pleasure. It was obvious the boys were not the same.

### OBJECT LESSON No. 4

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate Esau's lack of appreciation for his birthright.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A coloring book.

**PREPARATION:** Try to get a coloring book your kids will be familiar with, one they would purchase.

**PRESENTATION:** I want you to notice my coloring book. I am sure to some of you this particular one is a familiar one. I was told that this book could be mine if I took care of it. But if my friend, who gave it to me to hold, decides to take it back, I better tear out a couple of pages. (*Tear out a couple of pages and be sloppy about it.*) Oops, I messed up a little there, but I think it will be all right. Maybe I had better take one more page out to give myself an extra picture to color. No one will miss three pages. (*Tear the cover this time and the page you want out.*)

Look at the book now. (*Hold it up and show how it is not so nice looking now.*) I did not have much respect for the book my friend gave me, did I? If he wanted to give it to me now I probably wouldn't want it, and I am sure he wouldn't. I have no respect for the book or for what I could have had.

It was the same with Esau. He did not treat his birthright with respect. He could have been blessed of God through his father, Isaac, if he had only been more careful. Esau took his birthright too lightly, so he did not watch it carefully enough to keep it. He did not really appreciate what he had. God was giving him an opportunity to be number one in the family, but he gave it up.

### OBJECT LESSON No. 5

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate Esau's first step in receiving his father's blessing.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A small bottle of cola and a hostess cake or pie.

**PREPARATION:** The cola should be the kind with the twist-off top.

**PRESENTATION:** What do I have to do to take a drink of this cola and eat this pie? That's right. I have to open the bottle and I have to tear the package open to get to the pie. (*Open the bottle and the pie and sample both.*) There is always a first step in getting a reward, prize, or thing of value. Anything that is worth possessing takes an effort of some sort to attain. It did not take much to open the bottle or the pie, but it took some. It took a first move before I could enjoy the next step which was tasting the two foods.

Esau could have received the blessing of his father instead of Jacob if he had not sold his birthright. He did not want to suffer the hunger he was feeling so he became desperate and sold his birthright to his brother. His first step towards getting the special blessing from his father was to be ready for it. His interest in hunting showed that he was not ready. He had not taken the proper first step

to receiving his prize, thus his brother Jacob received it instead.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 6

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate Esau's realization of his loss of the birthright.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A toothpick, some string, a sugar cube, a cup of warm water, and an empty cup.

**PREPARATION:** Tie the string to the toothpick and stick it in the sugar cube. Have the cup of warm water on the table in clear view.

**PRESENTATION:** I want to share with you how Esau discovered he had lost his birthright. At the end of my string is a sugar cube. A sugar cube is a solid mass of sugar that is a perfect additive to a cup of coffee or some other similar item that needs sweetened. As I place the cube in the cup of water I have on the table, it is hard to tell when the cube melts. There is no tug on the string or movement to tell me when the cube is melted. I have to check it every once in a while. (*Pull the string back out when the cube has melted, and then slowly pour the water from that cup into the empty can so that the boys and girls can see the cube has indeed melted.*) So now you can see that the cube did melt off of the stick, and we never really knew it.

Esau lost his birthright of receiving the special eldest sons' blessing to his brother, Jacob. He knew he had given his birthright to Jacob, but since he was the oldest son he felt he had control of the blessing. He thought he was holding the string to control his blessing so he did not think about his deal with Jacob. Then one day he realized that all he had at the end of his string of power was nothing. When he came to the reality that he had lost his precious birthright, he saw he had nothing, and that he had been left holding a string that led to failure. Esau's hold of being the oldest son was not enough. His foolish deal with his brother made him pay for his lack of respect for his birthright.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 7

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate Esau's unequal trade of his birthright for some stew.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A can of noodle soup, a bowl and a cup full of coins.

**PREPARATION:** Open the can of soup before placing it out on the table.

**PRESENTATION:** Everyone here has eaten soup before, haven't they? I thought so. I have a can of noodle soup, and I already opened it before the program this morning. Now I am going to pour it into the bowl on the table! (*Pour it into the bowl slowly.*) Pretty soon everyone in the room will be able to smell it I'm sure. Smells good!

In the other cup I have some coins. (*Jiggle the coins — pour some out in your hand.*) I am not sure exactly how much money I have, but it is more than the cost of the can of soup I am certain. If you were going to choose one of these items, which one would you take? I mean which one do you think would be more valuable, the soup or the cup full of coins? That's correct. The cup full of

coins would be the best value because once the soup is eaten it is gone. There may be enough money, however, to buy several cans of soup plus more. The best trade would be to give me the soup and you take the coins.

Kids, as silly as the choice we just made may seem, that is what Esau did. His birthright had much more value than the stew his brother Jacob had but Esau made the trade. He let his hunger and circumstances for the moment make him make a foolish choice concerning his birthright. The blessing he would have received from his father along with all of the things he would have been given as the heir to the family treasures would have bought him many bowls of stew. Yet Esau sold his birthright for a bowl of stew.

## OVERHEAD STORY

### LET'S MAKE A DEAL

No. 1 — There's Pete potato talking to Bud. They look like they are trying to work out some kind of deal. We'll just drop in this morning and see what's going on.

"Well, I really want your flashlight and canteen for camping," explained Pete. "But I don't have anything to trade for them. You already said you do not want my crayons or pocket knife. What do you want?"

"Just let me think," began Bud. "I have a baseball hat like yours and a wagon. How about your bicycle?"

"My bike?!" gulped Peter. He really wanted the canteen and flashlight for camp, but he wasn't sure it was worth his bike or not.

"It's the bike or no deal," said Bud again trying to pressure Pete.

"Okay!" said Pete sadly. "It's a deal."

No. 2 — Pete headed for his yard to get his bike. He thought the deal was a little bit hurried and perhaps not the wisest, but he just had to have Bud's camp flashlight and canteen. He could see himself now being the center of attention at camp with a super-duper flashlight and a neat canteen for when they took hikes and needed a drink. The closer he got home the more convinced he was that he had made the right trade. Anyway, his seat was torn and the fenders bent. It wouldn't do him any good any more. Pete got his bike and rode back to Bud's house.

No. 3 — When Pete got back to Bud's house, Bud was polishing up the canteen and checking the flashlight to make sure it was in working order.

"I didn't know if you would come back and trade or not," said Bud. "But I cleaned the canteen up just in case."

"Yes, I'm going to trade," assured Pete. "If I can save enough money up for camp I'll have the two things I need most while there, a canteen and flashlight."

"Are you sure your parents will let you make the deal?" asked Bud. "I don't want your parents jumping on me because you made a deal without them knowing it."

"Hey, what do you think I am, a babyhead? My parents don't care what I do with my stuff. It's mine," said Pete.

"Okay, here's the canteen and flashlight," said Bud.

"Okay, here's the bike," replied Pete.

No. 4 — The two boys traded and immediately began to admire their newly-claimed treasures. Both Pete and Bud felt they had made the best deal. For the moment Pete had the things he needed for camp and Bud had a bike to take him from place to place.

In a few moments Pete started back for home. He could hardly wait to tell the first person he saw about his super trade. He really showed his expert trading skill and he wanted to tell everyone he met.

No. 5 — Meanwhile, Bud rode his bike over to Roscoe and Wally's to show it off. They were in the garage polishing, adjusting, and checking their bikes up.

"Hey, you two!" yelled Bud. "Look at my bike I traded for with Pete."

"Wow! How did you do that?" asked Wally.

"I traded my canteen and flashlight," replied Bud.

"Just in time, too," added Roscoe.

"What do you mean?" asked Bud.

"Haven't you heard?" asked Roscoe in return.

"Heard what?" asked Bud again. "Is it something neat?"

No. 6 — "The neatest thing we've had in a long time!" said Roscoe. "The Men's Club in town is sponsoring a big bike race contest. The winner gets a free scholarship to camp this year plus a gift certificate at Antwan's Sporting Goods store."

"What does it cost? What do you have to do to get into the race?" asked Bud.

"You have to go to Antwan's and get a form, and the cost is one dollar plus you need a bike," explained Wally.

"I'm in!" beamed Bud. "I've got a bike, and it's so broke in I'll bet I can run over that race track faster than anyone!"

"We are going to give you a race for first place anyway," dared Roscoe.

No. 7 — The next day the boys went down to the sports store and signed up for the race. They parked their bikes on the bike tree and got in line to sign up. It looked like 50 to 75 kids had signed up for the race. They would start out in front of the store, race through the park, and end up again at the other end of the store's parking lot. The race would start Saturday at 10:00 a.m. and anyone who wanted to could take practice runs over the race course. Bud thought that was a good idea and talked Roscoe and Wally into going over the course with him. The excitement was really building for the big event.

No. 8 — "Are you guys ready?" asked Bud after they signed up.

"You bet. Let's go!" said Roscoe. "I'll beat the both of you!"

Off the three boys went. Their route took them right by Pete's house. Pete just happened to be sitting on the front porch. He saw the boys go by and that they went into the park so he tried to cut them off at the second entrance. He was right in his guess and was able to stop the boys.

"Hey, what are you guys up to?" asked Pete.

No. 9 — "We entered the Men's Club bike race," said

Bud. "It starts Saturday at 10:00 a.m. in front of Antwan's store."

"And the winner gets to go to camp free and they get a gift certificate at Antwan's Sporting Goods store."

"What do you have to do to enter?" asked Pete.

"Give a dollar," said Wally.

"And have a bike," added Bud.

"What?" screamed Pete. "A bike? I've got to get home. What have I done!?"

Pete ran home and started working on some parts and scattered pieces of an old bike he had to try and get ready for the race Saturday.

No. 10 — Soon Saturday came and all the boys were at the store on the starting line, but there was no sign of Pete. When the gun went off Pete still was not seen. Off the boys raced, following the clearly marked route the Men's Club had made. Roscoe, Bud and Wally switched the lead with some others all the way through the race. At the end Bud was ahead with Roscoe and Wally close behind. Bud crossed the line first.

No. 11 — And when he did, there was Pete at the starting line. Pete had come too late. He had lost track of the time while finishing his makeshift bike and came at the end of the race, instead of the beginning. Bud collected his pass to camp and gift certificates which he used to buy a new canteen and flashlight, and then went to talk to Pete along with Wally and Roscoe.

"You are late," said the boys.

"I know," sobbed Pete. "I traded my bike without thinking. I could have won that race. I could have gone to camp free and won what I traded for just like you did, Bud. I blew it!"

Pete learned his lesson the hard way. Without thinking he had traded away his chance to be number one in the race and to get exactly what he wanted. Pete's bike was his right to get into the race, but he traded it for something he felt he needed but he could have done without. When he did not appreciate or respect what he had, he lost his chance to have even more.

## CLOSING

Boys and girls, Pete did the same kind of thing that Esau did. Esau wanted some stew to relieve his hunger for the moment and Pete wanted a flashlight and canteen so bad he did not care what he gave up to get it. Both boys lost a blessing. One could have been the leader of his family when Isaac died and the other could have been in the race with a good chance to win. After all, his bike was the one Bud rode to win the race.

God has told us that anytime we take our eyes off the goal of serving Him we too lose out on a blessing. We are to serve Jesus not our desires for food, a home, a car or anything else. God wants us to have these things but not if they come before him. If you are having that trouble in your life and God has talked to you about it today you need to pray and ask Him to help you get back on the right track. After all, you do not want to miss a blessing either!

# DON'T LOOK BACK

## INTRODUCTION

How many of you know what time it is? Of course you do, it's time for the quiet seats and all of you know what that means, don't you? Sure you do. I want to look for people who are sitting up straight, hands on lap, feet on floor, and looking right up front. We're going to talk about a lady and the lesson she learned, and hopefully, we can learn the same thing. We don't even know the lady's name. It's not mentioned anywhere in the Bible, but what happened to her was important enough for Jesus to talk about it and told us to remember her. It was a lady who started out doing something but didn't finish it. There's a lot of people like that in the world today, isn't there? There's a lot of people who are good starters but not finishers. It's what I call the firecracker vs. the flare. A flare burns for a long time and keeps on burning. It makes a bright light but a firecracker is just a big boom and then it's all over.

I heard a story once of some boys who went on a camping trip and got lost out in the woods. They had no idea where they were since they had no compass, no map and no directions. So they laid down for the night and decided that in the morning it would be easier to find their way in the daylight. Then the boys couldn't agree on which way they should go. So finally a couple of them got together and said we're going this way and that left one who said no we need to go in the direction of that tree way over there. He pointed towards a big tall tree which looked like miles and miles away. The other boys said no, we're going to go this way. So all of the boys, except for one, went in one direction and the one boy went in a straight line towards the tree. He kept his eye on the tree and he never took his eye off the tree but just kept walking in a straight line towards it. Well, to make a long story short, the boy who followed the tree went the quickest and shortest way and by going towards the tree he ran into another camp site that was by the tree. The other boys ended up getting lost and weren't found for almost five days because they didn't really know where they were going. They didn't have a goal or they didn't have something set in front of them to look at. They kept going to the left and then to the right. Sometimes they lost track of where they were going and then going back in the same direction that they came from. You have to set your eye on a goal. You can't look to the left, nor to the right, or look behind you. You must keep going straight ahead towards the goal. The Apostle Paul said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, and I've kept the faith." The only way that Paul could have completed his life in the way that he wanted to do it was to finish it in the way he started it after he became a Christian. He did a lot of bad things in the first part of his life, but once he got saved, he set a goal for himself and he kept on going in that direction. He never looked back or turned around. I think that's a good goal for each one of us to have set in our own lives.

## BIBLE STORY

There's a man in the Bible by the name of Lot. His wife is also mentioned but her name is not given. She's only known as Lot's wife. The Bible says that when Lot and Abraham split up, Lot and his wife and children settled in a town by the name of Sodom. It was a city of wickedness and all kinds of terrible sins. These people didn't care about God or anybody else. They didn't even care about themselves for the most part. But for some strange reason, even though Lot and his family knew what was going on there in Sodom, they stayed there. When they started living with ungodly people who were doing wrong things, Lot and his family I'm sure, thought that some of the things that they used to think were wrong maybe weren't so wrong any more. That's what happens when you start hanging around the wrong crowd. God was so aggravated with Sodom that He decided to destroy it. He was going to burn it up. He knew that in the past Lot and his family had tried to serve Him, so He sent two angels to warn Lot. He told them to get out before He destroyed the city. The angel told them that once you go out of the city don't look back but just keep your eyes straight ahead and don't look back at it. Lot gave the instructions to his family. I believe some of you have probably heard the story in Sunday school. I've always heard the story told that Lot and his family just barely got to the city limits of Sodom when God started destroying the city. It was just outside of Sodom that Lot's wife turned around to look back, completely disobeying what God had told her not to do. The Bible says that she turned into a pillar of salt, except if you read the account very carefully you'll find out that's not what really happened. If you read in Genesis, chapter 19, especially in verse 23, you'll find that Lot and his children had already entered a little town by the name of Zoar, which was almost 50 miles away from Sodom, and they were safe. They had already gotten to safety. It was just before Lot's wife entered into Zoar that the pull of the old life and friends and the pull of the things that she'd grown up to love in Sodom finally overcame her heart. It was there outside the gates of Zoar that she turned into a pillar of salt, not outside the gates of Sodom. Why is that so important? It's so important because she almost made it to Zoar. She almost made it to safety and she almost did what God wanted her to do. She almost completed the course, but listen to me boys and girls, almost is not good enough. Almost is not going to get the job done for God. Lot's wife didn't turn into a pillar of salt outside the gates of Sodom, she turned into a pillar of salt outside the gates of Zoar. She was another casualty of almost. Almost! Almost! Almost! Our memory verse today is fitting for this story. Let's take a look at it.

## MEMORY VERSE

**"I have opened my mouth unto the Lord and I cannot go back." Judges 11:35**

## OBJECT LESSON No. 1

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate that anything less than being what you should be is not really good enough to get the job done.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A yardstick.

**PREPARATION:** In preparation for this object lesson it's going to be necessary that you understand the object lessons in this lesson. I'm talking about utilizing again the thing that I really believe in, and that is the power of space repetition. We're going to be doing rapid-fire here. These object lessons that seem to be going in the same direction, and the reason why they are, is that's the way it's supposed to be. It's very important for the boys and girls to understand before they leave here that they have got to finish the course. This is the whole crux of this lesson, and if they miss that, then they're missing the whole thing. So while ministering in these object lessons get in your mind very clearly what the purpose of this whole lesson is, and that's to drive this thought of completion home. We've got to complete it and we've got to see it through. There are too many young people today who are stopping way short of the goal that God has for them. That's why we have the problems in a lot of our churches today with adults as we do. I'm sure most of you are quite aware of this, so it's our responsibility as teachers of the little people, to get the right foundation here. This lesson is quite crucial to it. I just wanted to throw that in to make sure that all of you who are teaching this lesson really understand how I feel so you in, in turn, can communicate these strong feelings as I'm sure you feel yourself. So praise the Lord! To prepare this object lesson besides preparing your own heart you've got to prepare the yardstick. The best way to do that is to cut off the last foot of the yardstick. You can either break it or make a clean cut. It would probably look better if you made a clean cut so the boys and girls won't really notice that it has been broken off until you draw it to their attention. Have both pieces on the table on your platform prior to the presentation.

**PRESENTATION:** Boys and girls, Lot's wife started in the same direction as Lot and the rest of their children did but she just didn't finish it. She didn't complete the course that God had given her to run. It's just like this yardstick (*hold up the bigger piece*). Now most of you know a yardstick or a yard is made up of three feet. So this yardstick, if it's a good yardstick, is going to be three feet, right? Right! Now here we have a yardstick, that because the name of it is a yardstick, that means if someone was to pick it up it should have the capability of measuring off three feet. (*Hold it up.*) Except there's just one problem — there's one foot missing (*hold up the other foot at this time*). Does that mean that this yardstick is a complete yardstick? (*Wait for an audience response!*) No, of course not, because there's one foot missing. We can call this a yardstick, it can look like a yardstick from a distance, we can write the word yardstick on it, we can tell everybody we want to that it's a yardstick but saying it's a yardstick doesn't make it a yardstick. It has to have three feet before it's a yardstick. It can look it but it isn't. And that's exactly where all of us are at this morning. We can say we're Christians, we can look like Christians, we

can act like Christians, but until we are we're not a Christian. Just like this yardstick. But let's go on.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 2

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate once again that anything less than complete is basically useless.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A dozen eggs in the carton.

**PREPARATION:** The only preparation necessary for this object lesson is to have the eggs opened on your table on the platform just prior to the presentation.

**PRESENTATION:** And now for our next object we have here a dozen eggs (*hold up the box*). Now, how many is in a dozen? (*Wait for an audience response.*) Right, twelve. Exactly! Now what's going to happen if I take this one egg out? (*Take the one egg out and hold the box so that the children can see the eggs, but of course not tipping them over too far or they'll see them a little closer than they really want to or than what you want them to.*) Now, I've taken this one egg out which means I still have a dozen, right? What do you mean wrong? I still have a box here. The box here says there's a dozen eggs. It looks like a dozen eggs' box, doesn't it? But as we look inside we find out that there isn't. How many of you are understanding what I'm trying to get across to you here this morning? It's got to be complete before it's a dozen. There has to be twelve before it's a dozen. The box has to be full before it's a dozen. Anything less than that is not a dozen. But let's go on a little further.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 3

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate as we have been, the importance of completion.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A six-pack of Coke.

**PREPARATION:** You can either drink one of the bottles or cans out of the six-pack before the presentation or take it out as you're speaking. It doesn't matter, whatever you feel most comfortable with, but we're going along the same lines as the importance of completion.

**PRESENTATION:** How many is in a six-pack? Six, right! (*You might want to take one out of the package now.*) How many is in this one? Five? I thought this was supposed to be a six-pack. It is a six-pack, right? But there's one missing, right? That makes it a five-pack. No it doesn't make it anything because there's no such thing as a five-pack. It's either a six-pack or it's nothing. It's either a six-pack or you have five individual cans or four or three or two or one. A six-pack is called a six-pack, why? Because it's got six, that's right. It doesn't make any difference what you do all your life but it makes a difference whether you complete the course and whether you finish. It does make a difference if you are a Christian or not.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 4

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate that not only the ingredients, but what we do with the ingredients of a person's life, constitutes whether we finish the course or not.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** The same dozen eggs that we've already used in one of the previous object lessons and some type of a cooking pan, a frying pan or whatever. A wet and dry towel to wipe your hands off in case you need those. A large stirring spoon.

**PREPARATION:** In preparing for this object lesson keep all of your props as I've recommended in the past couple of years right there on your table so they're easily accessible. This helps to keep the program moving smoothly. It also becomes a focal point of the boys and girls as they come in from week to week because they know that the things up there are things you're going to be using and it kind of keeps them guessing and keeps their attention as to what these objects are going to be used for.

**PRESENTATION:** Right now we're going to make some scrambled eggs and I think that everyone knows a little bit about how they're made. I'm not much of a cook but we're going to give it a try here. We're going to take egg number one and we're going to pick it up here. We're going to crack it and put it into the pan. Then we're going to take egg number two and we're going to do so at this time. Then we're going to take the spoon and we're going to stir them up, one, two, three and there we go. We're going to stir them up three times and now we have *(take the spoon out and lay it to the side and show them what we have in the pan as close as you can)* scrambled eggs. Mmmmm, one problem, what happened? We didn't finish cooking them, did we? As a matter of fact we haven't cooked them at all. So now they tell me that all the ingredients you need for scrambled eggs is eggs, right? We've got the eggs, we've put them in the pan, we've stirred them up so we should have scrambled eggs. One problem, we just didn't cook them. You see you can have all the ingredients but they all have to be put together right. You see boys and girls, everybody in this room has the ingredients today to be a great Christian. You have it within you to be a great Christian and you can become a great man or a great woman of God. We have children in here who can become great preachers some day but it takes more than just having the ingredients. It takes adding Jesus to our life! It takes having the desire to do it. You see, we had the eggs and we've got the eggs right here in my hand. In this pan we have the ingredients to make good scrambled eggs but it's not going to happen if I just leave them here. Scrambled eggs aren't going to just happen by leaving them here in this pan. I have to put them on the stove. Some of you need to be put on the stove. Some of you need to get fired up for God to be what God wants you to be. These scrambled eggs are not completed and they'll never be completed this way. They'll rot unless I take them over and put them on the stove and cook them.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 5

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate again the tragedy of a partially completed job.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** An untied shoe.

**PREPARATION:** In preparation for this object lesson you have two options, you can either use your shoe, untie it and take it off and leave it on the platform. For those of

you who do not wear tie shoes, or for some of you who are ladies, this will be a little tougher, so I would recommend getting a tennis shoe and have it untied sitting on the table on your platform ready to go for the presentation.

**PRESENTATION:** We have a perfectly good shoe up here this morning *(hold the shoe up at that time)*. We can put this shoe on and it's ready to go. I could carry someone a great distance *(if it's a tennis shoe, you could use the illustration of running or jogging for many miles)* and all it would take is just to pick it up just like this and put it on someone's foot and they can take off running, right? Almost right. There's one other thing we'd have to do once we get it on the person's foot, and what is it? *(Wait for the audience response.)* Of course, we'd have to tie it. You see, unless this shoe is tied onto someone's foot what's going to happen? Probably one of two things. Either they will loose the shoe in the middle of a race or a few miles down the road, or maybe not even that far, because it's not tight enough so it will fall off or they'll trip over the shoelaces and fall and get hurt and not get anywhere anyway. What am I saying? I'm saying that we have a perfectly good shoe here but it's useless unless it's tied. *(Begin tying it at this time. You might want to have an assistant hold it up as you tie it in front of the audience.)* It's like many of you, you're great, boys and girls, but you haven't given your life to Christ yet so you're not complete. You've got years to live should Jesus not come back for a while. Until this shoe is tied, there's no way someone is ready to run the race, because you're only partially prepared.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 6

**PURPOSE:** To try to draw to a conclusion the concept of completion.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** Box of aluminum foil and a baking potato.

**PREPARATION:** In preparing for this object lesson just have all your paraphernalia laying on the table in advance of the presentation.

**PRESENTATION:** I'm going to bake a potato boys and girls, right here. We've got a potato here and what do we do to bake it? Why, everybody knows how to bake a potato. All you do is take a little bit of foil, *(take some at this time)* wrap up the potato and here we have it. We've got a baked potato right here. Right? Wrong! What's missing? We've got to bake it! But why is it called a baked potato? I thought all you had to have in a baked potato was a potato wrapped up in tin foil. I guess I was wrong, wasn't I? You see we've got all the ingredients, we've got the potato, it's right here in my hand, we've got it wrapped up and it's ready to go. The only difference is between a potato and a baked potato is baking it. That's all the difference in you boys and girls here today between being a starting Christian and a finishing Christian is whether you've just started or whether you finish. We started baking this potato didn't we? We got it out, we got it ready, it's washed, it's wrapped and now there's only one thing left to do, and that's put it in the oven. Now, it will never, never, never be a baked potato until we put it in the oven. It can stay here all day but it's not going to all

of a sudden sprout legs and walk to the oven itself, at least I don't think so. It might surprise us but I don't think it will. We have to pick it up and put it in the oven, just like we have to pick ourselves up and take ourselves where we want to go and do what we know we need to do. Finish what you start — finish the course — finish what God has called us to do.

## OVERHEAD STORY

### BUBBLE TROUBLE

No. 1 — Well there's Double Bubble, the fastest gum in the West and his partner Triple Trouble. I just can't believe those two guys are good friends. Double Bubble is one of the smartest, obedient pieces of gum in town. Why, every job he's ever taken on he's done it quicker and he's done it better. He's one of those pieces of gum that finishes everything he starts. You know what I mean? He just doesn't fool around, when there's a job to be done he just gets in there and gets going and doesn't quit until the thing is finished. He doesn't do a halfway job, no sir, not Double Bubble. He gets in there and gets with it. That's what's so hard to understand, he's always hanging around with that Triple Trouble. Triple never gets anything done and he never finishes anything. He starts a lot of things but I can't remember one thing in the history of this whole town that Triple has ever finished. Why, one time he started to go to the store and never even made it half way there. He started a paper route and never even got the first paper delivered. He started school and never finished school. Why, he can't even sit down to eat and start to eat when he usually ends up getting up and going somewhere else and never finishes eating. Isn't that crazy? Craziest kid I ever saw in my life. I sure can't figure how those two hang around together, they're just as different as night and day. I wonder where in the world they're going this time of day, especially this far from town. Oh, wait a minute. That picture that Double's holding in his hand might be the answer to all our questions.

No. 2 — Well, they must be out looking for the escaped convict, Sammy Sucker. Sammy just escaped from the city jail, you know. They said he robbed the bank and he said he didn't do it. Nobody knows for sure, but if he's going to be proven innocent he's going to have to be brought back for trial. It looks like Double and Triple are going out after him. It's like I told you, whenever Double sets his mind to do something, he's the fastest gum in the West and I'm sure he'll go out there and find that old sucker, but I think he could have gotten a better partner than Triple Trouble. I sure hope he knows what he's doing. It gets awful hot out there in that desert and there's a lot of dangers out there especially when you're so far away from home. You've got to have somebody that's dependable and someone that's going to stick with you to the bitter end. Wait a minute, there's somebody way off there in the distance . . .

No. 3 — That looks like Sammy and it looks like our heroes are off to get him, too. Here we go, get ready for the chase. It looks like they're gaining on him. Nobody has ever outrun Double Bubble. It looks like they're going

to get their man. Oh, oh, wait a minute, we've got trouble, we've definitely got trouble.

No. 4 — Double's horse is tripping. Look out Double, look out. Doesn't take much to break a leg or an arm out here, especially falling off a horse going at that speed. Look out . . .

No. 5 — oh, oh, quicksand. The thing that every cowboy fears the most. And the quicksand out here in these parts don't take long to suck you up. "I'll go get a rope," says Triple. "I'll be right back." "You'll never make it back in time," Double yelled. "Yes I will," said Triple, "You can depend on me." Oh, oh I think I've heard that before. Triple Trouble jumped on his horse and started to ride back towards town as fast as he could. Sammy Sucker was going out of sight. Our hero Double Bubble was left in the quicksand all alone. He tried not to move too much. Any movement that he made just made him go deeper and deeper into the quicksand. He knew he had to relax and he knew he had to take it easy. His life was in Triple Trouble's hands right now. If Triple Trouble ever finished anything today's got to be the day he's got to do it.

No. 6 — There's Triple now and he's riding as hard as he can. He's going to work on it, I know he is. He's got to save his friend, Double Bubble's life. It's riding on Triple Trouble now. He's got to make it and he's got to hurry. If he hasn't ever finished anything in his life he's got to finish this job. Wait a minute, what in the world is he doing?

No. 7 — I can't believe it, he's stopping for a drink of water. Doesn't he know how important it is to get to town in a hurry? Doesn't he realize that someone's life is depending on what he's doing right now? Doesn't he realize that it's important to finish the job that he started? What's wrong with him? He's back underway now. He's almost to town. Oh, no you've got to be kidding.

No. 8 — Now he's taking a rest. How can anybody forget the importance of what they're doing so easily? How can anybody forget that he's got to finish the job?

No. 9 — He's finally made it to town and he's got the rescue party, but now look. He's having a cup of coffee with them at the cafe. This is the way Triple's life has always been. What is it going to take to get it through his head that he's got to finish what he starts? If they don't get there soon it's going to be too late.

No. 10 — They're on their way at last. Hurry you guys, hurry, hurry! You've got to ride faster than you've ever ridden before. They've got to make it back to Double Bubble. They've got to make it. If you've ever finished anything Triple, please finish this. They're coming up to the place where Double was . . . there's Double's horse.

No. 11 — Double's not there, he's gone! The rescue party was too late. Triple Trouble got sidetracked too many times. He started out with some good intentions but good intentions aren't good enough to get the job done. We all know that now don't we? I hope we don't make the same mistakes.

## CLOSING

I want you to bow your head and close your eyes. Our Children's Church is over today. Lot's wife looked

back and turned into a pillar of salt. She didn't finish what God wanted her to do. Triple Trouble got sidetracked and he didn't finish what he was supposed to do. It was too late. He didn't stay on the right track. There's a lot of boys and girls in this room this morning that can do great things for God if they'd stay on the right track and not look back. "I fought a good fight, I finished my course and I've kept the faith," said the Apostle Paul, and because I did, "there's a crown of righteousness awaiting me." Some day boys and girls, we're going to face God face to face. We're going to explain to Him why we've done the things we've done. What are you going to answer Him if you've come up a little bit short and if you've gotten

sidetracked or if you've lost track of what you're doing? You'd better think about it now or you're going to be sorry when you think about it later.

"Dear God, we thank you today for the lessons in the Bible that are truths to our hearts and help us to learn lessons of life that other people have gone through. I pray that You won't let any of us today leave this place and forget what we've seen through the stories, the object lessons, the memory verse and everything that we've heard and seen. If there's some of us here this morning that are off the track, help us to get back on it and never look back. In Christ's name, Amen."

# SIGNS OF THE LINES

## INTRODUCTION

All right boys and girls, it's time once again for the quiet seat watcher to start. He's going to be watching closely for people who are sitting up straight with their hands on their laps, feet on the floor and looking right here at my face. I'm talking about important people in the Bible. I don't think I need to say that we all know who the most important person in the Bible was, of course, the Lord Jesus Christ and He's our main example that we should always follow. Reading through the Bible and looking at lives of many men and women who served God over the years, I think it would help each one of us if we would realize that God uses certain people for certain reasons. By studying these people and seeing the kind of lives they lived, and the way that God used them, I think it will help people of today, like you and I, to be able to do great things for God that we never thought possible. Today we are going to talk about a man by the name of Moses. We've talked about Moses before in other lessons. We've talked about how he crossed the Red Sea and how he led the Israelites out of Egypt. There have been several lessons in the past that we've used Moses as an example, but today we're going to talk about another part of Moses' life. It's a part of his life that sometimes people who study the Bible overlook. This particular part of his life is an example of a man who was brave and who had courage to stand up for God. He did what he knew was right even though it didn't look like anybody around him agreed with him. It's very easy for us to go with the crowd, isn't it? We don't have a lot of brave people in the world today. We don't have a lot of boys and girls who have a lot of courage and are willing to stand up for what they know is right. It's a lot easier to go with the crowd and it's a lot easier to do what others want you to do and say such as laugh at dirty jokes, look at dirty pictures, laugh at people that all the rest of the crowd is laughing at, but God very seldom uses people like that. God uses people that are strong, brave and that are willing to take a stand for Him. He knows that sometimes that by us taking a stand that means we're going to be laughed at, criticized and some people have even lost their lives, but nevertheless every once in a while, there is a man like Moses who will stand up and pay the price whatever it takes to do what God wants them to do. I've heard it said that if you don't stand for something you'll fall for anything. Nobody wants to be singled out today. On the very day that this lesson is being written there was a young boy, only eight years old that jumped in front of a subway train in New York city. Needless to say, he was killed. Do you know why he did it? Because a couple of his friends whom he was with dared him to do it and said he was chicken if he didn't. That might sound crazy, and it is, but there are kids, teenagers and even older people who do crazy things like that every day simply because they're not willing to stand up and do what's right because somebody might call them chicken or laugh at them. Moses wasn't that way. He was a man of God and as we tell this story about one time when Moses showed

how strongly he did believe in doing what God wanted him to do. I want everybody in this room this morning to ask themselves, do I have that kind of courage to do what Moses did? I think you're going to have to ask yourself that question before this day is over.

## BIBLE STORY

I think all of you remember when Moses went up to the mountain to get the Ten Commandments from God. That must have been one of the greatest experiences that anyone could have ever gone through. The Bible says that when Moses came back down with the Ten Commandments in his hand he saw something that he didn't think he'd ever see. He saw hundreds and thousands of the Israelites dancing naked around a golden calf. Now remember boys and girls, these were the same people that God had fed with food from heaven. These were the same people that God had led away from an evil king in Egypt. These were God's people, God's chosen people. They saw miracles every day, but when things weren't going just right, they were ready to throw up their hands and quit like a lot of you here this morning. The Bible says that Moses got so upset when he saw those people dancing around the statue that they made out of their bracelets, necklaces and earrings that he took the Commandments and threw them on the ground and broke them. The Bible says that he went to the front of the camp. At the end of each day's journey they'd set up camp and they'd make it safe for the people to sleep at night just like the early pioneers in the United States used to put wagon trains in a circle at night and everyone would sleep in the middle of the circle and protect themselves from the Indians. The Bible says that Moses was so upset because of the things these people were doing against God that he took his stand. He went to the gate of the camp — now remember, there was no steel or concrete gate there, it was just an entrance and an exit of the camp that they had made. Moses went to the gate and he drew a line on the ground. Suddenly all of the people got quiet. They knew Moses was upset but they didn't know what he was going to do. It would have been a lot easier for Moses to go along with the crowd or it sure would have been easier if he would have just kept his mouth shut and not say anything. That's what most Christians do. They might not do anything wrong, but they don't do anything to speak up against sin either. But Moses didn't do any one of those things. He drew the line on the ground and he told the quiet crowd something that I'm sure they didn't want to hear. He said, "Everybody that's on God's side cross this line, and if you're not, stay where you are." The moment of truth had come for the Israelites. Moses took a stand when he drew a line and now it was going to be up to the people to decide what they wanted to do. Those who were sorry for what they had done and wanted to get right with God crossed the line and went over to the side of the line where Moses was standing. The Bible says that those who didn't cross the

line and were not willing to stand for God were destroyed by those who did take a stand. Moses drew a line and God's people had to choose what side they wanted to be on. I believe there's a line drawn today, and I believe everybody in this room needs to decide which side they want to be on. Some of you have never had courage to stand up for God. You've never had courage to do what was right. I'm sure it wasn't an easy decision for Moses to make that day but he knew what he had to do and he did it. God is looking for people to cross that line. I wonder who it's going to be here today?

## MEMORY VERSE

**"Who is on the Lord's side, let him come unto me."  
Exodus 32:26**

*(All six of these object lessons are going to be talking about some sort of line. We have a starting line, a hairline, a sideline, a chalk line, a plumb line and a finish line. As the teacher, make sure that you have in your mind the concept of the theme being developed here in this lesson. I personally call these the "lines of life" and I think by the kids seeing these things and understanding them, it will help them to realize that there comes a time in life that each one of us must take a stand for something. In spiritual things the crossing of lines or the dealing with lines or the avoidance of some of these lines will reflect their level of commitment to spirituality. So taking those thoughts in consideration I think we're ready to move along here on Object Lesson No. 1.)*

## OBJECT LESSON No. 1

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate to the audience that when we accept Christ as our personal Savior that is the **STARTING LINE** for us. It's the beginning of a new journey. Going over the concepts of being born again at this point will help the boys and girls to understand that when they do get saved old things should pass away and all things should become new. This is the starting line of our new life as a Christian.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A standard sheet of poster paper, a magic marker, a pair of scissors and a ball of thick twine or yarn.

**PREPARATION:** In preparation for this object lesson take the poster paper and the marker and print the word "START" in large block letters on the poster board. Take a piece of twine, (*this is going to depend on where you are, what size auditorium and so forth*), and by putting two holes in the top of the poster paper you can run the string through the holes and use the string to hang the sign. My recommendation is to hang the starting sign at the back of the auditorium facing the audience. Sometimes we've done it before the boys and girls even get into the room. I liked it better when I actually walked back during the presentation part of this object lesson and actually strung it myself either between two chairs or a couple of windows or a couple of poles or doors or whatever you've got back there. You could even put a couple of hooks in the wall — we've done that a couple of times. And as you're giving the presentation in the importance of getting off on the right foot as a Christian it

carries a little more weight mentally when they actually see you put the starting line up yourself. So whatever you choose, whatever you feel comfortable with is fine, but I like putting it up during the presentation. After the sign has been strung get ready for the presentation.

**PRESENTATION:** I want each one of you to watch me very closely now, because for the next couple of minutes I'm going to be showing you what I call "the lines of life," and everybody in this room is going to have to come up against these lines somewhere down the road. How you deal with them will depend mostly on your courage and your love for God. The Bible says that when we accept Christ as our personal Savior and when we realize that we've sinned and now are sorry for our sins and we turn our lives over to God, we become born again. That's like a starting line. (*Pick up the string and the starting line sign at this time and string it wherever you decided to do that.*) This is the beginning of a new life for you, that's why the Bible says that you're born again. It's making a new start. Just as the men who run a race line up at the starting line in preparing themselves to run the race. They're getting ready. Everyone starts out evenly and I like that. When we become a Christian we start out brand new because our sins have been forgiven and everything that we've done in the past has been forgotten by God. It's all washed away, and now we start with a clean slate, just as if somebody erased the chalk board of our life and all the bad things that were written on it. So that's going to be our first line this morning. The starting line . . . the starting line of life after we get saved. That's where it all starts. It's at the beginning — we're all equal in the sight of God. But there are other lines that we come across in life also.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 2

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate that it's God's will for us to stay on a straight and narrow path and do His will on a daily basis.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A **CHALK LINE**, and as big a piece of light colored wood as you can get into your auditorium and on your platform realistically.

**PREPARATION:** In preparing for this particular object lesson chalk lines could be bought at a hardware store or they could probably be borrowed from people who use them in your congregation. It's quite an interesting object and I've used them for many different illustrations from time to time and it fits in quite well with this particular lesson. Be sure that you also have a helper lined up to help you string the chalk line. It probably would be best to have some type of device, such as an easel or even another table or something to prop your board, that you're going to make the chalk line on up well in advance of the presentation. Then all you have to do is take your partner, have him hold one end of the chalk line, you hold the other and then you snap it. If the board is already set up it just makes the presentation go a little smoother.

**PRESENTATION:** We start at the starting line just as you saw me string back a few minutes ago. But just being off to a good start doesn't mean you're going to finish what God wants you to do. There are a lot of people whom I've met who have started out doing great things

for God. They had courage and they wanted to do what God wanted them to do but they didn't follow it through. One of the first lines that you'll come across after you've become a Christian is what we'll call today "The chalk line of life." For those of you who don't know what a chalk line is, we just happen to have one right up here. It kind of looks like a tape measure. It's this little piece of string that rolls out of this little holder and in this holder right here there's powdered chalk. The chalk gets all over the string and as we pull it out (*have your partner do so at this time*) we can use this chalk line to make a straight line. Carpenters use this to put on a piece of wood like this (*have your partner hold the chalk line on his end tight as you hold the holder on your end tight, then take your fingers and pull it away from the wood and let it snap, and then roll the chalk line back into the holder*). Now I hope all of you have seen what happened here. We know from this point (*point to the end of the chalk line*) to this end (*then point to the other end*) there is a straight line. We know that is a fact and that's the whole purpose of the chalk line. The chalk line of life is like the line that God has drawn for us in His word. We can relate that line also to the line that Moses drew in the camp of the Israelites that day, many years ago that we talked about in our Bible story a little earlier. I think most of you have heard the expression "staying on the straight and narrow." If a carpenter wants a straight line he uses a chalk line because he knows it's going to be straight. He doesn't trust his own judgment and he doesn't trust his drawing a line by just looking at it with a pencil. Because if he trusts his own judgment or if he trusts his own eyesight as he sees things, chances are he's going to get a crooked line and the job isn't going to come out right . . . and that's our problem. If we trust our own judgment and our own ideas, our lives are crooked and they're not as straight as God would like them to be. So after we start at the starting line of life with Christ as our Savior we've got to measure up with the chalk line of life and those are the lines that God has set up in His word, the Bible. Sometimes it's not always easy nor is it always convenient but, Moses was a man of courage, and not too many people have courage to line up with the Word of God today, but it can be done and God will help us. Let's consider the next line.

### OBJECT LESSON No. 3

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate that sometimes we can let little things destroy our relationship with God.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** Another sheet of our standard poster paper and a double-edged razor blade.

**PREPARATION:** In preparing for this object lesson, needless to say but yet not wanting to go unsaid, the double-edged razor blade should never be left on your prop table while the boys and girls are coming in. Anytime I deal with matches or any kind of combustible material or questionable objects I always keep them on my person right up until the presentation. I would definitely recommend that you follow this same rule in this particular presentation and any of the presentations like these in the future.

**PRESENTATION:** I'm sure that most of you boys and

girls are unaware that the devil's main goal is to keep you off the straight and narrow line that God has set for us to live by, and believe me, he's the master of it. We've had lessons in the past that the devil's like a roaring lion looking for someone to deceive and I think that most of you have learned that lesson well, because we've seen some of the damage that the devil can do when we just let him get a toe-hold in our life. The devil knows our weaknesses and he's out to destroy any bit of courage and any stand for God that you might ever want to take. I was at a pottery shop once and I saw a man who owned the shop getting ready to throw out this big clay jar. I asked him why he was doing it and he said because it was cracked. I looked at it and I didn't see any crack at all. But it didn't take long for the master potter to point out a very fine crack or what he called a "hairline crack." The reason why he called it a hairline crack was because it was so small and so fine you could barely see it with the naked eye. It was like looking at a human hair but yet it was there. He said once a hairline crack started it was very hard to stop and before long there was really nothing he could do about it and it would get bigger until finally the whole clay jar would just break in half. Then I thought, you know that's how the devil works in our lives. He starts out with just a hairline crack and gets a toe-hold in our lives when he finds a weak spot. We don't think it's serious but we stop reading our Bible and praying for a couple of days. Then we miss church and Sunday school for a couple of weeks and we don't care about other people around us. Next we say a few words that slip and we don't think it's serious but what's happening is there is a hairline crack coming into our life. We can start out at the starting line for God and we can try and stay on the straight chalk line that He's laid out for us in His word. But when the devil starts a hairline crack in our lives we'd better be careful, because what happens is what can happen right here (*take out the double-edged blade, make a cut in your poster board. Without bending the board put the blade down and ask the question*) "How many of you can see that cut?" Most of the audience because of their distance away from you would not be able to see it. Well, I'm right on top of it and I can hardly see it. It's like that hairline crack that we were talking about. That when a little pressure is put on it (*bend the poster board*) and the cut acts like a perforation. (*And of course then when the poster board is bent the cut becomes very visible and it's very easy to see. You might even want to put your hand through it as an illustration of even though how something can't be seen the damage has still been done.*) All it takes is just a small hairline crack and a tremendous amount of damage can be done in our lives. And then do you know what happens? I'll show you.

### OBJECT LESSON No. 4

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate that if we do let the devil get a toe-hold in our life and the hairline crack starts it won't be long before you'll be on the sidelines.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** The same board that you just used to snap your chalk line on and the magic marker.

**PREPARATION:** The whole purpose here must be kept in mind before anything else here can be illustrated.

We're showing the boys and girls how easy it is to get off the track so in preparing for the actual presentation I really feel like there needs to be more of a preparation of your own mentality here. Leave the board up as we told you in the earlier object lesson and have it propped up well in plain view of your entire audience. It can be overdramatized by drawing large lines when you do draw them on the board so the audience can clearly understand what you're trying to convey to them.

**PRESENTATION:** Boys and girls, once we give the devil a chance to start a hairline crack in our lives it won't be long before we won't be on the straight and narrow line. (*Point to the straight chalk line with your magic marker.*) But just like in a football or basketball game if someone gets hurt or gets too many fouls, what happens? Where do they go? Sure they go sit over here (*draw a stick figure either above or below the chalk line and then right above it print the word "SIDELINE."*) That's right they're on the sidelines. They're not in the game anymore because they're not doing what they were trying to do and they're not doing what they wanted to do. They're not doing what they need to do but they're sitting and watching everybody else do what they're supposed to be doing. One of the easiest places for a Christian to end up is sitting on the sidelines and missing everything that God wanted them to do and be. How many kids do you know that are not here today? They're not in the battle for God and they're not in His army anymore. They're not in the game of life so they're sitting there on the sidelines wondering what happened. Wondering how they fouled out or how they got hurt. I'm telling you how it happens right now. It happens when you give the devil an inch — he'll take a mile. Say we end up on the sidelines or say something happens, we know we're off the right track but we want to get back on the track, what do we do? I'm going to show you right now so watch closely.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 5

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate that we can get back on the right track and get back on the straight line that God has planned for us.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A plumb line apparatus.

**PREPARATION:** In preparing for the object lesson the paraphernalia can be constructed in one of two ways. (1) If you've got someone in the church who works at surveying or in any type of construction work, chances are they're going to have the tripod apparatus called the plumb line. If not, for by some reason you don't, one can be constructed very easily simply by taking a small piece of wood, *can be any piece of wood from a broom handle to a two by four*, and taking the string that we've already used beforehand, tying one end of the string around the piece of wood and then propping the piece of wood in the air somewhere. This will probably be the most difficult part of this preparation. you can stretch it across two chairs and let it hang the plumb line. Whatever you decide to string it across so it can be seen is going to be decided by what type of auditorium you have and what kind of material you have to choose from. On the bottom end of the string you should have a heavy weight. This can be anything from a lead fishing weight, which is ideal

because of the solidity of the object, to a piece of steel that you can paint up to make it look a little more attractive while it sits on your platform. This should be set up the night before and should be on the platform during the entire Children's Church session. This way it will be hanging straight and will not have to be set up during the presentation which could take a few minutes and you could waste valuable time. I'm sure most of you know the purpose of a plumb line again just as a chalk line to derive correct dimensions between points A and B. This, of course, is the whole purpose we're trying to illustrate here. After your plumb line is set up and you're in position, you're ready for the presentation.

**PRESENTATION:** What happens when you've gotten off the line? What happens when you're off the chalk line (*point to the chalk line on the wood that was snapped earlier*)? What happens when you're sitting on the side lines (*point to the little character on the sideline*)? What happens when you want to get back in the right direction, when you want to be able to take a stand again or when you want to have the courage to do what God wants you to do? When you don't want to be like everybody else that's sitting on the sidelines. You go right back to where we first started. You know what God wants you to do. You know He wants you to take a stand. You know He wants you to be courageous. But you also know that in order to get back to where God wants you to be, you're going to have to line up with what He wants you to do. That's why we need to line our life up with the plumb line of God (*get your plumb line by the wood and hold it up*). Boys and girls, this is called a plumb line. It's used by surveyors and construction men to make a straight line. As I hold this wood here, and this string with this weight on the end hangs toward the ground, sometimes touching the ground, I know that the weight on the bottom of this string will hold this string perfectly straight from the wood to the ground. I could be a mile away, 3/4 of a mile or 1/2 mile and I could look through a telescope like surveyors do, and I could see this line hanging straight. I know that that line is hanging straight to the earth, no matter what anybody thinks and no matter what anyone says. If I can line up with that line I'll be straight. It doesn't matter where you've been and it doesn't matter what you've done you can get straight. You can get back on the straight line but you've first got to see that you're on the sidelines and they've got to look down and see the straight line that God wants you to get back on again. Then after you see it, say, "Lord, I want to get in line with it." If you'll do that, you'll make it to our last line that we're going to talk about today.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 6

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate that if we could stay on the right track and keep our lives in line with the Word of God and what He would have us do, we'll make it to the finish line some day.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** The same paraphernalia we used to make our starting line. Our standard poster board and the same magic marker we've been using and a roll of twine.

**PREPARATION:** We'll prepare the sign for this pre-

sentation just as we did the starting line sign. Cut the hole, string it, but on this poster board print the word "FINISH." You will hang it behind you at the front of the platform giving the illustration that we've started at the back, at the starting line, and we've now progressed our way to the front which will be the finish line and of course the word "FINISH" should face the audience. So have your location set up where you will string the finish line as you give the presentation.

**PRESENTATION:** I think everybody's goal is to make it to heaven. We've seen how if we start out right for God in the starting line back there at the back, and then line ourselves up with the chalk line as we've seen up here in the word of God and if we don't let the devil put a hairline crack in our lives, as he sometimes does and then puts us on the sidelines, we can do great things for God. But even if we do get put on the sidelines we can go back to the plumb line that God has laid for us when He died on Calvary. We can get back on the track and we can get back on the chalk line and we'll make it to our goal, and that of course, (*hold up the sign and string it*) the finish line. There's a finish line out there and we can make it. We can be strong, and we can make a stand. We can cross the line just as Moses did and we can help others to cross the line and serve God also. But we have to take that stand first and cross the line first.

## FILMSTRIP

No. 1 — TITLE:

### CHARLEY TAKES A CHANCE

No. 2 — Well, there's Charley the Chameleon and his whole family watching TV. That, of course, is what most chameleon families do at night. I'm sure that most of you know that chameleons are a special kind of lizard. They change colors a lot. If they're in green grass they turn green, if they're in a brown tree they turn brown. It's like a lot of boys and girls I know. Wherever they are they fit right in. Let's see what the TV announcer is saying.

No. 3 — "And it's been told to us, Ladies and Gentlemen out there in television land, that a team of scientists is coming to our little community here to try to catch a chameleon and take him back so they can put him in a laboratory and find out how they change colors. But, of course, we know they'll never catch any of us, will they? But that's the way it is right here in Chameleonville." Well, it looks to me like Charlie and his family and everybody else in Chameleonville are going to get some visitors pretty soon.

No. 4 — "Huh, they'll never catch a chameleon around here," Charlie said. "All of us are always changing color because everybody here is so scared to let people see what we really are. We can just fit right in to any place." That sounds kind of strange coming from a chameleon. I think we'd better follow this story along.

No. 5 — There's Charley and his old buddy Che-Che eating lunch. Let's hear what they're saying. "Hey Che-Che, did you hear what the announcer said on TV last night?" "Sure I did, Charley, but they'll never catch one of us." "That's the whole point," said Charley. "This is the big chance, you know a chameleon around this place

could become famous, they could go to a laboratory, they're not going to kill them, they're just going to study them. You heard the announcer. But nobody wants to show who they are around this place, everybody's scared, everybody's chicken. Nobody's going to stand up for what they really are. They'll never catch anybody here, they'll never even find anybody who wants to help."

No. 6 — "Of course they're not going to catch anybody, of course we're all going to change colors. That's how we survive, you dummy. Besides, it's probably a trick. They'll just catch one of us and after they're done studying us, probably stick us in formaldehyde or give us a shot of penicillin in the head and kill us. You know how those scientists are."

No. 7 — "Look, Che-Che, you can't be afraid of everything. Sometimes you've got to be brave, sometimes you've got to stand up for what you believe, for what you think is right and for what you are as a chameleon. You don't know what it's like to be different until you try."

No. 8 — "Charley, I can't get it through your head we're trained from the time we're little babies to be chicken. We're trained from the time we're babies to be like everybody else and to look like the things around us and you're no different than the rest of us. You're a chameleon just like I am. You were raised here in Chameleonville just like I was, and if those scientists come around here, you're going to do just what everybody else is doing to change colors and nobody's even going to know you're here."

No. 9 — "You may be right," said Charley, "but we'll see."

No. 10 — And I think we're going to see sooner than even Charley thought we would. It looks like our guys are going on a little trip with the kids in their class. "This is crazy," said Che-Che, "I've heard of field trips but man, this is ridiculous. Whose idea was it to come out here anyway? I'd almost rather go back to school than walk through this mess." But suddenly they all stopped. They heard a noise. First it sounded like thunder, then they thought it was an airplane, but it wasn't either.

No. 11 — It was the scientists. They've come to get a chameleon.

No. 12 — All the little chameleons stopped right in their tracks. They looked up . . .

No. 13 — they knew it was the scientists. They knew they had to come to catch a chameleon. Suddenly a shadow came over them all and immediately without them even thinking . . .

No. 14 — they all turned into the color of the grass and they all turned green. They didn't want to be seen and they wanted to blend in with the grass. They wanted to be camouflaged and they didn't want to be recognized for what they were. This was Charley's chance and his moment of truth.

No. 15 — He's green now, too. He's changed just like his buddies have and he has fit right in, but he's thinking it over. What am I going to do? Am I going to be just like everybody else, Charley thought? I know they're going to think I'm crazy, and I might not ever see them again, but I've got to do what I think I need to do.

No. 16 — Charley turned back to his original color of brown and in just a second . . .

No. 17 — he was scooped up by one of the scientists. The other chameleons were in shock. They were sure they'd never see Charley again.

No. 18 — Charley didn't know what to expect. He was in a little jar all by himself and he saw other insects and lizards around him in other jars, but he didn't know now if he'd made the right decision or not. He thought for a minute that maybe he was crazy or he was stupid to let people know what he really was. He was stupid to let those scientists know that he was a chameleon and be seen. Maybe his friends were right. Maybe he should have been just like everybody else and maybe he should have listened to them after all.

No. 19 — It was months since Charley's mom and dad heard anything about Charley. Of course, they really didn't expect to. They knew he was gone and they'd never see him again. They couldn't understand why he was willing to be different. And then one night . . .

No. 20 — just as they had done every other night before, even when Charley was there, they were sitting around watching TV and that same announcer that gave the announcement that night that Charley heard that the scientists were first coming to Chameleonville . . .

No. 21 — "well, ladies and gentlemen," the announcer said, "a news bulletin just in that human scientists have reported that they have just had a major scientific breakthrough in learning what makes chameleons — that's us — tick, or turn color. It seems that because of the bravery of one chameleon several months ago, that wasn't willing to turn color, scientists were able to capture and study him. Also to find out what gives us chameleons the ability to adapt to our environment around us, and I guess it's helping them solve some of their problems as humans. And, of course, we all know that humans definitely have problems. Wait a minute, it looks like we've got a picture coming across our cameras right now. Yes, here is the picture of that chameleon that made this scientific breakthrough possible."

No. 22 — And I think we all know who it was . . . it was Charley. Charley's mother started to cry. She didn't think she'd ever see her son again, but because of his bravery and because he wasn't willing to be like everybody else,

some great things happened. And boys and girls, I wonder if the world could just see a Christian. If the world could just see a boy or girl who wasn't willing to be one thing one day, when they're around one group of people, and something else the next when they're around another group of people. If the world could see someone brave enough and courageous enough to take a stand and cross the line and say I've made my decision to follow Jesus, I wonder what would happen?

No. 23 — Charley was brave and he was willing to be different. He was willing to cross the line and he was willing to take a stand. He wasn't going to change colors for anybody. The world is not looking for chameleons like that today. The world's looking for brave kids. I wonder if we have anyone like that here today?

## CONCLUSION

I want every head bowed and every eye closed. Moses one day drew a line and he asked everybody that's on God's side to cross over. We've shown you the lines of life today . . . lines that you can either line up with, that you can cross, or that you can walk away from and totally ignore. Moses was brave. He did something that no one else wanted to do, or that hardly anybody else had enough courage to do, but he knew what he did was right. There are some of you here today that know what you need to do. We're going to give you an opportunity to do it right now. I stand here and I've drawn a line here at the front of this Children's Church right across this row of front seats. Everybody that's on God's side I want you to get up and cross it right now. *(Be sure you have enough room as a leader for the children who want to come up.)* Pray with them. "Dear God, we thank you today for these boys and girls that have made a choice as Moses did to cross the line. The line has been drawn today. We need boys and girls who are brave, courageous and who won't change colors when the going gets tough, but will stand up for what we are and what we believe. Give us strength today. And even if we are put on the sidelines some day, help us to remember there's a plumb line out there that you've set for us. We can line ourselves up with You and get back on that straight chalk line towards that finish line of heaven where we'll stand there and meet You some day. We all want to get there. In Jesus' name, Amen."

# Lesson No. 6

## JOSHUA AND CALEB

### *Forty Years For All Their Fears*

#### INTRODUCTION

It is time for everyone to turn their heads toward the front, put everything on the floor under your chair so it is out of the way, and sit quietly as we begin our lesson today.

Have you ever been in a place where perhaps you were the only person on one side of a game or argument? Everyone and their ideas are against you and yours and it is very difficult to win in those circumstances. Whenever two groups oppose each other the possibility of being in the minority is great. A minority is the side with the least amount of support or least-liked opinion. To stand up for your belief in a situation like that takes courage. If you are a Christian here today you are going to find that at certain times at school, with a group, or in some activity you may be the minority. Everyone else may be wanting to do something wrong while your belief in God and knowledge of what God would have you do tells you not to go along with the group. It is at these times that you will be forced to prove to yourself your faith in God. You must not give in to doing wrong if you want to be successful for God.

Our Bible lesson today is going to give us a look at two men who stood up for God when 10 men's faith failed them. In their case it was not standing against sin but against full trust in the Lord that was wrong.

If you want to know more about these two men of God then pay close attention as we go into the Bible story. If you give it your all, then you will get it all.

#### BIBLE STORY

In Numbers 13 and 14, Israel had finally come to the Promised Land God had said He would lead them to if they left Egypt. It had come to the point of crossing the Jordan River and becoming the nation God had intended them to be. Moses believed God would give them the land, but being a leader, Moses naturally wanted to investigate the land to determine the best method of entering the new land. Moses sent 12 men into Canaan to do spy work. Each man came from a tribe of Israel. Two of those men were men of deep trust in God and in Moses as a leader. These two men were Joshua and Caleb.

When the 12 spies returned from their trip each one gave a good report about the land. It was everything that God had said it would be. It was truly a land flowing with milk and honey except for perhaps one drawback. Some of the people who occupied the land were giants. That did not mean a thing to Joshua and Caleb, but to the other 10 spies, it scared them. Instead of seeing how big God was compared to these giants, they looked at how small they were in comparison. Immediately they felt they could not beat the giants and get the land. They gave up and told the rest of the people to do the same.

Joshua and Caleb on the other hand refused to give in to this problem. They said they should go take the land just as God had promised. They felt that with God's help

they were more than capable of taking the land. But the 10 spies had won the favor of the congregation to the point where now they, too, did not feel they could enter in and take the land. Finally, Joshua and Caleb issued one more plea. They said to the people that, "If they were truly God's people and He had called them that; if God had led them to this land they now faced, and He had; then He would give it to them." That's the kind of faith that God wanted to see. It was complete trust in Him.

Still, the vote to not enter Canaan was overwhelming against Moses, Joshua and Caleb. It was then that we see God's anger about this and learned that it's just as much a sin to not trust God sometimes as it is to not believe in Him at all. Here was God's people not even trusting Him! God told the people it would be another 40 years before they would be able to have this opportunity again. He would make them wander in the wilderness all that time. Out of all the people living at that time only two would get to enter into the Promised Land of Canaan. It would be Joshua and Caleb. They had not failed to put their trust in God when outnumbered or when up against an enemy bigger than they were. They appeared to lose when the vote to not go in was made, but in the very end, they had won. Only these two of those living at that time got to enter into the Promised Land.

#### MEMORY VERSE

**"For the Lord Thy God is with thee withersoever thou goest."** Joshua 1:9

#### OBJECT LESSON No. 1

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate how being outnumbered may not prove you will lose.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A large clear pitcher of water and some blue or red food coloring.

**PREPARATION:** Place the pitcher in a visible place in the center of your table.

**PRESENTATION:** Joshua and Caleb discovered early in life that they were outnumbered when it came to believing God fully. They did but the others did not.

Take a look at my pitcher of water and my bottle of food coloring. If they were able to come alive and decide to go to war against each other which would win? It would appear that the big pitcher of water would wash the bottle of food coloring away but watch what happens with just one drop of food coloring. (*Put a drop in the water.*) Instead of the larger pitcher of clear water washing away the drop of food coloring the red food coloring actually has permeated all of the water. It has turned the water red. The little bottle was outnumbered as far as the amount of fluids between the two goes, but because the food coloring had something more inside it than the water, it won out in the end.

This same principle was why Joshua and Caleb were successful 40 years later in their lives. Although they did not persuade the Israelites to enter into the Promised Land after having spied out the land, God allowed them to enter the Promised Land forty years later. Of all those who were alive at the first attempt, only Joshua and Caleb lived long enough to enter in. Why? Because in their lives they had more faith than anyone of the Israelites.

When all of Israel thought Joshua and Caleb's idea was wrong, God showed them 40 years later that they were right. Being outnumbered did not defeat Joshua and Caleb.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 2

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate numbers are not important to God.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A grocery bag and enough items that it would be impossible for you to carry all at once without the aid of the grocery bag.

**PREPARATION:** Leave the bag flat and have all your items on the table or on the floor nearby.

**PRESENTATION:** One look at all these groceries I have here would tell you that I would have my hands full if I tried to carry them all. I would have to make several trips to get all these groceries home. That is why grocery bags were invented. I am going to put all these groceries in the bag and show you that I did have something to help me. Now I can carry these groceries anywhere I want and make only one trip. At first it didn't look like I had a chance. It looked like the groceries outnumbered me but they didn't. I had something to meet the challenge. I had my grocery bag.

It was the same for Joshua and Caleb. They appeared to be outnumbered by their own people, hindered by the river they would need to cross, and up against giants that made them look as grasshoppers. Yet they had something that could meet the challenge. That something they had was faith in God and God was the someone they had. With God on their side they knew they could meet every challenge that came their way. God is never outnumbered.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 3

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate that at times when it looks like we may be losing out, if we keep our trust in God, we will ultimately succeed.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A piggy bank, some change to put in the bank, \$20.00 in ones and fives and an envelope.

**PREPARATION:** Put the currency in the envelope. Arrange the items so that the coins are first, the piggy bank second, and the envelope the last item in line. As you talk, keep taking coins and place them in the piggy bank.

**PRESENTATION:** Some of you who have a piggy bank at home or a real savings account at the bank probably feel that saving money is hopeless. Many times you probably find yourself with a penny, nickel, or dime and you put it in your bank. You come home, get a coin,

and drop it in the bank. You never get to see the money again because it can't be retrieved from the bank, or else Mom or Dad won't let you. The next day or week the same routine is followed. You get a coin, put it in the bank, and wonder if it is worth it. Because you do not see the money, or how much you have collected, or what it is you can buy, you begin to feel that saving the money is a losing cause.

But if you have ever saved money, or known someone who has, you would know that eventually there comes a reward for your faithfulness to save. What gets collected several coins at a time some day can be cashed in at the bank for a lot of money. (*Go to the envelope and reveal the money.*) Now you are able to see how much money you saved and know what you can buy.

Joshua and Caleb had carefully watched as Moses, who was their leader, put his trust in God. While everyone else thought that serving God or trusting God to go into the Promised Land seemed useless at times, Joshua and Caleb had learned that it was never a losing cause to put one's trust in Him. Moses had taught Joshua and Caleb by his example that no matter what the situation faith in God would see them through. In the end they would come out ahead. That is why they were not afraid and the reason they got to enter into the Promised Land.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 4

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate that we can wait too long to do something for God.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A book of matches and an empty pan.

**PREPARATION:** Have the pan near enough that you can toss the whole book of matches into it if you have to. You will be lighting the whole book at once.

**PRESENTATION:** I am going to do something now that I do not want any of you trying at home. It could be very dangerous. In fact, I don't want any of you playing with matches, whether you light one or not.

These matches, however, are a good way to show you what could happen if you waited too long to do something for God. I am going to light one of these matches but leave it in the book. If I let it burn too long before blowing it out what would happen? Yes, that's right. It would catch all the other matches on fire and I would not have another match to light. I would run out of opportunities to light something. (*Keep talking as the match burns into the others and ignites the whole pack.*)

You know, we can wait too long to obey God. We can wait too long to get right with God, too. There may come that point in time that we die, and if our lives are not right with God, we will not get a second opportunity. Ouch! The matches all caught on fire! I waited too long before blowing out that one match. Now the whole pack is lost. I'll have to wait to get another pack some day to use them correctly.

Israel had voted not to enter the Promised Land because of the giants, so God told them He was going to punish them by making them wander in the wilderness for each day they had spied out the land. That would add up to 40 years! After they heard that they decided they would try to take the land but God told them it was too

late. He had given them plenty of time to decide and they chose wrong. God's punishment would be enforced. You see, boys and girls, you can wait too long to obey God. Don't let it happen to you!

## OBJECT LESSON No. 5

**PURPOSE:** To demonstrate that not everything that looks lost is lost.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A funnel, a 12 pound coffee can full of sand and a plastic milk jug.

**PREPARATION:** Place the jug with the funnel in it on the table. When you first fill the funnel with sand, you may have to put your finger on the bottom hole to keep it from falling on through before you are ready for it too. Cover the bottom half of the jug with construction paper or an object so you cannot tell how full it is getting.

**PRESENTATION:** Watch me as I fill my funnel with sand. It looks pretty full, doesn't it? As I put it in the jug and move the sand towards the hole, notice how it disappears into the jug. Then all I have to do is add more sand and again it empties into the jug. Each time I add some sand I seem to lose it into the jug. I have finally run out of sand. It all went through the funnel into the jug. It is all lost into the jug, or is it? Once I take the funnel away and remove the cover on the jug you can see I have not lost the sand at all. It is now in my jug. All I did was move it from the can to the jug. It looked like I was losing all the sand through the funnel but I really wasn't.

Israel had thought that they were up against an enemy they could not conquer. Joshua and Caleb, however, knew that though everything around them looked hopeless and lost, it was not. After 40 years they still would enter into the Promised Land.

## SLIDE STORY

No. 1 — Title:

### "BIG BUT NOT BETTER"

No. 2 — There's old Ray and Vack and some of the other batteries getting ready to play a game of football. I wonder who they are going to play today?

"Say, where is that other team?" asked Brett, "I thought they were on their way?"

"They are. They are." replied Ray, "just give them a few minutes."

"Well, while we are waiting let's run some of our plays," suggested Vack.

As the batteries lined up to run their plays, a bus drove up to the opposite end of the field.

No. 3 — Out came some of the largest batteries that Ray and Vack and his friends had ever seen.

"Get a look at that guy!" remarked little Brett, one of the pass receivers.

"No kidding," agreed Bobby, the other pass receiver.

No. 4 — Sure enough, the Chargers were a bigger team. They had some 6 volt veterans and some 2 voltors, but most of their team had been around a long time. Most of the Chargers team had lifted weights and trained all year. Another thing they had going for them was that they had

not been beaten in their last 40 games!

No. 5 — Coach Dee came out on the field and heard the boys as their fears continued to surface.

"Finish your warmup drills, you guys, and meet me at the end of the field by the goal posts," said Coach Dee.

The boys quickly lined up and finished their exercises and then ran through a few plays.

No. 6 — As they headed for the end zone to meet the coach, Ray and Vack tried to encourage the rest of the team.

"Come on you guys," said Ray, "we can beat them. Our team is undefeated this year, too!"

"Hey, I've seen them play before. You haven't," said Dinky, "they will make us look like watch batteries compared to them."

"Wait, I've seen them play, too," interrupted Vack ...

No. 7 — But before Vack could finish, the coach had begun to talk.

"Boys, I know these fellows look big but that doesn't mean we can't beat them. Our team is just as good, and I think it is better than their team because we are faster. Besides that fellows, I believe we have a better team because we have something else going for us."

"What's that, Coach?" asked Dinky.

No. 8 — "It's something most of you have inside of you," encouraged the coach.

"You mean extra energy?" asked Brett.

"No, something more," answered Coach Dee.

"I think I know, Coach," said Ray, "you mean Jesus!"

No. 9 — "That's right," replied Coach Dee, "now God may not help us defeat this team today, but He'll help us to go on in life whether we win or lose. We won't lose our charge for life."

"Thanks, Coach Dee," said Vack, who was also one of the team captains, "I'm ready to cross the sidelines and beat them!"

No. 10 — Not a second after Vack had made his stand, the remainder of the team jumped to their feet. In one big cheer the team yelled, "Beat the Chargers!" It seemed as if a whole new wave of enthusiasm had spread through the team. What had been fear a moment ago had now been turned into confidence. The Spares were ready to take on the Chargers.

No. 11 — The enthusiasm had been so great that it turned the heads of all the Chargers. Now they looked in fear at the smaller Spare team. They had not faced another team with this much confidence against them before. All they could do was stand and watch as the Spares went through their drills once again.

No. 12 — A whistle blew and the referees had the teams take the field for the kickoff. Vack had won the flip of the coin for his team and they would receive the ball.

In one last huddle before the game began, Vack reminded his teammates, "I was going to tell you guys I've seen the Chargers play before. If we go in and play hard and with confidence, we can beat them. Let's do it for Coach."

Again a roar went up from the team and they rushed out onto the field.

No. 13 — Ray and Vack were the kick returners, and without telling the rest of the team, they decided to run a reverse. As the ball came down Ray picked it up and began running towards Vack. Vack took the ball and ran to the opposite side of the field. The big players on the Charger team were so surprised that Vack ran for a touchdown. His speed had proven too much just as the coach had said.

After all the cheering and congratulating had ended the Spares kicked off to the Chargers. They had planned an onside kick to surprise them.

No. 14 — It was more than a surprise. One of the Charger players fumbled the ball right into the hands of little Brett. Brett was so fast and smart, that he dodged all the big players of the Charger team and ran to the one yard line before being stopped by a Charger.

In the huddle for their first play a look of disbelief was on their faces. They felt they could win for sure now if they could just score on this next play.

A quick pass from Willie Joe to Ray produced another touchdown. The Spares were on their way, and the Chargers began to look like a defeated team.

No. 15 — At the end of the game, the final score was Chargers 6, Spares 40. They had beaten a team that had not lost in 40 games. The Chargers looked bigger and better but the difference was when the Spares crossed the sidelines with confidence and not fear. They knew that win or lose their lives would not end with that game.

They had won because they went out to win and they believed they could.

No. 16 — The Spares had shown that being smaller or outnumbered did not mean a thing. The most important thing they learned was that believing they could win instead of being afraid, made all the difference. The end of the Chargers came when the Spares realized that the Chargers were bigger but not necessarily better. The Spares had been beaten before but they were determined not to lose because of fear. They made their second opportunity a success.

## CLOSING

Fear can cause us to do many things. It can cause us to not try, try half-way or try with all our heart. Joshua and Caleb wanted the people to try with all their heart to defeat the giants but the people did not want to try at all. Even though God was on their side they let the size of the giants scare them. It was as if they were saying that the same God who had split the Red Sea for them and sent the 10 plagues to get them out of Egypt couldn't help them defeat the giants! Only Joshua, Caleb and Moses believed God could. It hurt these three men's hearts to see the people of Israel lose their faith in God. It would hurt God in His heart today if you did not trust Him either.

# THE MULE WAS NO FOOL

## INTRODUCTION

It's time once again for the preaching of the Word of God. Everybody sitting up straight, hands on lap, feet on floor looking up here right at my face and listening very closely now for about the next 22 minutes. I want you to give me your undivided attention. We're going to talk today about obedience. Obeying! We've talked about obeying our parents in a lesson which I remember and I think most of you do also. Today we're going to talk about what it means to obey. I believe there have been many boys and girls who have thought that they were the boss of their own life. They didn't have to listen to anybody else or pay attention to anyone, not their parents, not their teachers, not me, and not God. The Bible says our life is not our own, we're bought with a price as we've already talked about in other lessons about obeying laws such as the laws of sowing and reaping and other laws that God has for us that will help us along the pathway of life. It's always been God's will for us to obey man's laws, as well as God's laws, but sometimes it's hard to obey, isn't it? I know that you can take a dog, and you can repeat something over and over again. You can give him a dog biscuit or a little bone as a reward if he obeys, and hopefully the next time you tell him to do that thing he'll do it again, but everytime you do it you have to give him a reward. Unfortunately, that is the way it is with people sometimes too. The only way they obey is if they're rewarded, and I realize that rewards are part of life and part of living the way that all of us like to live, but sometimes we have to understand that obedience must be done even though we're not getting rewarded at the moment for anything. Just as we saw in the lesson on sowing and reaping that if we do obey God's laws and follow Him and do what He wants us to do, then our life will be a lot better and we will reap the good things. But if we don't obey we will suffer the consequences. The Bible says that to obey is better than sacrifice. There have been people through the years that have thought that in order to please God they'd have to live in a small house, give all their money up or spend their life on a mission field just so they could sacrifice, and thought that just because they did without certain things they would make God happy. But you know what makes God happiest? It's when we obey Him and not obeying Him out of fear but out of love. We want to serve Him and obey Him because we know He is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. It's true, to obey is better than anything else that we can do. To obey someone is to prove that you trust their judgment. To obey someone is to prove to them that you trust in what they're saying. There's no better way to please the Lord than to obey Him and to show Him that we trust Him in all things. We're going to hear a story today about what happened to a fellow who knew what was right. God told him what He wanted him to do but he disobeyed. Some times God uses strange ways and strange things to get us to obey and this is one of those kind of stories. Let's consider it.

## BIBLE STORY

One day King Balak, who was the King of the Midianites, was living with his people in the country of Moab. He heard about the children of Israel for many years and about their wonderful God who was more powerful than the heathen gods he served. He'd heard about how God had always helped the Israelites to win battles and now he was afraid because they were staying right in his country. What was he going to do? There was no sense to fight them. He'd never win because he knew that God was on their side. Balak remembered about a man he had met once, a man called Balaam. Balaam knew about this God of the Israelites. Balaam used to tell everybody that he was a prophet. It seemed like the thing to do, even though he wasn't, and he did not even really love God and obey Him or even want to serve Him. So, Balak sent messengers to ask Balaam to come to Moab and curse the children of Israel. He thought that would be one way to get rid of them. Well Balaam, after finding out what Balak wanted him to do, actually prayed and God told Balaam, "Don't curse my people, I've blessed them." Balaam told Balak what God had told him and Balak was really worried. Balak sent messengers back to Balaam and said, "You've got to curse these people, you've just got to or they'll destroy us if you don't." Balaam prayed again and God said, "Don't curse them." Finally, Balak sent the messengers back to get Balaam to bring him over so that Balak could talk to him face to face. God told Balaam not to go see Balak but Balaam decided he wanted to go anyway. God was angry with Balaam. So God sent an angel to stop Balaam right in the middle of the road to keep him from going to see King Balak. Now it just so happened that Balaam was riding on a donkey. The donkey saw the angel standing in the road but Balaam, who was pretending to be a prophet didn't even see the angel. Maybe he was daydreaming about some of the things that Balak would give him if he did curse the children of Israel as Balak wanted him to do. The donkey saw the angel and she was afraid. She turned out of the road into the field but Balaam beat the animal to make her go back out into the road. The angel then stood some distance down the road where there was a wall on each side and the donkey came to this place and saw the angel. She pushed herself as close to the wall on one side as she could to escape. Balaam's foot was crushed against the wall. Balaam was really mad now. He gave the donkey the beating of its life because she hurt his foot. Then the angel went down further and stood in a very narrow place along the road where there was no room to turn either to the right or to the left. When the donkey saw the angel standing there with a drawn sword in his hand, the beast just sat down in the road under Balaam. Balaam was really mad and he started beating the animal time after time. Finally, God opened the mouth of that donkey and the donkey spoke. The donkey said, "What have I done to you that you've beaten me these three times?" Balaam was so mad that he didn't even notice that the donkey

was talking. He answered, "You've disobeyed me three times and if I had a sword I'd kill you." Then the donkey said, "Am I not your own donkey on which you've ridden ever since you've bought me. Did I ever do anything like this before?" Balaam said, "No." And then God opened Balaam's eyes, and he too, saw the angel standing in the road with a drawn sword, and then he knew that the angel had come to punish him for disobeying God. He was frightened and he fell flat on his face. Balaam had to learn the hard way that when God says something you'd better obey Him. Our memory verse today says this very thing.

## MEMORY VERSE

**"To obey is better than sacrifice." I Samuel 15:22**

Our object lessons for this week are going to be in a little bit different perspective. I think some of you are used to the way we're doing things, so I don't think it's going to be too much of an adjustment for you. I think you'll appreciate the way we've laid these out here. What I'm trying to do is create a little roadway of life here by using streets signs and informatory signs to try to develop a mentality of obedience. Just as the boys and girls will see different signs in life, there are also signs that God puts up along the pathway of life. We're going to split the six object lessons into two parts made up of three object lessons each, and that is, if you obey and if you don't obey. I think that will draw a very interesting contrast. In these object lessons we'll be having you actually make the signs out of our usual poster board that we use so often in many of our object lessons. You can do one of two things: You can just hold them up as you make the presentation, or you might want to have some boys and girls come out of the audience and hold them up, and actually have these signs staggered like they're on a roadside or you can have them line up in front of the auditorium. Once when we were presenting this lesson I not only put the signs on cardboard, and had the kids stand there on the stage, but we also drew out the signs on the overhead projector along with the cardboard signs so it was kind of a double visual. I saw one Children's Church director do something similar to that with a transparency on the overhead except they used the signs as overlays. In other words, they drew a road on one transparency, put it on the overhead, and some of them even got fancy and made trees and colored it in, and so forth. It all depends on how elaborate you want to go with this particular presentation. I think that this can work out very well if it's done properly and every little bit of visual helps. *(I think most of you know how I feel about that.)* Then they took another transparency, made the signs, cut them out, and used them as overlays and put them on the original road transparency, so that all the signs didn't show up at once when the one transparency was initially put on the overhead. You can add them or take away. One thing to remember is that if you are going to use the transparency the signs will have to be large size or they'll have a hard time seeing them on the screen, particularly if you're dealing with a smaller situation and with a small screen. So just keep all of those things in mind and experiment a little bit and I'd like, once again, to take this opportunity to encourage those of you who are using this

third year. I think the only way you can get this third year, of course, is to have already utilized the first two years. So I think you understand the philosophy that we've used here at the Train Depot, and that is trying to use as much visual as we possible can, to make not just an audio point of contact but the focal point of contact also. I believe this is what has separated our materials from other materials in that we like to visualize everything, and also to encourage you not to just get locked into this particular routine that we set out for you here in the program, but don't be afraid to try something different and be creative yourself. I add little tips and hints here as we go, such as we're doing here, just before we give you the object lessons. I hope that it will stir a creative spark within you that you can get into making some of your own things that fit your group of boys and girls or your particular geographical location, and maybe help you to communicate just a little bit better. I think we've all heard the cliché that a rut is just a grave with both ends knocked out. I think all of us have seen enough of that type of mentality in church work and if you've spent the money to buy this, I'm sure you're going to want to get as much use out of it as you possibly can, so I hope we've been a little bit of an encouragement to you by our material and that you, yourself, will even start writing some of your own material. With these hints in mind, and with this free little exhortation, that I've given you here, we're ready to continue on with our lesson and the first half or first three object lessons will be under the category of IF YOU OBEY.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 1

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate that sometimes God wants us to stop what we're doing in life and do something else and it's our responsibility to obey Him.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** I would recommend at this point to get all the poster board that is needed for all of these object lessons. I would suggest possibly picking out about 10 sheets of the poster board, 17"x22" on normal size that we use or whatever size you've been using in your particular situation. A good pair of scissors, couple of markers, maybe some different colors, so on and so forth, depending on how elaborate you want to make these. We've got stop signs, yield signs, one way and if you want to go down to your office supply store and actually get the red poster board, the yellow, white and really get into it and make them as much of a duplicate of the actual street signs as you can — that would be great — and I think it would add more to it but there are some places that don't carry the colored poster board. So maybe you would want to color it in or maybe you would want to make up a sign but it's up to you. I'm going to leave that option open to you. I probably won't be mentioning every single color as most of you know the colors anyway, so we'll just go at it and we'll just use the references as to just poster board.

**PREPARATION:** In preparation for this object lesson you'll need to make a stop sign, and as we said, this could be made out of white poster board colored in red or you can make red poster board using white stick-on letters and white frame or you can make it any way you want to.

You can put a stick-on it, or you can just hold it up — whichever way you want to but this will be the first part and we'll need that, cut out and put together and set up on your table well in advance of the presentation.

**PRESENTATION:** I want to talk to you a little bit boys and girls about some signs that I think you are all familiar with, and we're going to relate some of these signs to spiritual things today as we talk about obedience. Just as the donkey was taking Balaam down that road the donkey knew that it had better obey that angel or it was going to be in big trouble. Then when Balaam finally saw the angel, too, he knew that the thing to do was obey. So today as we talk about obedience and obeying God, we're going to see some of the signs that maybe are familiar to you along the way, and relate them over to doing the same things that those signs say only along the lines of the things that God wants us to do. The first one is the STOP SIGN (*hold the stop sign up at this time, you can bring your volunteer up or put it on the overhead, whatever you've chosen, but now is the time to begin*). Sometimes boys and girls, God tells us to stop. Some of you have heard me use the word "repent". That's a word we don't hear too much anymore but every once in a while we hear it. The word "repent" actually means to stop what you're doing, turn around and go in the opposite direction. That's really the first step in obedience to God. When we realize that we are a sinner and that what we're doing is not right, and God is not pleased with the way we're living, we've got to stop right where we are. Just stop right dead in our tracks. It's like God's spiritual stop sign right here. It means stop what you're doing and stop the kind of life that you're living, turn around and go God's way. I hope that makes some sense to you because unless we first of all obey God along the lines of salvation, and the way He wants us to live, there is no way we can ever obey God in anything else. It all starts right here with this stop sign. This is the beginning of obedience to God. So this is the first step along God's spiritual road of life. Stopping what we're doing and realizing that Jesus is Lord and that He died for our sins. We need a Savior. Obey God when He says, "Come unto Me." We read in the Bible that Jesus is knocking on your heart's door; but, we've got to open that door. He wants to come in but we've got to let Him. So first of all, we've got to stop. Let's see, what is the next signpost along God's spiritual highway of life?

## OBJECT LESSON No. 2

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate that once we stop and repent of our sins we've then got to begin to yield our entire life to the Lord Jesus Christ.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** Another sheet of our poster board, scissors, markers and all the other things we've needed to put all of these object lessons together.

**PREPARATION:** In preparing for this object lesson we're going to make a yield sign. Most of you are familiar with the shapes and colors of that sign. Once again, depending on how elaborate you make it, once it's made it can be made ready on the platform and we're ready for the presentation.

**PRESENTATION:** We've talked about the first sign to

obey on God's highway of life, now we're going to talk about the next one that we'll probably run into, literally, and we can choose to obey it or not. This one right here (*hold up the YIELD SIGN*). I don't know how many of you know what this word "yield" means. It means to let someone else do something ahead of you or give way to someone else or let someone else have their way. This is exactly the next step along the highway of life. Once we repent and we stop our old ways then we have to give our entire life to the Lord and let Him begin to have His way and to yield our life to Him. You've heard me say on a number of occasions that our life is not our own. It's no different than going into a store and buying a piece of candy, that once you've paid for it, you expect the man to give it to you. If he doesn't give it to you, then you feel like something's wrong and you're right because you paid for it, you bought it. Jesus bought each one of us with His blood the day He died on Calvary and He owns us. If we do not give ourselves to Him we are robbing Him. I know that's a hard thing to understand but sometimes this whole idea of yielding or giving up what we want to do, and turning our lives over to the Lord, is probably one of the hardest things for anyone to do. It's a natural thing to do what we want to do and to be the boss of our own lives and not let anyone tell us what to do and that, of course, is why we've placed this sign here under the obedience category, because unless we're willing to obey God in the small things and give our life to Him, there is no way we can go on the spiritual highway any farther. We'll have to stop right here. But if you're willing to yield every part of your life to Him, then we can go on and we can continue with the things He wants us to do, and that will take us to the next object lesson.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 3

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate that we must understand that God's spiritual highway is a one way street. There's no turning back and there's no going back because the traffic doesn't go that way — it only goes forward.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** Another sheet of poster board and the other materials that are needed to put these signs together.

**PREPARATION:** In preparing for this object lesson we will make a one way sign, and add it to our collection of signs there on the table, and we will then be ready for the presentation.

**PRESENTATION:** We've stopped and we've yielded our life to God. The third sign to obey along God's spiritual highway is this one right here (*hold up the ONE WAY sign*). Does everybody here know what a One Way sign means? Sure you do. It means the traffic can only go one way. You can't turn around and go back the other way or you'll have an accident. I can't think of a better way of explaining God's highway of life. Once we start on it we can't go back. If you go back it's going to be a mess. Straight forward — keep your eyes on the goal — keep yielding to Jesus and go on one way and that's His way. You might run into some signs along the road of life that might say "go here, go there, if you go this way you'll have fun, take a detour, take a short cut." There are no detours on God's spiritual highway and there are no

shortcuts but only just the way He wants you to go. Now, we've seen what will happen if we obey God. We've seen if we stop, if we yield, if we keep going in the right direction that this is God's plan, but what happens if we don't obey? We know that's always consequences we'll suffer when we don't do what we're supposed to do. We need to talk about those a little bit and I think we will right now.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 4

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate the consequences of disobedience.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** Once again our sheet of poster board, scissors, markers, etc.

**PREPARATION:** In preparing for this object lesson we will take the poster board and fold it in half making a greeting card type of an effect. On the outside flap that will initially face the audience, in very large block letters so they may be easily read by the entire audience, put the words "DO NOT OPEN." Open your card up and on the inside you'll print "YOURSELF UP TO SIN." So that what the whole thing is saying is **Do Not Open Yourself Up To Sin**. In preparation of this piece of poster board you might again always take into consideration the size of your audience, being sure that there is no question about what is being read up there, and that it's in good view of everyone who needs to see it.

**PRESENTATION:** We've seen the signs that tell us what to do along God's spiritual highway. We know we need to obey them, but there are other signs that we will run into in life. There are other things that we'll see and we know that we need to obey them also, because if we don't, sometimes there will be serious consequences to suffer. For instance, we'll see this sign (*hold up the first card that will say DO NOT OPEN*). One of the very first things that we think of when we see a sign like this is what? Of course, we want to open it. We want to see what's inside. That's a natural thing to do. If someone tells us not to do something then we want to do it. We want to see if we can get by with it. You've heard me say before it's always easier to be bad than it is to be good because we have a sinful nature. Ever since the days of Adam and Eve it's been passed down from generation to generation this thing called sin and it's a lot easier to be bad than it is to be good. Being bad comes natural, you don't even have to think about it, it's just there. But when we disobey, (*open the card*) we're going to have problems. As you can see we're not to open ourselves up to sin. When we give the devil a foothold in our life, the old saying goes into effect, if you give someone an inch they'll take a mile. When you give the devil just a little bit of a hold that's all he needs. He starts digging away. It's just like a little hole in the dam. It starts out as a crack and then it begins to become a hole and then soon the whole dam gives way and many people will be killed. It starts out simple enough and innocent enough, but all things start out that way and then they lead to danger. **Do Not Open!** When you open yourself up to sin, just a little bit, that's when the trouble starts. Let's go on and take a look at another sign.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 5

**PURPOSE:** To once again illustrate the pitfalls of disobedience.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** Another sheet of poster board, markers, etc.

**PREPARATION:** In preparing for this object lesson we are going to prepare another card as we did in the other object lesson. On the outside of this one it will read **DO NOT ENTER** and on the inside the words will read **PLACES IN QUESTION**. Have that up next to your other signs on the platform and you're ready for the presentation.

**PRESENTATION:** Here's another sign we will surely run into along the road of life. **DO NOT ENTER**. Hmmmm, that's an interesting one, isn't it? How many times have you seen signs that say do not enter, stay out or no trespassing. I think we all have, and it's very easy to say, "They can't keep us out," or "there's no harm in going in there," and so we open this card and we see we are not to enter what? **PLACES IN QUESTION**. Say it with me, all of you, **Places in Question**. What is a place in question? Let's look at it this way. I think young people have always wanted to know what is wrong with going to certain places such as certain movie theaters, certain places where people are dancing. Also other places that maybe are a little more obvious such as taverns and the like that we know aren't the best places for us to attend as Christians. Let me give you a little guideline here. Maybe you have a question, and that's why we wrote it like this, places in question. Maybe you wonder what's right and what's wrong — well, that's kind of a guideline for that. If you're not ashamed to take Jesus with you, and do something with Jesus that people are doing there, or let Jesus see the things that are being shown there and let Him be involved with the things that people are being involved with there in that place, then there's probably nothing wrong with it. But if you even have a question about it, if you're not sure if it's right or wrong, then you don't need to be going there. Usually if something's right, you don't have any questions about it. If you're questioning it, then I would recommend that you think twice. **Do Not Enter Places In Question!** Don't give the devil even a toehold in your life boys and girls, don't even let him start. There are certain movies that you don't need to be seeing because all it does is put garbage in your mind. There are other places you don't need to go because they are places that just put garbage in your mind. You don't need to go there and it's not going to help you as a Christian. If there's any question about it, you don't need to go there because if you do, all you're doing is giving the devil another shot at you and that brings us down to our last object lesson.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 6

**PURPOSE:** To try to wrap up the concept of the repercussion of disobedience.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** Again a sheet of poster board, markers, etc.

**PREPARATION:** We're now making our last card and that will be the words printed on the outside "**DO NOT**

TOUCH” and the words on the inside “THINGS THAT WILL HURT YOU.”

**PRESENTATION:** Our last sign we’re going to be talking about today is this one (*hold up the DO NOT TOUCH sign*). To put up a do not touch sign in front of little babies is a waste of time because they can’t read but you can read. There are certain things in life that we’ll run up against that we know it’s just not smart to fool with. We know it’s not good to touch cigarettes and we know it’s not good to touch any kind of alcoholic drinks. We know it’s not good to touch things that are not ours with thoughts of taking them. These things will hurt you boys and girls. It’s no different than touching a stove and getting burned, but it seems like it’s always a shame that people have to learn the hard way. God’s warning signs are out here. Don’t fool with them. If you do, you’re going to get in trouble. You will obey or disobey them. The mule was no fool. The mule saw the angel standing out there in the middle of the road and she knew not to go on. She knew that she’d better obey. Sometimes it takes animals to teach us humans some important lessons that God wants us to learn. Do not touch anything that will hurt you. I guess maybe the best way to sum up this whole lesson is by showing you a little story about a friend of ours. Let’s take a look at it right now and maybe the lesson that he learned will keep you from having to learn it the same way.

## SLIDE STORY

No. 1 — TITLE:

### DON’T BLAME THE FLAME

Attention all moths, “do not,” repeat “do not” go near the thing called candle flame. That looks like a pretty strong order from the King if you ask me. And he’s right. A lot of the little moths don’t realize that the new candle that Mr. Johnson just put outside of his house can be a dangerous thing if they get too close to it. Some of them have never even seen a candle before. If they ever obeyed anything that the King ever said they’d better obey that one or it could cost them.

No. 2 — That’s Marvin, the moth. I wonder what he thinks of that new law. “I’ll tell you what I think of it,” said Marvin to his friends, “I think it’s crazy, who gives the King the right to tell us what to do? Just because he’s the King he thinks he’s big stuff. Why, that’s silly, I’ve seen candles before, they don’t run around and try to bite moths, they don’t chase moths out of town, all they do is just sit there. Seems like every time something new happens here the King’s got to make up another law for us to obey. Doesn’t he think we’ve got enough good sense on our own to know what’s right and wrong? Instead of having him up there on his big throne telling us when to stand up and sit down.” Looks like Marvin’s a little upset. I wonder why he doesn’t realize that the King’s just making these orders for his own good. I think we’d better follow along and see what these guys do here.

No. 3 — Well, they’re still talking about it at mothball practice. By now Marvin’s got all of his buddies stirred up. “What is a candle, anyway?” asked one of Marvin’s friends. “Haven’t you ever seen one?” chimed in one of

the others. “Yeh, yeh, yeh, it’s a big tall skinny thing like a little piece of fire on the top,” said still another. “I think we ought to go see it tonight,” said Marvin. “Are you kidding?” said all the other moths. “If we get caught over there, disobeying the King’s rules we’ll be in big trouble.” “Oh, forget the King,” said Marvin. “Besides, we’re just going to go look at it, we’re not going to touch the dumb thing. We’ll look at it real quick and then we’ll take off.” “Sounds exciting,” said one of the other moths. “O.K., here’s what we’re going to do,” said Marvin, “I’ll meet you guys right back here tonight at 7:00, we’ll all fly out there, we’ll look at it, check it out, some of you guys who haven’t seen it will know what you’re talking about and you’ll see what a nut this King we’ve got really is. Don’t tell your parents you’re going. Don’t tell anybody, just meet here, we’ll go, we’ll come back, you’ll be home before anybody even knows what’s going on.” Boy, I don’t know if I like the sound of that conversation. I don’t know what’s wrong with Marvin. He really has a hard time obeying people who are in charge. I hope this little midnight trip to the candle turns out all right. I guess we’ll just have to follow along and see.

No. 4 — “How much farther, Marvin?” asked Mike the moth. “My wings are getting tired.” “It’s not much farther,” Marvin answered back. “Just a little bit more. Wait, there it is now. Just a little bit more, I can see the flame from here. Come on, hurry up you guys, let’s go.” They all started flying a little bit faster, some of them were nervous especially some of them who had never seen a candle before — they didn’t know what to expect, but as they got closer they got a good closeup view.

No. 5 — “Well, there it is,” said Marvin, “the big bad bogey man dangerous candle. Watch out guys, it’s going to run over here and eat us.” “Come on, Marvin,” yelled Meathead, he was kind of the joker of the group, “don’t scare us like that, you don’t know what a candle is. It’s not funny anyway, if we get caught out here we’re in big trouble.” “You guys really crack me up, what’s the King going to do? Give us thirty lashes with a wet noodle for coming out here and looking at this stupid candle? What are you guys worried about? Nobody’s going to get hurt, you don’t see anything dangerous, do you? There’s nothing to be afraid of. You’re all making something out of nothing.”

No. 6 — “I think we ought to take off,” said Mike, “the King may be right. That fire up there looks like it could be dangerous.” “Are you guys crazy, come on let’s get a little bit closer.” “Not me,” said Meathead, “I’m getting out of here.” “Come on, are you guys chicken or what.” “No, we’re moths and we’re not supposed to go near a candle, the King said so and it’s our job to obey.” “What have I got to do to prove to you guys there’s nothing to be afraid of?” “You don’t have to prove anything,” said Mike, “Let’s go.” But it was too late.

No. 7 — Marvin had already taken off flying towards the flame. “Come on, Marvin, what are you doing, get over here,” the rest of his friends yelled, “we’ve got to get home, we’re going to get in trouble, what, are you crazy, come on.”

No. 8 — “Look up here you guys,” yelled Marvin, “look nothing’s happening, right, and I’m right next to it. It’s a

little warm but I'm just getting a suntan. Come on, come up here. You guys are just scared, there's nothing to be afraid of up here. You believe everything the King tells you? Come on," he yelled.

No. 9 — Meathead was yelling now as loud as he could, "Stay away, Marvin, stay away, come on we've got to get home, you're going to get hurt, I'm telling you you're going to get hurt." But Marvin wouldn't listen. He kept getting closer and closer almost like he was daring the flame from the candle to reach out and touch him, almost like he was standing on the edge of a cliff just daring the wind to blow him off. The moths yelled one more time but the more they yelled the closer Marvin got to the flame. Closer and closer — he was laughing as he did it. He flew around the flame one more time but suddenly a gust of wind came up that he didn't expect, it blew him right into the flame and in a split second before he could do anything he was blown right into the flame of the candle.

No. 10 — There was a loud scream and suddenly a bright flash inside the flame, some crackling noises. The rest of the moths yelled and screamed, "Marvin, Marvin," suddenly a lot of confusion, the moths flew over to where the candle was at. "Marvin, where are you, we told you to obey the King, we told you, we told you."

No. 11 — Marvin doesn't spend a lot of time with his friends much any more, he doesn't get to play the games

he used to play, he doesn't get to fly with them back and forth to school any more. He doesn't play mothball any more either. He kind of walks around on his crutch real slow and watches everybody else. It's a hard way to learn a lesson isn't it? It's a hard way to learn to obey but I guess he'll never forget, or will he? I don't think so.

## CLOSING

I want you to bow your head and close your eyes. Our time is gone this morning, the mule was no fool, he knew enough to obey God. Balaam was the fool, like Marvin was the fool or maybe some of us are even the fool. We obey what we want and those things that we don't want, we ignore. Balaam ended up losing his life because he disobeyed God. Marvin almost did. I wonder what it's going to take for us to obey. Let's pray. "Dear God, we thank you today for our lesson on obedience. We know to obey is better than sacrifice. It's your will for us to obey you in all things, to stop, to yield, to stay on the right track, not to open ourself up to sin, not to enter places in question and not to touch things that will hurt us, but to live by your rules. Help us to do that Lord, and if there is someone here who has a rebellious spirit in this place today and doesn't want to obey, help them to learn before it's too late. Help them not to have to learn the lesson the way Marvin did. In Christ's name, Amen."

## Lesson No. 8

# PLAY AND PAY

### INTRODUCTION

It's time once again for Bible preaching. I believe that most of you know by now that this is the most important part of the lesson. We've had our fun time and we've done things a little differently today than what we normally do and that's not bad. Right now, it's time to get serious and it's time to put your hands on your lap for the quiet seat watchers. Most of you realize that the Word of God is the most important thing. I don't think any of you need quiet seat prizes any more. I believe you know why we do it. It's a reward for those of you who do good and most of you do. We've got great boys and girls here and I'm proud of each and every one of you but I think that sometimes it's easy to get a little restless. It's easy to whisper with your neighbor and talk with them but we shouldn't do that. We're training you to go into the big church and we want you to learn how to do it right. O.K.? Today we're going to talk about some laws. A lot of people don't like the law. In the next couple of weeks we're going to be talking about laws more and more. There are certain laws that God has given us that will help us. Just as laws of the land, and most of you know that if we didn't have speed limits, people would go 80, 90 or more miles an hour and end up killing each other. Some people are stupid and they don't know how to behave and act right, so that's why we have laws. That's why we have rules and laws here in church, because some people don't know how to act, so we have to help them act right. That's why God has His laws, not to be mean, but He knows that unless He has rules and regulations, people aren't smart enough to know how to do it themselves and they'll end up hurting themselves. God's laws are laws that will help us if we'll just look at it that way. We've talked about sowing and reaping a long time ago, and you've heard me mention it from time to time, but we're going to talk about it again this morning. There are laws in the Bible. The Bible says in Galatians, chapter 6, verse 7: "Whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap." That was a memory verse for us once and you've heard me say it over and over again. Whatever you put into something is what you're going to get out and whatever you feed grows, whatever you starve dies. You've heard me say all these things, but for the next couple of weeks we'll be talking about people in the Bible who have had to learn important lessons by what they did and what happened to them. What they did is something that will help each one of us to understand God's laws and hopefully live by them in a better way than we ever have before. Sowing and reaping are terms that farmers use when they reap a harvest. Most of you know that when you sow something, it's not **sew**, it's **sow**. When you sew clothes you're sewing them together. When you're sowing seeds you're putting them in the ground and taking care of them, and watering them and making sure they get the right amount of sunshine. You care so that hopefully they'll grow up into the kind of plants that you want them to be. Of course, if they're vegetables, fruits or whatever you're growing when they become ripe and ready, you'll be able to go out and

harvest them. Then you will either eat them or sell them, and this of course, is how farmers make a living. Sowing and reaping is basically how we live our lives in the same way. Which way we live our lives and whatever we do today is going to come back to us maybe tomorrow, next week or next year, but it will come back. If you don't sow right you're not going to get the right kind of crops, it's just that simple. You might not like it but you can't change it. As a matter of fact, there's three parts to sowing and reaping. 1) We reap what we sow for whatever we put into something is what we're going to get out, and that goes along with anything we do in life. 2) We reap more than we sow. For instance, if we plant one little seed of corn we're going to get a stalk of corn which has between 1 and 3 ears of corn and everyone of those ears of corn have probably 100 little kernels of the very same thing that we originally put into the ground. If we plant one kernel and only get one kernel of corn back then that doesn't make farming very profitable, but out of the one little kernel we get the stock that has the ears which gives us a lot more corn than the kernel we originally planted in the ground. So number 2 says we actually reap more than we sow. 3) We reap later what we sow. I think most of you know that when we plant something you could stand there and put water on it all day, let the sun shine on it and put artificial heat and lamps on it, but it's not going to make it grow any faster. It doesn't grow in a day like a tree doesn't grow in a day. A stock of corn doesn't grow in a day and cabbage or wheat doesn't grow in a day. It takes months before the harvest is ready to reap and that's the way it is in life. Just because you got away with doing something wrong today doesn't mean it's not going to catch up with you six months or a year from now. I hope that's one of the things you learn from our lesson on sowing and reaping. So there are some laws of the harvest that affect our lives. It affects me, it affects you and it affects everybody in this room. We can say that it's not going to happen to us or we can say that the laws of the harvest are not going to affect us. We can say that we can be smarter than these laws but you can say whatever you want to but it's not going to change the fact that these laws will affect you. You will reap what you sow, you will reap more than what you have sown, and you will probably reap later what you sow, but you will reap. You can mark it down, **YOU WILL REAP EXACTLY WHAT YOU HAVE SOWN**. So keeping that in mind we're ready for our lesson and we're going to start it off with a couple of prime examples of people who reaped exactly what they sowed. So listen to me very closely, look right here at my face, and I'm going to tell you the Bible story. It's about two people by the names of Ahab and Jezebel.

### BIBLE STORY

All through the history of Israel there were good kings and bad kings. This is a story about a king who wasn't too good and his name was Ahab. He had a wife by

the name of Jezebel. There was a man named Naboth and he had a vineyard next to King Ahab's palace in Jezreel. This land had been in Naboth's family for many, many years and according to the law of Moses, no man could sell the land. You had to keep it in your family. Now King Ahab wanted Naboth's land for a vegetable garden because it was right next to the palace. He tried to buy it and he tried trading it for a better vineyard but Naboth wouldn't part with it. He said, "The Lord forbids me to sell the land which has come down to me from my fathers." Now Ahab wasn't real happy with that. He went home and sulked. His wife Jezebel came in to try to get him to eat dinner and he wouldn't eat. When he told her why, she said that's silly, I'll get the land for you. She wrote letters to the elders of the city. She signed them with Ahab's name and sealed them with Ahab's seal. She wrote: "Proclaim a fast and set Naboth in front of all the people and bring in two rough men and say Naboth cursed God and the king and then carry him outside the city and stone him to death." The elders were afraid to disobey Jezebel because they knew she was mean. So they had a fast and put Naboth in front of the people. And the two men who had been bribed to say what Jezebel had wanted them to say came and said that Naboth had cursed God and the king. The law of Moses commanded anybody who cursed God was to be stoned. They took him outside the city and stoned him to death. His blood stained the stones where he fell and the dogs licked it up. When Jezebel heard the news she told Ahab to go and get the land because Naboth is dead. But the Word of God came to Elijah the prophet. God told Elijah to go down and meet Ahab and tell him that because of what he did, that in the place where the dogs licked the blood of Naboth, the dogs will lick your blood and your wife's blood also. Ahab knew that Elijah wasn't fooling around. He was getting ready to go into battle soon with the Syrians and so he was afraid. So instead of dressing up as the king, because he knew the Syrians were looking for the king so they could kill him first, he dressed up like any ordinary soldier. The Bible says that by chance a Syrian drew a bow and the arrow flew into the soldiers of Israel just aimlessly. But it wasn't aimless at all. That one arrow found its mark in the chest of King Ahab. He fell down in his chariot and the man who was driving the chariot tried to get him out of the battle, but by the time he got him out he died. They took his body out and as they washed the blood from the chariot, guess where they washed it out? They washed the blood out from the very place where Naboth was killed. And guess who was there to lick the blood? The dogs. But what about Ahab's wife, Jezebel? Thirteen years later after a new king had taken over. He was walking down the street when he saw Jezebel standing in a window looking down at him from the street. She had two men standing on either side of her who had been acting as bodyguards. The new king, who was godly, looked up at her and asked her whose side she was on. After a small discussion the godly king snapped his fingers, gave an order, and the two men standing on either side of Jezebel picked her up and threw her out the window. She landed on the street and the dogs were there to lick up the blood. Whatever you sow you're going to reap whether it's six months or thirteen years. And today's memory verse goes along with what I'm saying perfectly.

## MEMORY VERSE

**"They that sow wickedness reap the same." Job 4:8**

**NOTE** — We're going to break these object lessons down, we have six of them and we're going to break these down into three categories. Basically these will be the three Laws of the Harvest that we mentioned in the introduction: two under the category of reaping what you sow; two under reaping more than you sow; and two under reaping later than you sow. So we will handle them within these three categories.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 1

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate that you will reap what you sow and in some cases it happens immediately.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A regular household candle, a candleholder and a box of wooden matches.

**PREPARATION:** In preparing for this object lesson the easiest thing to do is to have the candle mounted in the holder sturdily, of course, so it won't fall over in the midst of the presentation and have the box of matches there on the table just prior to the presentation. I think I've mentioned this in another lesson, but the reason I'm using these box matches in particular is because they're a lot easier to work with, and it usually works out the best rather than packaged matches or a lighter. Then always encourage the boys and girls never to try to do any of these things at home themselves and discourage them from playing with matches or fire. After this is set up you're ready for the presentation.

**PRESENTATION:** You've seen what happened to Ahab and Jezebel. You've heard about the Laws of the Harvest here this morning. You've seen the memory verse that if you sow wickedness you're going to reap the same. I want to show you what we're talking about. It's easy to say it sometimes and you have to see it as well as say it. I've got a candle here and we're going to light it (*do so at this time*). I don't know if there's anybody in this room who doesn't realize that fire is dangerous. You've seen pictures on the news and you've seen pictures in the newspaper. Some of you have even experienced the dangers of fire — getting burned yourself. There's no one here who doesn't know the danger of fire. It can be good or it can be bad, depending on how it's used, just like a lot of other things in life. If I left this candle on the table as it is now, and I hold my hand up here (*place it about two feet higher than the flame*) I don't even feel a bit of that fire. The reason being, I'm too far away from it. That's why when we tell you in Children's Church to stay away from sin, there's a reason. Stay away from things you know are wrong. You know there are things outside that can hurt you. You know the devil is like a roaring lion. He's out there to put things in front of you. You've heard me say it before, stay away from it and you won't get hurt. If you take part with it you're going to get hurt. Just like holding my hand up here, I'm not going to get burned. But as I bring it closer (*start bringing your hand closer to the flame very slowly*) to the flame I feel it right about a foot above the flame. Now my good sense tells me that if I bring it closer it's going to do what? My hand's going to get hotter. But I'm doing it and I'm bringing it closer and

closer. Right now I'm about five or six inches above the flame. It's beginning to get warmer. My good sense right now would tell me not to get any closer, just like your good sense and the Holy Spirit will tell you not to come any closer to sin. Then what happens? You think you're smart. You think you can outfox the devil. You don't think that sowing and reaping is for you. You don't think the Laws of the Harvest matter to you, and if I was to take this hand and put it right down onto the flame (*do so very quickly at this time*) what's going to happen? My hand's going to get burned (*pull your hand away*). If I would have left my hand there on the flame I could have been burned very badly and I would have paid a price. I would have reaped exactly what I'd sown. Not because I was stupid. Not because I didn't know any better but because I chose to do it anyway. I would have been burned by the fire. Sowing and reaping — put your hand in the fire and you're going to get burned. Play with sin and you're going to get hurt. Do something wrong and you're going to pay for it. That's a fact of life.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 2

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate that we might not like the law of sowing and reaping but because we don't like it does not mean that we can change it.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A piece of white 17 x 22 inch poster board, a pair of scissors, a magic marker and a brad.

**PREPARATION:** In preparation for this object lesson make a round circle, a large-sized one on the poster board, cut it out and make it look like a clock. Put the numbers and little lines and so on and so forth. Out of the scrap make a couple of hands. Then take your brad and put it in the middle to fasten the hands to the clock and you're all set.

**PRESENTATION:** We've got a little homemade clock (*hold up the clock at this time*). If we were to set this clock at the correct time — I could set it with my watch — which is usually right on the money according to airport time (*and set it at whatever time it happens to be in your Children's Church on this particular morning*). Now, you know boys and girls, sometimes we don't like God's laws, and we don't like the laws of sowing and reaping. Maybe we can pretend they don't exist. For instance, we can take this clock and maybe we want to save time, or maybe we want this Children's Church to be over so we could make it twelve o'clock (*set the hands for 12:00*). Does that mean it's twelve o'clock? No! We think just by changing time the way we want it, it's going to make it true. It doesn't! Or maybe we wish that it hadn't even started so we set it for eleven o'clock. Does that mean it's 11:00? No! Just by wishing something would be different doesn't make it different, does it? So it is with the laws of the harvest. We're going to reap exactly what we sow whether we like it or not. Let's go on and see that not only do we reap what we sow but we reap more than we sow.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 3

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate that we reap more than what we sow.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** One kernel of corn and an ear of corn or a can of corn, whichever you can secure in your particular area, depending on what time of year that you're using this lesson.

**PREPARATION:** In preparation for this object lesson I would definitely recommend trying to find an ear of corn in place of the can of corn, because I don't think just pouring a can of corn out is going to illustrate what we're trying to get across here. Because Colonel Sanders has ears of corn available almost twelve months out of the year, that might be one place where you can get corn. Since I'm a big fan of Colonel Sanders' chicken, that's one thing that I've noticed as far as any other places where you can get ears of corn fairly readily. I would try to go out of the way to get an ear of corn in place of the can because I think it will better illustrate the concept that we're trying to project here. Have these things on your table prior to the presentation and you're ready to go.

**PRESENTATION:** We've not only said boys and girls, that you reap what you sow, but you reap more than you sow. If you remember in our introduction to the lesson I told you that this is the law of the harvest that makes farming profitable. If you plant one kernel of corn and get only one kernel back you really wasted your time planting the one kernel because you could have gotten just as much if you'd kept it rather than planting it. But we know that's not the way farming works. We can take this one kernel of corn that I have here (*hold it up at this time*), we put it in the ground, water it, plant it, the sun shines on it and after several months we'll see that the stocks of corn grow up to be 6, 8 and sometimes 10 feet high. Then off of those stocks of corn many, many ears of corn grow, such as we have here. On this ear of corn we have maybe 100 — 175 — or 200 little kernels right here that we originally planted. What happened? We reaped more than what we sowed. And that's a fact of life. Whatever you put in, you will not only get back what you put in, but you'll get more. That's good when you're doing good things but it's bad when you're doing bad things. When we give our tithes and our offerings we know that God will bless us by giving us money back in return if we're faithful to Him, but by the same token, if we're doing bad things, then in turn we'll reap bad things just as we've planted. Let's take a look at something more.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 4

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate that you reap more than what you sow.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A package of apple seeds.

**PREPARATION:** The only preparation necessary for this object lesson is to secure the apple seeds or a reasonable facsimile thereof.

**PRESENTATION:** It's just as growing apples. I can take one of these apple seeds out of this package right here (*do so at this time*), and as one little tiny seed will cause an apple tree to grow, it can grow in one season maybe 200 to 500 apples depending on the size of the tree. I heard a man once say that you could count the seeds in an apple but you could never count the amount of apples in a seed. That sounds pretty good, doesn't it?

Let's think about it one more time. You could count the amount of seeds in an apple but you could never count the amount of apples that come out of a seed. Just by planting that one little seed — growing one tree season after season, year after year, all these apples will be produced from it. It's amazing isn't it? Just by living our life the way God wants us to live we could have good things happen for years and years even after we're dead and gone, but by doing bad things the bad things live on too. And that's the tragedy about it. That's what happened with Ahab and Jezebel. Thirteen years later the dogs were licking Jezebel's blood. It caught up to her didn't it? This brings us to our next object lesson, that we reap later sometimes what we sow.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 5

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate that just because we didn't get caught immediately doesn't mean that our sin will not find us out.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A glass, a pitcher, instant lemonade, a mixing spoon and a container of water.

**PREPARATION:** In preparation for this object lesson, be sure you have all your ingredients laid out on the table in front of you there as it's important to make sure that you know what you're doing, so it comes across that way during the presentation.

**PRESENTATION:** We're living in a time of instant everything. Instant coffee, instant tea, instant potatoes, you name it and everything in the world today is instant. That word instant is kind of interesting isn't it? What does it mean? Instant means fast, right now or immediately. Everybody in the world today wants everything quick, quick, or as the natives in Hawaii say Wiki-Wiki, quick, quick and that's where this whole thing of instant comes in. You could say that we sort of live in an instant society. Little kids don't want to be little kids, they want to be teenagers, teenagers don't want to be teenagers, they want to be adults. Everybody wants to be a success overnight, everybody wants to do everything immediately and sometimes it just isn't that way. For instance, I've got here some instant lemonade. We're going to make some. Would you like some lemonade? Sure you would. I'm going to take my lemonade mix here, put it in this empty pitcher, take the water and pour it in here, stir it all up and pour myself a glass of lemonade (*do so at this time*). It looks like we've got some lemonade in here doesn't it? Well, it looks like it and it really is lemonade except for one problem — we don't have any lemons. You see, what we have in here is something that tastes like lemonade. It's not made out of real lemons. You didn't see any lemons brought out here. You didn't see me bring them in and crush them and mix them all up. It's something that tastes like lemonade. In order to make real lemonade we have to get the lemons which had to have grown on a tree and which had to be planted. We had to bring them in here, squeeze them and mix in with the sugar. So far I think you all know the process. Not everything's going to happen immediately just like we think it's going to or like we think it should. You might think that you've got everything figured out the way it should be right now, just like this instant lemonade but time is the true test.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 6

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate that just because you can't see anything immediately doesn't mean that it's not there.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A large sponge, an empty glass, a transparent dish and a container of water and an empty opaque dish.

**PREPARATION:** In preparation for this object lesson take some of the water from the container, put it in the opaque dish and let the sponge soak it up. The best way to prepare this sponge is to get just enough water in it before the presentation, and this can be done anytime before the presentation, before the boys and girls even come in so that when you pick it up it's not dripping. In other words we're trying to create an atmosphere of a sponge that is just a sponge and does not have any water in it. If it was soaked, as you well know when you pick it up it's going to drip, so the ideal situation is to have it preloaded, set in the opaque dish and even though it is laden with water it's not overloaded so that the minute that you pick it up, and even if you touch it, it's going to let water come out. You might have to practice with that a little while. That's why we're putting this into this particular part of the preparation to get that worked out, so it's just right, so when you do squeeze it you can emit water from it, but it has to be when you want it to do it, not just doing it on its own. Once you've got it worked out you can have it in the dish, with the empty clear dish in front of it, well in clear view of the entire audience. As a matter of fact, if you want to go one step further, you can use colored water so it might be more easily seen in the clear dish.

**PRESENTATION:** There are a lot of things in life boys and girls, that you know as well as I know, that you can't see. You heard me mention earlier in this lesson that what you feed grows, what you starve dies. Sometimes you can't see that growth and sometimes you can't see how things change a little bit at a time. I don't think you could look back and see the day that you grew an inch or that maybe you put on a pound, but little by little it happens, doesn't it? One day at a time the weeks go by, weeks at a time then months go by, months at a time and years go by. Things happen that way. You grow an inch here, an inch there, a pound here, a pound there and pretty soon you're a teenager and you're an adult. You don't see it, but it's there and that's the way sowing and reaping is. We can take this sponge, this looks like a regular sponge doesn't it? (*Hold it up at this time*), but inside this sponge is water (*begin to squeeze out just a little bit*), it's there, you can see it (*squeeze it periodically as you continue the presentation*). Just because we can't see it doesn't mean it doesn't exist. These are the laws of God. The laws are there and you will reap what you sow, you reap more than what you sow and sometimes you reap later than what you sow. I put the water in this sponge nearly an hour ago and it's been setting there for the last hour waiting for me to pick it up as I'm doing right now and squeeze it out. It hasn't gone anywhere but it was there, waiting, sowing and reaping — it all comes back. Whatever you do is going to come back to you. Some 5, some 10 and some 20 fold. Look up here on the magic table and see how easy it is for things to begin to multiply and grow

in our lives. Whether it's good or whether it's bad doesn't matter. They both grow in our lives, don't they.

## MAGIC WITH A MEANING

### THE SIX BILL REPEAT

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate that not only do we get back what we put into something but, as we've already been studying throughout this entire lesson on the laws of the harvest, that you will also get back more than you put in.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** The paraphernalia necessary to perform this illusion, a trick called **The Six Bill Repeat**, which of course, is included here in your programmer.

**PREPARATION:** In preparing for this illusion, just as you've heard me mention many times over whenever you've been endeavoring to execute other magic tricks that we've used in the programmer, the key to the success of the presentation is right here in the preparation. This is not the type of trick that you just pick up and do. The illusion is one that we feel is excellent due to the nature of the trick, and the way that we're using it in this particular lesson, but without the proper preparation the forcefulness of it will be greatly limited. Your skill and ability to communicate through this medium will be the key factor, and of course, will depend on how much time and effort you're willing to expend practicing to be sure you understand the workings and can execute each move properly. So by keeping all these ideas in mind, and now that you're scared half to death to even pick the thing up and try, we're going to go through it with you step by step on just the illusion part of it first and the basic movements. Then after that, we'll go on to the presentation and try to give you a basic concept of the type of pattern you can give while you're making the moves that have been given to you in this point of the preparation. You are holding in your hand a very old English illusion called The Six Bill Repeat. Actually, what you should have in your left hand right now are the three untouched singles, and in your right hand should be the three half cut singles with three separate bills stashed in each one of them, which will probably be the way it will come to you. I would like to bring out one point right here and that is, this trick is optional in the sense that the bills that we supply you with can be used and can be used quite adequately. When I have done this trick, just to give an effect of realism, I took actual one dollar bills and just duplicated the set up which you have now in your hands which of course would be the equivalent of \$18.00. It just depends on whether you want to put out \$18.00 and go through the effort of taping up the bills and then putting them back together later. I enjoy doing it because I think it adds enough realism to it where you are drawing the boys' and girls' attention to the bills and the value thereof. So, whichever way you decide to go, we've given you the option on that and you can use your own judgment. We'll now continue on with the preparation and go through one practice run before we add the pattern. In your left hand you will be holding the three single untouched bills and in the right hand you will be holding the three trick bills with three single bills stashed inside of each one of them. You should begin by holding them with both hands, the three untouched singles should be on the left side, the three trick

bills on the right side, and of course, the cut edges of the bill should always be facing you and never facing the audience. Fan them out in your two hands just as you would be holding any playing cards. You might want to hold each one of them up, and count them out as you hold them up and put them back in your hand, counting out of course the number six which is the apparent number that you have there. You might want to even flip the bills over and then back again very quickly as you count them out. If you do that rapidly the boys and girls will never see the cuts. After you have them in your hand and have them fanned out and you've counted them out, you can then bring them all together in a flush stack in your hand so you can hold them with one hand — leaving the three untouched bills on the bottom. Then holding the stack in your left hand you can use your right hand to begin to peel off what appears to be the top three one dollar bills on the top of your stack. They are actually the three hidden bills in your top trick bill. After you have pulled off the top three bills you can fan out the bills that are left in your hand, just as you originally started out with, and then of course, count them out for the boys and girls once again as you initially did at the beginning of the presentation, and even though you have apparently pulled out three of the six, you've still got six in your hand. The bills can be counted out individually again, flipped back and forth, put back into a single stack in your left hand and then go back and rip off another three which, of course, will be the next three bills in your second trick bill. Now, the one problem that most magicians have in this particular trick is taking the empty trick bill, which is of course, your top bill after you've taken the first three out getting it to the bottom of the stack, so you're ready to peel the next three out from the second trick bill in line. This, of course, can be done after you've taken out the first three bills and then you're showing the boys and girls that there are six left. Then very quickly and unobtrusively you can take the top bill that you've stolen the first three bills from and stick it at the bottom of the stack, which will be of course, at the very bottom of the pile of bills which leaves the second trick bill with the next three ready to be pulled out at the top of the pile. That of course, will be repeated with the next one and so on down the line so that the last part of your presentation, when you actually lay the last six down or hold the last six in your hand, whichever you choose to do, all the stashed or stolen bills as we call them in magician's terminology, will be laying on the table and the three trick bills and the three original singles will be all that you'll be holding in your hand. As we said at the beginning of this lesson this is actually a pretty simple trick but it can become a little confusing without practice. So make sure you understand the philosophy behind it and what the actual purpose of the thing is, it makes it a lot easier to work. So, after you've tried that a few times I think that we're ready to add the pattern to the preparation, which of course, will give us the actual presentation.

**PRESENTATION:** We've talked all morning about the laws of sowing and reaping. I have something here on the table that I think everyone understands the language that it speaks, and that of course, is the language of money. I have here six bills (*hold up your six fanned-out bills in your hands as we went over in the preparation*). How are

these six one dollar bills going to teach us a lesson? Watch closely and you'll see. The Bible says that whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. Give and it shall be given unto you, pressed down, shaken together and running over. God's laws are the multiplication of the harvest. Both good and bad are easily seen right here in my hands if you'll watch closely. I have apparently six one dollar bills in my hand here (*this will be the time that you will be counting them out for the boys and girls, one at a time, flipping them over if you will and putting them back in your hand*). How many did we count out? (*Wait for the boys and girls to respond.*) Of course, six (*at this point pull them together in your left hand in a stack*). Now, let's say that we're going to invest three of these bills in something good. Three out of the six, of course, would be half but the Bible says that ten percent of whatever money we get or whatever things we accumulate in life should go to the Lord. Well, let's say we're not going to give ten percent but we're going to give fifty percent, which of course, would be three of the six (*pull the top three bills out of the first trick bill, lay them on the table*). One, two, three — we've taken three out of the six — how many should be left? (*Wait for a response.*) Three, right? (*Fan them out in your hand again, count them out with the boys and girls, and they of course, will see much to their amazement that you still have six.*) Well, how can that be? It's very simple, it's a perfect illustration of God's laws of sowing and reaping. When we give to God, He gives back to us. When we sow good things, we reap good things (*shuffle now your top empty trick bill to the bottom of the stack, put them back in your left hand and go on to the next segment of the presentation*). Just as we know that God is going to bless us with good things, when we give out of the abundance of our heart or by the same token if we sow bad things, as you've already seen in the lesson today. Let's try it again. We're going to count out three more bills out of this stack (*do so at this time and lay them on the table next to your first three*). One, two, three — maybe we'll let these next three bills be some money that has been taken or stolen. I read a story once of a man who stole some money and then tried to get rid of it because he knew he'd done wrong. Just as we tried to get rid of these three bills, but then when he went to count (*fan out the bills and count them again*) one, two, three, four, five, six — he couldn't get rid of it. He knew he'd done wrong and he knew he was going to have to pay the consequence. It still came back to him didn't it? What are we trying to tell you here from this lesson on sowing and reaping? (*Take your empty second trick bill and shuffle it to the bottom of the deck which leaves you one last trick bill with the last of the three bills that you will show.*) I'm saying that whether it's good (*pull out the first of the three bills from your last trick bill, lay them on the table next to your other two stacks*) or whether it's bad (*pull out the next bill*), God has guaranteed us (*pull out your last bill*) that whatever we sow, whatever we put in (*and at that time fan out the bills one last time showing them that there are still six*) we're going to get it back. Good or bad, sowing or reaping, that's the law, isn't it? Sometimes a blessing as we saw at the beginning where we sowed good money and gave it to God. Sometimes a curse after we've taken something or sowed bad money or done bad things. This money can be used to represent anything we want. Either good things

or bad things, but however it is given it will come back. Whatever you sow you will reap. Hard to believe, but it's true. What to do? The answer is up to you.

## SLIDE STORY

### ZACH CAME BACK

No. 1 — Zach and Jeremy had been best friends for two years. Still Jeremy had never gotten used to Zach calling him names such as bean head and boxer. Whenever they played catch, Zach and Jeremy had a good time. Yet Jeremy had learned to accept all the names Zach called him. He knew that Zach didn't mean any harm. Although he often thought to himself that it would be nice if Zach would just call him Jeremy.

No. 2 — The next day it was raining and Jeremy couldn't come out, so Zach played with some new boys on the block. They were playing baseball in the drizzle and it looked more like mud ball. As the game went on, the score was tied, it was the ninth inning with two outs and Zach was next to bat.

No. 3 — As Zach took the bat in his hands, he heard someone holler, "Bat Zat!" All of a sudden others chimed in, "Zat's at bat!"

He leaned forward and swung and thought sure he would hit the ball, when he heard the umpire call, "Strike!"

No. 4 — The ball had passed him by so quickly that he barely saw it. This time he planned to knock it out of the park. Again he heard the others calling out, "Bat Zat! Gimme Zat bat!"

Again Zach swung with all his might, but the ball had made it past him before he had a chance to hit.

No. 5 — This time Zach was ready, he swung and hit a fly ball to centerfield. Zach threw his bat down and started running for first base as the crowd cheered.

No. 6 — Before he was even half way there, the ball was caught on the fly and Zach was out. That did it for his team. No other runs came in and they wouldn't get another chance to bat. If they couldn't keep the other team from scoring, the game would be lost. All of a sudden the screaming turned to jeers. People were no longer saying "Bat Zat." Now he could hear, "Zat's a rat!" and "Zat can't bat!"

No. 7 — As he took his position as pitcher, the jeers were still ringing in his ears. He knew that he had to strike out three men in a row — something he had never done before. He wanted desperately to make it because he didn't like being called a rat. He didn't like it at all!

No. 8 — With two on base and two outs, Zach was facing the best hitter on the opposing team. He could hear some of his teammates yelling, "Strike him out — or you're a rat!" On the second pitch, the batter hit a fly ball which was caught by the short stop —

No. 9 — As his team cheered, the short stop dropped it. While everyone was fumbling around trying to recover, both runs came in. They had lost the game. No matter what happened from now on — the other side had scored. Zach's team had lost. There was no hope.

No. 10 — After the game, Zach picked up his mitt to head home. He could still hear the jeers: “Zat’s a rat!” “Zat can’t bat!” He hung his head as he walked along wondering if he could ever be just plain old Zach again.

No. 11 — In the morning, he was walking along with good old Jeremy — telling him how it went. “I couldn’t believe it,” Zach said. “They were all calling me names. It made me feel crummy. I want them to call me by my real name.”

“I know what you mean,” Jeremy answered. But Zach did not understand.

No. 12 — Just then, Jeremy kicked a bent drink can that was in their pathway. Suddenly Zach screamed, “Hey, beanhead! That was mine.” The words he said seemed to echo back to him as if they were high up in the mountains.

No. 13 — Jeremy picked up the can and handed it to Zach. He had a quiet, settled look on his face, but Zach looked bewildered. In a moment, Zach asked, “Do you mind if I call you beanhead?”

Jeremy answered, “I’d rather you just call me by my name.” Zach thought for a moment. Now he knew how it felt to be called silly names.

No. 14 — He smiled at his friend. “There’s no problem, Jeremy. I’ll call you by your name. And if I ever come up with another nickname for you, I’ll check with you and see if you like it.”

Jeremy smiled back at Zach. “Thanks, Zach,” he said. “You’re a real friend.”

## CLOSING

I want you to bow your head and I want you to close your eyes. We’ve talked a lot today about sowing and reaping. I don’t want to sound like a broken record but this is probably one of the most important lessons you’ll ever hear. There are some of you who have sown bad seeds and there are some of you who have done things wrong in the past that you’re going to pay for. Some of you might be involved in some bad things at home or at school and with friends you’re involved in the wrong kind of things. You’re making bad investments and they’re going to come back to you. Maybe not right now, but they will and you know they will. You’ve seen that this morning and you want to make it right. You know you’re not in the place God wants you to be. While heads are bowed and eyes are closed, if you can say, “Yes, I know that I’ve planted a bad crop, I’ve sown some bad seeds, and I know that if I don’t make a change soon, I’m going to reap the heartaches that I’ve sown.” I want you to raise your hand, no one’s looking around. Those of you who raised your hand, I’m going to pray for you and I want you to pray silently there while I pray out loud. Let’s determine in our minds today that we’re going to begin to plant good seeds in our life according to the will of God. “Heavenly Father, we thank you this morning for these boys and girls who raised their hands in honesty. They know, Lord, that they’re involved in things that they shouldn’t be, and I ask you right now that you’ll help them to quit it and stop right here Lord, before that bad crop gets any bigger. As we put our faith and trust in You today, we just believe that you’re going to help us be what you want us to be. In Christ’s name, Amen.”

# Lesson No. 9

## ELIJAH AND ELISHA

### *A Double Dose*

#### INTRODUCTION

We are about to begin our lesson, so it is important that you pay attention. You should always try to get everything you can out of a lesson. The only way you can do that is by listening and trying to learn something new. I could be the best junior church teacher you have ever had and you still might not learn anything. That may sound funny to you, but let me explain. A teacher cannot teach nor a preacher preach to someone who doesn't want to learn or hear. You must want to listen and learn before you do. One sure way to get something out of every junior church lesson is to try and find something new you have never heard before. In that way every junior church lesson will be a challenge to you and more exciting. Our success as your leaders depends a great deal upon your desire to make junior church rewarding for yourself.

I want to challenge each of you to get involved through listening today and make junior church more exciting than it has ever been before. It is all up to you.

#### BIBLE STORY

Our lesson today is found in I Kings 19 and II Kings 2:11. We are going to learn about Elijah and Elisha, two prophets of God. Elisha was a student under Elijah. The first time they met Elisha was plowing in a field. Elijah gave Elisha his mantle, a special cloth he carried, and that told Elisha he should follow Elijah.

The most important meeting Elijah and Elisha had was also their last meeting. It was coming to the end of Elijah's ministry when he would go to be with God. As he prepared to leave this world he asked Elisha if there was anything he could do for him. Almost immediately Elisha replied that he wanted a double portion of Elijah's spirit to be upon him. Elijah told Elisha that what he had asked for was a very hard thing yet he would try. He told Elisha that if he saw him when he was taken then the double portion would be given. As they walked along, a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and then Elijah went up by a whirlwind to heaven. Elisha saw it all and knew the double portion of Elijah's spirit was upon him. He had found grace in the eyes of the Lord. He was now the successor to Elijah. He was God's new spokesman and minister to the people. Elisha would not let God down.

#### MEMORY VERSE

"The Lord will give grace and glory." Psalm 84:11

#### OBJECT LESSON No. 1

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate a double portion.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** Two grocery sacks, magic marker, two pans, and popcorn, popped.

**PREPARATION:** On one sack write ELIJAH — PROPHET and on the other sack write ELISHA — PROPHET. The words can be on top of each other if you do not have enough room.

The pans should be large enough to hold all the popcorn or most of it. Make sure one pan is only half the size of the other one. Pop enough popcorn to fill one bag half full. Pour just enough out so that you have twice as much in the Elisha's sack as in the Elijah sack. Place both sacks on the table facing the audience.

**PRESENTATION:** Elijah knew that his time on earth would soon be over. His ministry was to be carried on by Elisha; whom he had had time to teach about God and about being a prophet. Elijah asked Elisha to tell him what one thing he could do for him before he left to go to heaven. It was then that Elisha asked for a double portion of Elijah's spirit to be upon him. He wanted to be twice as close to God as Elijah had been. It was an admirable thing to ask. He was really saying he wanted to be the best prophet he could be for God.

On our table you will notice I have two sacks. One is labeled Elijah and the other Elisha. We cannot see inside of a person to look at his spirit and it is sort of the same with our sacks here. We cannot see inside of them so we do not know if Elijah has more inside of him than Elisha. I do have some popcorn inside both sacks, however, and I am going to pour out Elisha's sack. He has more than twice the popcorn of the other sack. We would never have been able to tell that from the outside.

That is the way the double portion of Elijah's spirit came upon Elisha, too. It existed on the inside of his life; in his heart. He needed twice as much faith and understanding from God so he asked for it. He received his double portion in his heart where he could know God better.

#### OBJECT LESSON No. 2

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate twice as much.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** Two lights — one a flashlight and the other a floodlight or spotlight or large camper's lantern.

**PREPARATION:** Make sure the one light is far brighter than the little flashlight. These lights could also be electrical like a lamp and a high intensity lamp, if you want.

**PRESENTATION:** Even with the lights on this morning I believe we can see the difference between these two hand held lights. First let's turn on the little light and look at it. It doesn't produce much light, does it? Even if the lights were out about all we could see from this little flashlight would be a circle about the size of a coffee can lid. It could be seen but it would not be very bright.

Now let's take the spotlight and turn it on. Wow! Look at how bright the light is! It is easily two to three

times brighter, isn't it? You know Jesus said we are to let our light so shine that others can see God through us. He meant that we are to have so much of Jesus in our hearts that it can be seen in our lives. That is what Elisha wanted for his life. He saw God in Elijah's life and he wanted God to be in his life twice as much. He was not wanting to be twice as good as Elijah. He just wanted to make sure his life would be as godly. Elisha wanted to be as committed and as outstanding a prophet for God as he could.

### OBJECT LESSON No. 3

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate how Elisha knew to follow Elijah.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A broom, a yo-yo, a hat, a Rubic's cube and four volunteers.

**PREPARATION:** Place all the items on or near the table. Do not tell anyone what to do with the items. Just tell them to come up and do with them what they feel should be done.

**PRESENTATION:** For this lesson I am going to need four volunteers. I think our assistants have already chosen four people, so you four stand right where you are and get ready to come up when I give the word.

What I want each of you to do is come up when I say and take an item and do whatever you think it is you should do with it. If it's something you have to pretend you are doing, then pretend. Please do not argue over an item. If someone else gets one you saw and wanted, you take another one and do as I have already instructed. Take only one item and please do not trade or try to do more than the one.

Okay, you four may come to the table and begin. (*Each child should naturally use the item the way it was intended.*) Everyone stop doing what you were doing right where you are. Let's evaluate our situation. First, one person took the hat and put it on. No one told him to do it, he just knew. Second, this person picked up the yo-yo and began playing with it as it was intended. Again, I did not tell him to do it. He knew what to do. Our third person took the broom and pretended she was sweeping the floor. She realized that that was the use of the item and did it. She knew what to do without being told. Finally, we come to our last volunteer who found the Rubic's cube. He picked it up and began trying to solve it. It was as if it were a natural reaction to the cube.

In each instance past experience or natural instinct told the volunteer the procedure to follow with each item. It was the same for Elisha. Mantles were common items in his time, and when Elijah left his with Elisha, Elisha reacted naturally and from previous knowledge just as our volunteers did. Elisha knew what he was to do because he had learned to react to God in a natural way. He just knew he was to follow Elijah and he was right.

### OBJECT LESSON No. 4

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate being a follower like Elisha.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A salt shaker, a box of salt, a small trash can and either two grocery sacks or two plastic trash can liners.

**PREPARATION:** Have the salt shaker empty except

for one more shake. Put the trash can liner in the trash can and fill with trash. Have the other liner ready to put in the can.

**PRESENTATION:** There is probably not too many of you here who have not run out of salt as you were using it sometime or another. We all have. I am going to use the last of this salt and empty it here into the trash can. There, it is completely empty. When the salt shaker is empty, what do we do? That's right we refill it. We refill the salt shaker out of a box of salt we have standing by. It is usually on a shelf somewhere waiting to be used. Hardly ever is it used as the salt shaker. The box of salt sort of waits on the sidelines until it is needed and then it comes on to be used. It does not replace the salt shaker, just the salt that was used. It allows the salt shaker to continue to be useful.

We can see this same idea with our full trash can. At our home, when the bag in our trash can is full, I take it out to a bigger container outside. (*Pick it up out of the can and place to one side.*) Then, I put a new bag in the can. The bag keeps the can from getting all dirty and collects the trash just as the can would. The extra bags I have around the house for this purpose are there to let me continue collecting my trash.

Elisha was not a box of salt nor a paper sack to catch trash, but he was the person to fill the gap when Elijah left for heaven. He waited on the sidelines as a replacement until it was his turn to be the lead prophet for God. His job was to be ready to take Elijah's place of ministry when he left and make sure the Word of God continued to get preached. God needs men and women like Elisha He can trust and use to get His work done. Can you be an Elisha, too?

### OBJECT LESSON No. 5

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate replacement, such as how Elisha replaced Elijah.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** Two tin cans, 6 ft. string, a telephone, one frame of an old overhead story, and one picture from an old flash card story.

**PREPARATION:** Make a small hole in the center of the bottom of each can and put each end of the string through the holes to make a phone. Lay your flash card face down on the table and place the overhead frame on the projector, but do not turn it on.

**PRESENTATION:** Some of you are not going to believe this, but this string tied between these two cans was a way to play like we were talking to each other, when I was a kid. It was a can telephone. I'll hold one end and give the other can to someone in the first row, and we'll see how it works. (*Go through the process a few minutes to demonstrate.*) It didn't work the best in the world but it did work a little. For adults to talk to each other, the telegraph or letters were the only way to communicate. Then the telephone was invented. It did not replace newspapers, letters, or the telegraph so much as it added to communication. It just carried on the process of getting messages out. Cans or the telegraph are not used today, but messages still go across wires.

Now let's look at one of our old flash card stories. Before overhead, slide, or filmstrip projectors became

useful to us businesses, schools and churches used flash cards to get a message across. We still use flash cards but now we can show them to a larger audience through the use of an overhead projector. Someone has discovered that putting the same drawing on a plastic sheet and then putting it under a light and magnifying glass will let it be seen on a larger area. The overhead sheet replaces the flash card for showing to a larger group, but it does not take its place entirely. The overhead continues to do the same as the flash card. It carries on the message giving process of the flash card only in a different manner.

When it came time for Elisha to take Elijah's place as prophet he did it his way. He was not Elijah and the people could not expect him to be like Elijah. He would have to be himself in all that he did. Elisha would, however, continue to carry God's message to the people. Elisha did not change the message of God that Elijah presented. He continued it. He, too, was God's man.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 6

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate Elisha's place in this point and time of Israel.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** An automobile spare tire.

**PREPARATION:** You may want to clean the tire to keep yourself as clean as possible, or wear gloves when you roll the tire in and out.

**PRESENTATION:** (*Roll the tire out and set it up in front of you or the table as you begin. You may want to place it on the table and have an aide hold it as you talk.*) Almost every car and truck in the world carries a spare tire. It may look like mine and it may not. Some spares are designed to get you to the next spare gas station, and some are designed to take the place of the bad tire until the bad one is fixed. The spare like I have goes with the car in the trunk wherever the car goes. It is ready to be used at anytime. It may never get used but it is ready.

There are a lot of people in the world who are spares, too. In sports, some men and women never get to start, but they are asked to be ready. When they are called upon, they are to enter the game and fill in and play as good as one of the starters. In the business world there are people who are spares, too. Vice presidents of companies, assistant managers, and back-ups are all people who have been asked to know their jobs so well that if the boss or manager were to be unable to perform their duties, they could step right in and carry on the work. They may never get the opportunity to do that, but their job is to be ready to if they must.

Elisha was God's spare for Elijah. He was to be ready to take Elijah's place when God would call Elijah to heaven. He was to learn all he could about God and about Elijah's message so that he could continue it without delay or confusion. Elisha's willingness to obey God and to follow Elijah until it was his turn to be God's prophet allowed Elisha to become as great a prophet as Elijah had been.

God may be asking you to be a spare, too. He wants you to be spiritually ready to share Jesus with your friends and to some day take over key positions in the church. Will you be the spare God wants?

## SLIDE STORY

### MORK GETS PROMOTED

No. 1 — There's Mork, the horseshoe magnet, and some of his friends. Everyone likes to be around Mork. It seemed like he had all the pull to get things done and knew exactly what to do when his friends were in trouble or came to him for help. Today would be a good day to listen in on the magnets. They seem to be interested in something Mork is telling them.

"Well, how are you going to know who this fellow is that you want to take your place?" asked Perry magnet. "I mean, why don't you let the company replace you with someone?"

"I'll know who I want," replied Mork. "I'll know on the inside."

No. 2 — "See all you guys later," said Mork.

"Okay, goodbye Mork!" the magnets replied.

Mork picked up his walking stick and headed for the farm country. He knew he wanted a replacement that worked hard and had a lot of exposure to nature. He figured a farm boy would be just the kind of fellow he wanted. Mork had passed through several farms until finally he came to one that he sensed was the place that he wanted.

No. 3 — In a field not far from the house, Mork saw the fellow he wanted to be his right hand man. It was Mark magnet, riding a plow and holding a pin in the cultivator as his dad plowed. Mark always rode along when his dad plowed the fields to help him. When he saw Mork, a special attraction seemed to come over Mark and Mork. Mork left a card with Mark and said he would meet them later back at the farm house.

No. 4 — "Mark, I need a magnet like you to train and some day be my replacement," Mork said, as he began to explain his need of Mark.

"But, I'm not anything special," Mark replied humbly. "I'm just a country boy and I haven't done anything great that I know of. Are you sure it's me?"

"Mark, I'm sure," said Mork. "I'll see you at our company tomorrow."

No. 5 — The next day Mark and his dad said goodbye to each other. Somehow Mark's dad knew this was a right situation. He did not want to interfere, only give his son encouragement and his blessing so he would do a good job. Mark knew it was right, too. He felt he and Mork were alike in many ways.

No. 6 — Mark found Mork at his office. "What exactly is your job?" asked Mork.

"I am the middleman between the foreman magnet of this plant and the people," replied Mork. "Besides that, I'm one of the strongest magnets in the plant. The foreman needs me."

No. 7 — "You say you are a middleman?" Mark began.

"Come on I'll show you," Mork interrupted.

The two magnets began a tour of the company plant. They made nails, paper clips, thumb tacks, and staples at the plant which were then shipped on pallets by truck all over the world. It appeared to be a big operation and many of the magnets held important jobs. It was easy to see where Mork fit in. Everywhere they went and every-

one they met knew him. He seemed to be loved by all the magnets. In the short time that Mark had known Mork, he, too, was beginning to love Mork as a close friend.

No. 8 — “Now, I’ll show you my other job here. See that pallet of nails? I am the only magnet who can lift them when the truck comes. The foreman can’t, and he knows it. I think that is why I am able to get everything for the workers. I have more strength inside than he does, and that has kept me one step ahead most of the time,” explained Mork.

“You mean the foreman has tried to get rid of you before?” Mark asked surprisingly.

No. 9 — “That’s right,” Mork went on, “and that is the reason I chose you to be my replacement some day. I’ve been looking for someone who had character and would not give up when things got tough, like they have been for me a time or two.”

“And you chose me?” asked Mark again.

No. 10 — Just then one of the workers came running up to Mork to give him some important information.

“Mork! Mork! he yelled.

“What is it, Bubba?” Mork asked. “What’s wrong?”

“I just heard the foreman has ordered a new pallet for the nails. It will be twice as big.”

“So what’s the problem?” Mork asked puzzled.

“He said that if you couldn’t lift his pallet, he would be getting a new lifter and a new representative for the workers. He’s out to get your job, Mork. You had better get some more strength or something before he pins you down.”

More than ever before Mork knew how important it was now to teach Mark all he could about his job. It was just a matter of time before he would have to step down from his job. He knew he could not remain forever as the worker’s helper, but he knew their only hope for survival against the foreman was another representative. He felt Mark could do it.

No. 11 — “Mark, I am not quitting, but I must go on to Magnet Heaven and retire. I have known this for quite some time,” said Mork.

“How did you know that?” asked Mark.

“Well,” said Mork, “one of King Magnet’s men came and told me about a year ago. King Magnet said my time as leader had ended. I was to get someone to carry on for me. You have got to do it.”

“Mark and Mork went back to Mork’s office to wait for the foreman’s next step. It wasn’t long before they discovered what it was.

No. 12 — Mork and Mark could see the foreman headed their way.

“How can I do your job?” asked Mark, “I’m not strong.”

“Mark, trust me. I don’t know how, but if I transfer my power to you, you will become twice as strong. I have learned this over many years of service to King Magnet. Now Mark, you can carry on for me!”

“As Mork finished, the foreman came through the office door and began talking to Mark.

“Well, where is he?” asked the foreman.

“Who?” asked Mark, not knowing he was asking for Mork.

“Mork,” replied the foreman.

Mark looked around and noticed that Mork had slipped out through another door. He was left to face the foreman alone and be the worker’s helper and middleman.

“Just as I thought,” continued the foreman with a smile of victory. “I’ve got a man to do this job.”

“Wait!” said Mark. “Let me try to lift that pallet.”

No. 13 — Mork had never tried to lift much of anything before, but when he got to the pallet he lifted it with ease. He was able to lift double the amount of what Mork had been able to do. The foreman left defeated again, because Mark would now carry on Mork’s job. The foreman had lost again.

Mark walked back to the office, and now everyone was looking up to him as they did with Mork.

No. 14 — Back at the office Mark found a note from Mork. Here’s what it said:

“Dear Mark,

I did not give you the double strength you needed. It was available to you all the time. All I did was help you get it. I knew you loved the King, and that made a big difference in your ability. I’ll see you in Magnet Heaven some day.

Mork”

Mark realized from that point on that he was called to represent the worker and carry on the work Mork had begun. He was willing to take Mork’s place.

## CLOSING

Elisha received a double portion of Elijah’s spirit. It let him perform miracles and control the attention of God’s people to the things of God as had Elijah. Elijah knew that Elisha had something special about him that made him a good replacement. He already loved God and wanted to serve God 100%. When a person is like that in their heart already God can call them to do anything for Him, and they will do a great job. God is wanting each one of you to carry on the work of sharing the Good News with other people. Those who will succeed the most will be those who give God 100% right now in their lives. Will you be a person who will right now tell God you intend on carrying on His work as a teacher, missionary, preacher or worker in some other area? As we pray, let God know what it is you will be willing to do. Will you?

# FORGET AND REGRET

## INTRODUCTION

It's time, once again for the preaching of the Word of God. I want you to sit up straight, hands on lap, feet on floor, everybody looking right up here. Our quiet seat watchers are getting ready. I'm going to count to three and blow the whistle, and when I do, they're going to walk up and down the aisles looking for you who are listening because today I don't want you to forget to be quiet. Nobody forgets, because today our lesson is on forgetting. I don't want anybody to forget because today we're going to be talking all about forgetting and regretting. Get ready, one, two, three, the quiet seat watchers are on their way. How many of you have ever forgotten anything? Let me see your hands. Oh, you're kidding. Some of you have probably forgotten that you forgot. I don't think anybody, including myself, hasn't been in some place where we've forgotten to do something, or get something that we said we were going to do or that we were supposed to get. Supposedly, elephants never forget, but I don't know. I've never talked to one, but if their memory is halfway as big as their bodies, maybe that's the truth, I don't know. All through history a lot has been written about forgetting. It's said that when you get old your memory starts failing. I've known a lot of boys and girls who are pretty young that their memory has failed them. There was an old custom, that if you were to tie a string around your finger, that whenever you looked at that string during the day it was supposed to remind you of what you were to do that day. The problem is a lot of people forgot to look at the string, and that after they looked at it, they forgot what it meant anyway. I don't think there's any sure-fire way to remember anything. I think the sad part about Christian boys and girls forgetting things is the things that they forget are the things that God has done for them. It's easy for us to forget what God has done, isn't it? It's easy to forget the kind of life that He's saved us from. It's easy to forget that He forgave us of all the sins that we ever committed. It's easy for us to forget the good things that He's given us and the things that He's blessed us with. It's easy to forget all these Children's Church lessons that we've been teaching. It's easy to forget Sunday School and it's easy to forget that Jesus died on the cross for us. The title of our lesson is **Forget and Regret**. I met a girl once who forgot to do her homework and she was sorry the next day when she went to school. I met a little boy once who forgot to get up early on a Saturday morning to mow a lawn that he had promised he was going to mow, and he was sorry because he never got that job again. And do you know what? I forgot something once. I was cooking T.V. dinners and I forgot to take them out of the oven and guess what happened? You're right! It wasn't too good because it was a big mess and I was sorry. That little girl regretted her forgetfulness, that little boy regretted his forgetfulness and I sure regretted mine because I went away hungry after I looked at my charcoaled T.V. dinners. If we forget what God has done for us we'll regret it some day. Our lesson and story today revolve around our Bible Story. It's a story about a king by the

name of Joash. He forgot and he lived to regret it. Let's talk about him.

## BIBLE STORY

There once was a little boy by the name of Joash. He was the son of one of the kings of Israel called Ahaziah. It's an unusual story about little Joash. He was next in line to be king but his grandmother, Athaliah, wanted to be queen so she killed all of the children. She thought she'd killed them all except that the high priest, by the name of Jehoiada and his wife Jehoshebe, took little Joash before he was killed by his grandmother and hid him in the temple. They let everybody think that all of the children were dead so that little Joash would be safe. You can read it for yourself in the book of II Kings, chapters 11, 12 and 13. Years went by and Queen Athaliah was so wicked and everybody hated her but they were afraid of her. But Jehoiada got little Prince Joash when he was seven years old and ordered all the soldiers and made them promise to guard him. He made the announcement to the rest of the people in Jerusalem that there was a king from the line of David and he was here and he needs to be king. The people cheered. The wicked Queen Athaliah screamed, "Treason, treason," but Jehoiada, the high priest told the soldiers to take her out of the temple and kill her. She didn't deserve to be queen. They did as they were told, and seven year old Prince Joash became the new king of Israel. Everybody cheered and said, "He's to rule for 40 years." It looked like the Israelites had a good king again who loved and feared God and would help them to worship God in the way that they should. When Joash grew up it came into his heart to repair God's holy temple. Almost 150 years had gone by since Solomon had built the temple and some of the parts had become worn out and needed to be repaired. Some of the parts had even been stolen to make up a temple to worship Baal. Moses had commanded that every man 20 years and older should bring a half a shekel to the Lord every year and Joash was enforcing the law. They started collecting the money and it was used to rebuild the beautiful temple. Soon it was done and it was more beautiful than it had ever been and the people were excited and they cheered. They knew they had a good king in Joash, the little boy that grew up to be a great king. As long as the good old High Priest Jehoiada, the man who had saved Joash from his grandmother in the first place lived, King Joash was a good ruler. But unfortunately, as things go, Jehoiada was already 90 years old when Joash was crowned king and at last the old priest died. He was 130 years old when he died. The people loved him so much for all the good things that he had done that they buried him with the kings in the city of David. But after Jehoiada died some sad things happened and that's the basis for our lesson today. Some of the princes of Judah came to King Joash and said they were tired of worshiping the Lord. They wanted to go back to idol worship, and can you believe it, Joash said that he felt the same way and so the

people left the Lord and returned to worshiping Baal and the other idols. God sent prophets and one of them in particular, Zechariah, to warn them that if they didn't go back to worshiping God they'd be in big trouble. But Joash, the man who saw miracles, who worshiped and who loved God, told the people to stone Zechariah the prophet, to death. Do you know who Zechariah's father was? Jehoiada, the high priest, who had actually saved Joash from his grandmother in the first place. What a terrible thing to do. He forgot, didn't he? He forgot what Jehoiada had done for him. He forgot what God had done for him. It's strange how people forget some of the most important things. They wouldn't listen to Zechariah, they killed him. But God's punishment came to Joash and the people of Judah. The Syrians invaded Judah and Jerusalem and they killed all the princes because they had forgotten the God of their fathers. Joash tried to bribe them not to kill him but it didn't make any difference. They came into his bedroom and killed him. Joash began to reign when he was only seven years old and he was king for 40 years. If he had not forgotten God he might have reigned for many more years but he forgot. He forgot the people who helped him and he forgot that God made him what he was and that's why our memory verse is so important today. Let's take a look at it.

## MEMORY VERSE

"Beware, lest thou forget the Lord." Deut. 6:12

## OBJECT LESSON No. 1

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate some of the consequences of forgetting in general.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A quart of milk.

**PREPARATION:** In preparation for this object lesson you can go two ways. The whole concept here is to teach the children what happens when we forget small things. Basically, the way I have presented this has been to leave the carton of milk out of the refrigerator for about a week and let it get real spoiled, so it really smells awful, and then during the presentation you can have a boy come up out of the audience and have him smell it. That usually gets a good reaction. If that's a little too rough for you then you can just have the milk up there and just talk about it. Whatever you feel comfortable with is fine. Sometimes we like to get a little dramatic but it might be a little too dramatic for you. Either way, have the carton of milk either spoiled or unspoiled on your table on the platform well in advance of the presentation.

**PRESENTATION:** Sometimes we take the simple things of life for granted. I wonder how many people have had a quart of milk like we have up here, (*hold up the carton of milk*), and after maybe you've finished with it you forget to put it back into the refrigerator or maybe your mom will come by later and do it. But what would have happened if no one would have put it in the refrigerator? Does anybody know? (*Wait for an audience response.*) It turns out something like this (*and if you've chosen to use a boy to smell it, then just bring him up and have him give his reaction at that time and then you can carry on with the presentation from there*). Milk spoils, doesn't it? Goes bad, turns sour or whatever you want to call it. Stinks is another

word that you can use. Anyway you look at it, by forgetting to put the milk back in the refrigerator, the rest of the milk becomes unusable. Doesn't seem like a very big thing to you, does it? But what would happen if we did that to all the milk that we had in the house? We wouldn't have a lot of milk because the milk would spoil. It's something that you have to remember to do. Also when you're cooking something you have to remember to take it out of the oven. So remembering small things are important because if you forget the small things chances are you might forget the big things. As usual, whenever we forget something we regret it later. But let's go on a little bit further. We've talked just a little bit about forgetting in general but now let's talk about forgetting things specifically such as spiritual things.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 2

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate that it's easy to forget the good things that God has done for us.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A carton of chocolate ice cream, some chocolate syrup, some whip cream or Cool Whip, a nice ice cream dish, some scoopers to scoop all of your goodies out with, and a spoon to eat it with, and maybe a napkin if you're a real messy eater.

**PREPARATION:** The only preparation necessary for this object lesson is to keep all of your paraphernalia in the refrigerator right up until the presentation time. You should have an assistant who can go very quickly after you have started on your first object lesson to go and get your equipment out of the refrigerator, and have it in a bag ready to give to you when it comes time for this presentation. It should not be taken out of the bag until you are ready to work with it. You don't want the children to be distracted in the middle of the program by seeing ice cream, whipped cream and chocolate syrup, etc. That does have a tendency to become a little distracting sometimes. Keep it in a bag in the refrigerator and have your assistant get it just when you're ready, and then as you need them, take them out of the bag and it will present more of an exciting mystery effect as you begin to use with each one of the articles.

**PRESENTATION:** Not only is it easy to forget the little things in life but it's easy to forget the things that God has done for us. It amazed me when I read again the story of the little boy Joash whom we studied about in our Bible story. He saw all of the good things that God had done for him and yet he forgot so quickly the moment someone told him to do something else. For instance, I hear we've got some chocolate ice cream (*pull the chocolate ice cream out at that time*). We can have ourselves a little chocolate ice cream here. Boy, it looks good. My favorite is chocolate, how about yours? Anybody out there like chocolate as a favorite? Sure, a lot of you do. But for most kids this ice cream's not enough. Used to be when I was a small boy, just to get ice cream was a treat. But now, ice cream isn't enough. We need chocolate ice cream with chocolate syrup (*pull the syrup open, you might need a can opener there if it's not already open. It would be wise to have it already opened depending on which way you're going there — you'll have to make the adjustment. Pour the syrup over it real slow*). MMMMMM . . . Boy, that looks good, doesn't it? For a lot of children chocolate ice cream with chocolate syrup, boy, that's the greatest. But for some

that's still not enough. We need a sundae. A sundae isn't complete without whipped cream (*pull out the whipped cream and put it on the rest of the ice cream*). For many just chocolate ice cream was plenty, but for others it's just not enough. They forget about the good things and they just want more and more all the time. And what's worse than that, they want it without even working for it. Does that sound like anybody here? Remember, boys and girls, God doesn't owe us a thing. We owe Him everything. There's a song that says: He paid a debt He did not owe. We owe a debt that we can never pay. Whatever we get from God we need to be thankful for because He doesn't owe us a thing. But watch closely and let's talk some more about forgetting.

### OBJECT LESSON No. 3

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate that things are here one day and gone the next.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** Just an ice cube.

**PREPARATION:** In preparation for this object lesson have your ice cube or cubes, you might want to have a few backups just to be safe, in an ice tray. Again your assistant can bring those over from the refrigerator at the same time he was bringing the ice cream and chocolate syrup and whipped cream, etc. They will last long enough, certainly, to keep during that last object lesson and then be ready for this one that we're now in progress with. Have them brought to the table and you're ready for the presentation.

**PRESENTATION:** I think every one of you boys and girls have heard the expression "here today and gone tomorrow." I'm sure all of you know what it means. Sometimes we take for granted the things that God has given us. We're not thankful for them. We don't remember to thank Him. It's like this ice cube (*pick one up at that time*). An ice cube doesn't last forever in weather like this, does it? It's here (*squeeze it tightly in your hand and hold it up as you watch the water drip*). We had something solid that we started with — a solid ice cube — solid water, but as most of you know, the longer I hold it in my hand like this — what happens? The solid turns to liquid. It's gone right before our eyes. King Joash experienced that in his life, didn't he? When he served and remembered God and loved God everything went well. But when he forgot what God had done for him, everything he had was gone. I wonder how many people — how many Christians — that God has given many wonderful things and blessed them. Then they forget and it's gone and they wonder why. It's surprising, isn't it? But not only do we forget the things that God has done, but we get careless with the things that God has given us.

### OBJECT LESSON No. 4

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate the carelessness that Christians display with the blessings that God bestows.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A raw egg, a flat cooking pan, a wet towel and a dry towel.

**PREPARATION:** In preparing for this object lesson you might have your assistant bring the egg also over when he brings the ice cream paraphernalia, and the ice cube. The

cooking pan should be set either on a table or on a small lift that is above the table. You can build up a little platform with bricks, or just a smaller table, to raise this up so it's in clear sight of the audience. Have your wet and dry towels available just in case there is some splattering from the egg. The larger the cooking pan, probably the better, but it needs to be as flat as possible so that when the egg falls down and breaks on the pan the audience can see it rather than just hearing it. The visual is very important here. After that's ready you can continue to move right on to the presentation.

**PRESENTATION:** Have you ever met someone who was careless with the things that God has given? I've known boys and girls who didn't have any toys or who didn't have anything, and boy, when they got something, they treated it like gold. They were thankful for it. I've known other boys and girls whom God was good to and gave them good parents, a nice home, warm clothes, good food and they didn't care about it. They treated everything like dirt. They lost their toys, wrecked them, tore up their clothes and didn't care about anything. We get careless sometimes with the blessings of God. We forget how hard our parents had to work. We forget how good God has been to us and we take things that God has given us and we throw it around (*begin throwing the egg up and down and catching it in your hand*). You might not always have those things but I want you to know that and when we get careless (*at this point let the egg drop into the pan and it will smash*) and it's gone. The blessings might not be there forever. You should remember that.

### OBJECT LESSON No. 5

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate that for most Christians the more we get the more we expect God to give us.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** Three or four candy bars that you like.

**PREPARATION:** In preparing for this object lesson it's important to understand the philosophy behind it. Either you do it, or use an assistant for it. This is almost more of a skit than it is an object lesson. The over-reaction of whoever is going to do it becomes very critical to the visual point. What we'll do — we'll have the person who is going to be the prime character in this presentation unwrap a candy bar and actually eat that one, completely, so the size of the candy bar might be a factor in what you're doing here and then we'll say that it seems like the more we give people the more they want. Then we'll have somebody who will open the candy bars and stuff them in their mouth and then even mash them on their face. Not necessarily eating them but kind of dropping them, but just actually illustrating a gorging effect. So if you don't want to do it, get an assistant like a teenager in the church who can really act it out and play it up, and it will be a good gag, but it also creates a great visual. After you've got yourself or your assistant set up and the candy bars, of course, are brought in later on in the presentation, as candy like that has a tendency to sprout legs if they're not properly supervised.

**PRESENTATION:** Boys and girls, it seems like the more we get the more we want. The more God gives us the more we wish for more. We can give someone a candy bar (*unwrap the one and let the person who's doing it for you*

or yourself eat it at that time as you continue the presentation). For us, the one candy bar is plenty, but for others they just want more and more. More and more (at that time the person who is presenting that part of the illustration should begin to rip open the paper and gorge himself with the remaining candy bars, however many you've chosen to use). It seems like a never-ending battle and they seem like a funnel, more and more — give me more and more. They treat God like a Santa Claus rather than someone who sent His son to die for us. I wonder how many of you in here today are just that way? It's so easy to forget the goodness of God.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 6

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate that God's blessings and the things that He gives us are to be used and not abused, because if we don't use it, we'll lose it.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** Jar of peanut butter, jar of jelly, loaf of bread, couple of knives and spoons, some napkins and a plate.

**PREPARATION:** In preparing for this object lesson you can also have these food items brought over at the same time the assistant brings over the rest of the goodies. You're going to have some busy assistants today. You might have to buy them a shopping cart to bring all these things from the local church refrigerator to your Children's Church, but I believe it will be worth the effort. Have them kept in a separate bag as not to distract any of the children from what you're saying and you're ready for the presentation.

**PRESENTATION:** Let's make ourselves a sandwich here this morning, shall we? We've got some peanut butter here (*take it out of the bag*), and we've got some jelly here (*take that out of the bag and take all the rest of your goodies out of the bag as you talk and spread them all out on the table in plain view of the audience*). I like peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, how about you? Well, a few of you don't but that's all right, we don't have any bologna or tuna fish today so we're just going to go with the peanut butter and jelly. Boy, this looks like a good peanut butter and jelly sandwich here, doesn't it? I could just pick this whole thing up and eat it right now, couldn't I? What! I can't — mmmmm, what do I have to do? Well, of course, there's no peanut butter and jelly sandwich up here. I've got a jar of peanut butter (*hold it up*), I've got a jar of jelly (*hold it up*), I've got a loaf of bread, I've got all the ingredients to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich but what must I do? Why, I've got to put them all together, of course. I've got to use what I've got here. I've got to put it together (*begin doing so at this time as you continue the presentation*). I've got to use everything I've got here or it's a waste and that's the way everything in life is. If we don't use it, if we abuse it then we're going to lose it. God has given us things and He's entrusted us with things. He expects us to use them and He expects us to put them all together to make something good out of it. Not to take it for granted, to forget it, or to forget Him, but to take the most complicated things to the simplest things in life itself and put them all together. But when we forget where they came from, and when we forget the One who made them possible, like the fruit to make the jelly, the peanuts to make the peanut butter and the

wheat to make the bread — when we forget Him then we forgot it all. Forgetting, it's kind of an easy thing to do, isn't it? Joash had to learn a lesson the hard way. He forgot God and he forgot the things that God had done for him. He forgot the things that God had given to him. Let's take a look at a couple of friends of ours. We've got a hero in our story today. Well, he's sort of a hero. His name is Albert the Ant, he had a bad habit of forgetting too. Let's watch.

## FILMSTRIP

### No. 1 — KING OF THE HILL

No. 2 — Well, there's Albert now. It looks like he's out in the middle of a desert somewhere. It looks like he's dying. Why, he must not have had anything to eat for days, no water, nothing left. I can't believe our story's starting like this. Somebody's got to help him. Isn't there somebody out there who can help him? If he doesn't get help soon he's going to die.

No. 3 — He's going unconscious. Everything's spinning around and everything's going black. Albert, Albert, wait no, not yet, not yet. Somebody help him, please.

No. 4 — Somebody did help him. Somebody must have gotten to him just in the nick of time. Boy, that was close. It seemed like days before Albert could finally start eating right, but those other folks who saved his life took him to the hospital, paid the bill, took care of him because they weren't going to let him die. They risked their lives to save Albert.

No. 5 — They read the Bible to him when he got well enough to understand. Day after day, night after night, week after week, they'd stay in the hospital room talking with Albert about the Lord, praying with him and finally . . .

No. 6 — Albert gave his heart to the Lord, he got saved! He was thankful to those folks who helped him that day. He was thankful to those of them who rescued him from the desert. How could he ever repay those folks for saving his life? And now for learning about Jesus, boy, they really did a lot for him didn't they? After they all left that night . . .

No. 7 — Albert made a commitment never to forget what God did. He knew that he should have died out there in the desert and he knew it was only a miracle of God that those folks came by and rescued him, took him to the hospital, nursed him back to health and even paid the bill when he couldn't pay it himself. He knew it was a miracle of God. God's hand was upon him and he made a vow. He made a promise never to forget what God had done for him.

No. 8 — But it was a long way back to recovery. He'd become very weak out there in the desert with no food or water. He'd lost a lot of weight. He had to work hard and every day he did. He ran every day, he worked out with weights every day, and he ate as much as he could. He worked harder and harder every day, and soon he grew strong again. As a matter of fact, he grew stronger this time than he ever was before. Even though he was only a teenager he knew that he had to work to get his strength back.

No. 9 — He got a job after school and he worked hard at it. He never forgot the commitment that he'd made to God,

he never forgot what God did for him and he tried to give his best back to God. He never wanted to forget how good God had been to him and he wanted to give God his best.

No. 10 — Albert became popular, not only in school and on the job. He became the leader of his church youth group. He was getting ready to graduate from high school. It seemed like everybody liked him and it seemed like they were so proud of what a great Christian he was. They were so proud of how he'd given his life to God and how he made that commitment never to forget what God had done for him. Albert told them, I'll never forget what God has done and I'm going to be the best leader that this church youth group has ever had.

No. 11 — Albert had worked out day and night. He became big and strong and became good in sports in his high school. He was the star football player. The team was city champs that year. It was Albert's senior year and it wasn't long . . .

No. 12 — That Albert graduated from high school. The day he graduated he prayed a prayer, "God I'll never forget that You made this all possible, I'll never forget You, God, I'll remember You the rest of my life and I'll always be thankful and You've helped me to be what I am today."

No. 13 — Because Albert was so good in football, and he made such good grades, he got a free scholarship to the Bug University and he never forgot what God had done for him. It was Albert's first year at BU when one day he picked up the paper and read the headlines.

No. 14 — The King had died, the King ant, the King of the Hill, the King that had been there ever since Albert could remember was now dead. And now the question was, who was going to take his place? Nobody had been trained. I guess everyone had thought the King would live forever and they weren't prepared and now no one, literally no one, was capable of taking over the King's place except maybe, you guessed it . . .

No. 15 — Albert got a phone call at the university. The people had voted, they wanted Albert to be King. He couldn't believe it. He didn't have any training to be a King. Oh he made good grades in school and he studied politics a little bit, but he didn't know that much about it. But he prayed and he said, "God, I believe your hand is on me and I'll be the best King I can and with your help I can do it. I've never forgotten you, God, and I'll never forget you now that I'm King. I'm going to tell everybody what you did for me. Now is my chance to tell everybody about what you've done."

No. 16 — Sure enough, Albert made a great King. He prayed every day and he didn't forget what God had done for him. He sat down with all the leaders of the Ant Hill Community and they made some new changes. Good changes, and the Ant Hill began to grow.

No. 17 — They fixed up some things that needed fixing up, they planted some new shrubs, the ant hill grew bigger and bigger, it turned into a bigger city than they ever thought it could. Albert was proud of what was happening. He knew it was good.

No. 18 — The people were so proud of Albert, too, that they made a big statue of him just outside the ant hill. Albert would sit up there sometimes in the day and look

over the giant ant hill and all the things he'd accomplished since he'd been King.

No. 19 — And as he looked it over one day he thought to himself, "Boy I've done a lot of good things for this ant hill. You know, I've got it made as King here, I could be King here for the rest of my life and never do another thing. The people love me, they think I'm wonderful and you know what? They're right. Why, I'm the best King this ant hill's ever had. I've done more in the time I've been King than any other King in the whole history of this hill. You know, I'm really pretty good. I'm really pretty smart and I've done it all by myself." Oh, oh, I've never heard Albert say that before, I never have. Something's happening to Albert, boys and girls. Albert's beginning to change like people do sometimes. Suddenly Albert wasn't thanking God for everything that was happening. Suddenly, Albert forgot about how he got to be King in the first place. He forgot about those days in the desert when he was almost dead. Albert's life was changing.

No. 20 — Instead of being the first one in church on Sunday morning Albert was sleeping in the King's palace. He didn't wake up till noon where he ordered breakfast in bed.

No. 21 — He forgot to read his Bible and he forgot to pray. He was forgetting, boys and girls, and he was forgetting quick. He saw the glamor of being King, he was so popular now that everybody almost thought he was a God and Albert loved it. Instead of thanking God he was glorying in himself. Things went like that for a while and looked like it was going fine but one day the radio announcer came on the radio and announced a huge storm was coming in the direction of the ant hill.

No. 22 — Albert came out of the ant hill to look and sure enough the clouds were building. He got a little nervous because he'd never seen a storm like that before. He never saw the clouds look quite that dark and he never heard the thunder clap quite that loud. He sent out the orders — bring out the sandbags. The place had never been flooded before but he was a little nervous. Albert wasn't praying now, he'd forgotten all about that. He was going to depend on himself.

No. 23 — All the worker ants scurried around. They started bringing out the old sandbags, hadn't been used for years but they started sandbagging around the ant hill. More, more Albert yelled, hurry, hurry up, the clouds are coming in and sure enough . . .

No. 24 — The rain started to move in, the thunder was crashing, the lightning flashing and the water began to rise. Soon the creeks were overflowing and the rivers were overflowing.

No. 25 — And the water started rising higher and higher and higher. The scout was looking from the top of the ant hill and he kept calling down reports to King Albert. The water's rising, it's already over the sandbags, we're going to have to evacuate.

No. 26 — The siren sounded and all the ants started to run. They knew they were in trouble. They knew that if that water came down into that ant hill they'd all drown and they wouldn't have a chance. Hurry, hurry, hurry, but the water was rising faster. The sandbags were breaking. The

scout yelled, hurry, run, run, run but the alarm had been sounded too late. The sand started to give and the water started rising higher, and soon the whole ant hill collapsed.

No. 27 — The land was under water and so was the ant hill. Ants floating, supplies lost and a whole city destroyed. The storm raged for hours and finally the water subsided. It started to go back into the creeks and into the rivers. Only a few ants were left. The alarm came too late. Albert was one of the few who was left.

No. 28 — Soaking wet he looked over his little kingdom. He looked over his statue that was destroyed. He looked over all of those he had known who were now dead and drowned. His little kingdom, his little world destroyed. Albert's mind went back . . .

No. 29 — To the day that he made a commitment to God. His mind went back to those days in the desert when he was dying and he thought of all the things he was going to do for God. He thought of all the times he'd told God that he'd never forget Him but he did, and it was easy to forget. He couldn't believe how easy it was. He thought he was God.

No. 30 — With big tears in his eyes he saw what was left of his little kingdom.

It reminds us of the story of King Joash in the Bible, doesn't it? King Joash had it all, everybody loved him and he started out doing great things for God but he forgot — he forgot God. It not only cost him his kingship but it cost

him his life. I wonder how many of you here today have forgotten what God has done for You? We go about our merry way from day to day. Laughing, joking, having a good time and there's nothing wrong with that, but sometimes we forget where everything came from. We owe it all to Him, don't we? He paid a debt He didn't owe and we owe a debt to Him we can never repay. If you forget you're going to regret. Joash did, Albert did and so will we. Beware, lest thou forget the Lord. Many people have had painful lives and sad experiences because they forgot what the Lord did for them!

## CLOSING

I want everybody to bow their head and close your eyes. Before we go today I think we need to remember the Lord and what He's done for us. I think we need to pray together. "Dear Lord, we love you today and we don't want to ever forget your salvation. We don't want to forget the blessings and we don't want to forget your love. We don't want to forget your caring about us even now as we stand here in this Children's Church. We love you, Lord. We're not going to be like Albert. We're not going to say that today and forget it ten or twenty years from now. Help us not to forget. Help us never to forget what you've done for us and before we lay our head on the pillow tonight, if we have to tie a string around ten of our fingers, help us never to forget you who has never forgotten us. In Christ's name, Amen."

## Lesson No. 11

# LABOR DAY

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome everyone! I don't know about you, but I'm glad to be here! This is a good opportunity for us to learn about another one of our special holidays, and how it relates to the Bible and our lives. Today we will be learning about the holiday called Labor Day. It is a day that has been set aside to honor everyone who works. It is a day when someone said, "Let's rest."

In 1882, Peter J. McGuire was the first person whom we know of to suggest that we have a labor day. At that time, Mr. McGuire was the president of a carpenter's union. He thought that since our country already observed religious holidays, military holidays, and national holidays, then there should be a holiday for the working man. His union agreed upon the first Monday in September as their labor day and began celebrating that day every year in their own union. They named that special day Labor Day.

In 1884, most of the other labor unions had voted to make Labor Day a national holiday. In 1894, 30 states had made Labor Day a legal holiday, and in that same year, President Grover Cleveland signed an act that made it a legal holiday in the District of Columbia, our capital. Today all 50 states celebrate Labor Day as a legal holiday. Mr. McGuire had succeeded in getting the worker recognized. He was remembered and given a special day to let the labor force rest and to be appreciated.

## BIBLE STORY

This morning I want to tell you about a man who worked hard just to please God and at the same time knew when to rest. He knew when to tell his workers thanks and to show them appreciation.

That man is Nehemiah. Nehemiah was a cupbearer for the king. King Artaxerxes saw that Nehemiah was sad one day and asked him what was the matter. Nehemiah told the king that he was sad because he had heard that the walls around Jerusalem had fallen and been left down. His request was to take time away from the king to rebuild the city and its walls. God was with Nehemiah and King Artaxerxes gave Nehemiah permission to do it.

Soon Nehemiah was building the walls. He had recruited priests, nobles, officials and all the kinsmen he could. With much enthusiasm they said, "Let us arise and build." They wanted to get to work. In the process of generating excitement about rebuilding the wall, others learned about the project as well. Sanballat, an enemy of the Jews, also heard about Nehemiah's project and surrounded the work crew at the wall. Instead of giving up, Nehemiah had some soldiers stationed at one part of the structure, and for everyone else working on the wall, he had them carry on their work with one hand while carrying a spear with the other. When Sanballat saw this he realized that Nehemiah was prepared to fight and stayed away from bothering him. The work continued and in 52 days the wall was rebuilt. Hard work, cautious work, and work for God allowed Nehemiah to be suc-

cessful. God's Word says in Nehemiah 6:16, that when all their enemies heard it, and the nations nearby saw it, they lost their confidence in being stronger than the Jews. They recognized the work had been accomplished with the help of God.

As a result of this work for God, a special day was set aside on the first day of the seventh month to say thanks to God for His protection over them and to say thanks to those who helped. It was a time of revival for them. The Feast of Tabernacles was a feast that celebrated going into the Promised Land of Israel, a time of resting from their wanderings in the wilderness. Nehemiah wanted to make this feast a double celebration.

Today as we celebrate and remember our own country's Labor Day, we must keep in mind that God is ever working on our behalf. He sent Jesus to earth to provide a way for us to be saved and the Holy Spirit to prompt our spiritual natures towards sensing our need for Jesus in our lives. Accepting Jesus into your life just begins the Christian walk, for the Lord said we are to work out our salvation. If we are laboring in the right way for the Lord in our lives, then every Sunday should have a significant meaning for us. We are not only worshipping God on that day, but taking a labor day of our own each week that was first established by God in the Ten Commandments when He said, "Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the sabbath ..." On that day God said we are not to do any work but honor Him and take a needed rest ourselves.

## MEMORY VERSE

"The laborer is worthy of his hire." Luke 10:7

## OBJECT LESSON No. 1

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate a saturation point in work.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A medium-size rectangular or round sponge, four thin pans and some water in a pitcher.

**PREPARATION:** The pans should be pizza depth or the cookie sheet kind so that the water can be easily seen. After all the pans are set on the table, pour a little water into each one.

**PRESENTATION:** The Bible tells us that, "... on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made." (Genesis 2:2)

Now God really did not need a rest. He never gets tired like you and I get tired. When it says that God rested, the Bible is saying that God stopped. He did not need to improve on what He had made, nor did He have to add anything else. He had put all the forces of nature into motion that were necessary, and He knew they would now operate perfectly until the end of the earth.

But God's rest time created an example for us to follow. God wanted us to remember to stop from our daily routine to worship Him and to not get so tied up in

our own work that it takes God's place or causes us to become ineffective in all we do.

You all noticed at the beginning that I placed four pans on the table and then poured some water into each one. I am going to show you how becoming absorbed in something other than the Lord can eventually make you ineffective. I am going to sponge up each water spill and never ring it out. *(If the sponge cleans up each spill, just add more water and do it again. Make sure you never wring the water out of the sponge. Let it become so saturated that it becomes useless.)* Oops! I have come to a point that illustrates our lesson today. The sponge worked and worked until it could not work any longer, unless I wrung it out or let it dry out a day and began again. It needed a rest period to continue to be effective. Working continually with no rest is not healthy.

Labor Day was set aside to honor people who worked, but it also created a break in the normal routine of work to let folks get away from what they were doing so they could return to work relaxed and thankful for the special day in their honor. Just knowing they had one day off in their honor gave them a lift emotionally and mentally.

Our day of rest for Christians was established by God (and honored by Jesus when He was on earth) to give them a life mentally, physically, and spiritually towards God. If we really care for God, we should honor His day.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 2

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate one way work can be accomplished.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** Three or four boxes and a two-wheeled hand dolly.

**PREPARATION:** Fill the boxes with heavy objects such as books, bricks, shoes, or whatever so that they are not easy to pick up. Close the lids and tape them so the items do not fall out.

**PRESENTATION:** I need a volunteer to come up here and help me. How about you, young man? Good, come right on up here. You look pretty strong to me. Pick up one of these boxes for me and hold it, will you? We are going to carry it across the room in a moment. Now don't drop it. Okay, I need a second volunteer. That's right. Jump right up and come up here. I want you to help us carry these three boxes across the room. Pick one of the others up and hold it until I get mine. Now fellas, don't drop them. I have some things in there that might break. *(Now you get the dolly and load yours on it and tell them to follow you. By this time they should be tired of holding the boxes.)* Okay fellows, I have mine loaded. Let's go across the room here. Hey, you let yours down. How come? Too heavy? And you, too? Well, let's see how are we going to get them across the room? I don't want to make three trips. Hey, let's load all three boxes on my dolly. Good idea, isn't it? Look, I can take it all at once now, and easily, too! The cart made all the difference. It helps carry the load for all of us. It sure is a handy idea and tool, isn't it? Thanks guys. You helped me load them on the cart and gave me the idea. That's good team work!

Nehemiah had the same idea when he was faced with

his enemy, Sanballat. Nehemiah knew the only way his wall could get built was through teamwork. When he had the men carry a weapon in one hand and work with the other, he was taking the load off of just a few who might have to do all the fighting or all the work. In Nehemiah's way, everyone carried the load and made the work go faster. All work for God can be accomplished if people would work together to lighten the load.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 3

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate that rest always follows work and accomplishment.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** Your same three heavy boxes from the last object lesson, a volunteer and a timer or a watch with a second hand.

**PREPARATION:** Get a new volunteer, but try to select someone who is in 1st or 2nd grade and is not real strong-looking. You are going to tell him he has one minute to pick the boxes up and carry them to a spot and stack them, then unstack them one at a time, and re-stack them where they were, and then repeat the process. He is going to see how many times he can do it in the time allotted. The key to the lesson is to stop when he gets tired, or it is obvious the load is too heavy for him to continue.

**PRESENTATION:** I have my volunteer, so let me explain what he is going to do. He is going to stack the boxes over here, then re-stack them back here as many times as he can in one minute's time. Got the idea? Okay, ready? Go!

Look at him go! He's doing a fine job. How many times can he stack and re-stack the boxes? Oops! Stop. Stop. We don't want anyone to get hurt in the lessons. They got to be too much for you, didn't they? You needed a rest. If I had let you take your time and never timed you, you might have done much better. It's hard to say how many times you would have stacked and re-stacked the boxes.

But I want you to notice that you couldn't keep working. If the minute had passed you would have rested and quit. If I had told you only one or two times were enough, you might have finished that and then rested, but in either case, you would have taken a break. God knew that we could not work all the time. In a way Labor Day is a reminder of this too. Work is not all there is to life. A time for worship and rest are necessary, too! Nehemiah celebrated the Feast of the Tabernacles to remind his people that they needed rest. God initiated the Sabbath to tell us about rest and now labor organizations know the importance of rest, too. They may not see it the way God and Christians understand it, but they know it in part.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 4

**PURPOSE:** To define labor.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** Broom, dustpan, marble-size gravel, two sheets of 8½ x 11 inch paper, a box, some toys and paper sack to put trash in.

**PREPARATION:** Write TOY BOX on one paper and

place it on the side of your box. Tear the other piece of paper into small pieces that can be swept up. Lay the toys, box, paper pieces, dust pan, and broom in front of your table on the floor of your stage area.

**PRESENTATION:** When we refer to the work labor we usually mean doing something that makes someone sweat, get tired or work hard. We can do our laboring at home around the house or on a job for money. We almost always think of labor as being hard to do and for some kind of reward, like money or praise.

But labor can also be out of love. I want to illustrate how. If I was a hired worker for a company, my boss might come in and say, "I want you to sweep the floor and pick up the toys." Because my boss paid me I would clean all this mess up. I would work to clean it up because I would be getting money for it.

But let's pretend everything you see on the floor is my little brother's room. Mom almost always cleans it up because he is still too young to know how to clean up, but today she can't because she is sick. I come in and see Mom sick and the room a mess, so out of love, I clean it up. *(Take the broom and dustpan and sweep up the items on the floor. Then pick up the toys and put them in the box.)*

There now. That looks better, doesn't it? I have cleaned the room up out of love for my mom and my brother. I wanted to work out of love, not for money. I did it to please my mom.

I Thessalonians 1:3, Paul wrote, "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labor of love . . ." He was saying that he was very thankful to the Thessalonians for their work for God. It is a good time for us to remember that our work in the world for money or whatever, cannot compare in value to our labor in love for God. We can labor for God by teaching, praying, witnessing, attending church and helping others. Nehemiah went back to Jerusalem to rebuild the wall of the city out of his love for God not for money or praise. The best kind of labor we could perform would be labors of love for God or someone else.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 5

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate work.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A hand saw, a piece of wood, (a 2x4 if you can) a drop-cloth or some paper to catch the shavings and a carved wooden toy.

**PREPARATION:** Have a small chair or bench to saw your board on and the cloth underneath.

**PRESENTATION:** When we talk about work we are talking about accomplishing a task or producing a product. In other words, some people's work makes something and other people's work is what we might call helper's work. They help make a product by preparing things or getting things to someone else who will actually make the item.

Can everyone see my saw? I also have a piece of wood we call a 2x4. I am going to cut it into two pieces. Watch me now as I do some work by cutting the 2x4 into

half. *(Cut the 2x4, then show a piece you have cut.)*

Well, that took some work, but I managed to get the board cut. I cannot carve things out of wood, but if I worked in a toy shop my job might be to cut pieces of wood for someone else to make the toys. Out of the piece of wood I cut someone else might be able to make a train like I have here. You see, it was carved out of a piece of wood but someone else cut the wood for the person who carved the train. Both jobs are considered work.

As you can see, work takes a little effort. It is easy to see that if I had 40 or 50 of those 2x4's to cut I would need a rest period every once in a while or I would be totally exhausted. It would also be easy to see that if all I did every day for the rest of my life was cut pieces of wood, I might feel that I did not have a very appreciative job. I might feel that no one really cared. That is what Mr. McGuire probably thought about all workers. He wanted every worker on every job to feel important. You are important to God no matter what you do, so work proudly for Jesus.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 6

**PURPOSE:** To show how work is not totally continuous.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A wind-up toy like a: toddler's radio that shows a picture story as it unwinds or a perfection game or a kidda-long or an oven timer or a three-minute sand timer.

**PREPARATION:** You only need one of these items or you can secure another that will accomplish the same effect. You need something that will run down quickly.

**PRESENTATION:** Since you and I are people and not machines, we cannot work for days and days without rest. At the same time we each have feelings and concerns that machines do not. We are more complex and fragile. Rest is not just important to humans, it is vital.

Let's take a look at this idea with a toy I have. It is a wind-up toy. It does not have a battery and it does not run on electricity. When the spring that makes this toy run unwinds then the toy must be rewound.

Listen as my little girl's toy radio plays its tune all the way through. There is no way for it to continue unless I re-wind it. Once it is finished with the tune, it must be prepared again by winding for the start of the tune. In other words, the radio will not go on and on and on. It can't.

In a way the radio is like man. He cannot work for unlimited amounts of time. Our bodies require rest. Also, our total human make-up is designed for periodic "breaks" in routine labor.

Nehemiah and Mr. McGuire each knew that the best way to tell a worker you appreciate him is by giving him some time off in recognition. The Feast of Tabernacles came at just the right time for Nehemiah to tell his workers thank you, and Mr. McGuire started a special day of his own to tell workers in America they too were appreciated. Since work is not continuous perhaps Labor Day tells those who do work long and hard at their jobs that they are appreciated and they need to take a rest once in a while to be even better workers.

# FLASH CARD STORY

## THE DOMINO EFFECT

No. 1 — There is Donnie and Dan Domino sitting on Donnie's front porch. It looks like they are just killing some time today and not up to anything special. But here comes Bo across the yard towards the boys. Maybe he's got something for everyone to do. We had better listen in.

"Hey Donnie and Dan, There you two are! Haven't you heard about the playground at the park?"

"No. What about it?" asked Donnie.

"Well, that big storm we had last night blew a huge tree on the playground equipment and wrecked just about everything!" explained Bo.

No. 2 — "No kidding?" asked Dan, in surprise. "Now what are we supposed to play on? That's the only playground we have!"

The three boys continued discussing their new problem. They were not sure if the adults could fix their playground equipment or not. Almost everyone in town worked during the week so it might be some time before it got repaired. Finally, Donnie got an idea.

No. 3 — "I've got it! I've got it!" Donnie yelled, jumping off the porch step. "We can do it!"

"Who we?" asked Dan and Bo together.

"We, we. That's who," replied Donnie. "We can get a bunch of the kids together, clear the tree away and see how much has to be replaced."

"I think you are serious, aren't you?" asked Bo, hardly believing what he was hearing.

"Yes, yes I am!" replied Donnie. "Let's round up the gang."

No. 4 — The three boys split up and started going from friend's house to friend's house getting help for their project. Almost everywhere you looked you could see the boys with their friends going from door to door collecting a crowd of followers as they went.

In two hours the boys met again at the playground. Donnie and Dan gave each person a task to do to help get the tree and old equipment out of the way.

No. 5 — Next Donnie left Dan to run the clean-up operation while he and Bo went to Mr. Double's hardware store.

"Hello boys," greeted Mr. Double. "What can I do for you two?"

"Mr. Double," Bo began, "we need your help."

"I'll help you if I can," Mr. Double replied, smiling just as he always did. It made him happy to help other folks.

"Our playground had a tree fall on it last night in the storm, and we need some stuff to fix it back up. Do you think you could tell us where we could get some things?" asked Bo.

"Let me think a moment," said Mr. Double. He looked at his watch and then at his store. Then he thought some more. Finally, Mr. Double had an answer.

No. 6 — "I'll give you all the materials you need boys. In fact, I am going to close my store and go help you. I'll also call a few of my business friends and see if they can come and help," said Mr. Double.

"Wow wee!" yelled the boys happily "Let's go!"

No. 7 — When they returned to the playground area everything had been cleaned up. The tree and most of the damaged playground equipment had been removed. Already beside the playground a load of sand and new pipe and wood have been delivered from Mr. Double's hardware store. The work and cooperation of the kids continued for two more days until the playground had been completely restored.

No. 8 — As everyone rested on the last day, they noticed a group of people walking towards them from the city.

"Look, it's the mayor!" exclaimed Dot when she saw who it was.

Not only was it the mayor, but all the city officials. Someone had called City Hall and told them about the activities going on at the playground. Not only was it a good deed, but it was getting recognized, too.

"Where is Donnie, Dan, and Bo?" asked the mayor.

"Here we are," answered Donnie. "Did we do something wrong, Mr. Mayor?"

"Just the opposite, son," replied the mayor. "What you three boys started, and what the rest of you helped them do concerning our city's playground, has been one of the greatest acts of love we have ever seen. You worked without pay and without being told."

"Mr. Mayor," began Bo, "we did it so we would have a place to play, but we also did it for all those other kids who didn't have any other place to play. We knew it could take two weeks or two months before it got fixed, so we wanted to help."

No. 9 — "That is what I have heard," said the mayor, "and in honor of your good deed we are going to have a holiday."

"A holiday!" said Dan surprised.

"What kind of holiday?" asked the others.

"A work holiday," replied the mayor. "The city council and I have voted to make the 1st Monday of every June a no labor day in honor of you three boys and all your help. If it is all right with you, we want to call it the Domino Effect Day."

No. 10 — "Why the Domino Effect Day, Mr. Mayor?" asked Donnie.

"Because what you all did had an effect on our whole town. You boys brought out love and cooperation in our people. You showed us in a small way that all of us are to be appreciated. I want us to always be reminded to stop and take a rest every year to say thanks to those who have worked hard over the year like you have the last two days. Domino Effect Day will be a no labor day. It will be a fun play day here at the park," said the mayor.

"Hooray! Hooray!" shouted all the workers.

All Bo, Donnie, and Dan could do was smile at each other. They had never suspected their work would turn into a holiday, especially a no-working one. It felt good to be appreciated. The Domino Effect Day would always remind them of that fact.

## CLOSING

Sunday has been called "a day of rest." God intended for it to be His day. We have always been told in God's Word to worship Him and rest on the Sabbath. Over the

years the value of rest periods has been discovered to be very important. Our Labor Day holiday was not just an idea to honor our people who work in America but created an extra opportunity for the worker to rest. Everyone wants to be appreciated, and it is good that

unions chose to show their workers they appreciated them as well. Labor Day was started by men to honor the worker and at the same time give them a special day of rest. It was something God had always had. We would do well to remember that each Labor Day holiday.

## Lesson No. 12

# HALLOWEEN

### INTRODUCTION

Today, before we go into our Bible lesson, I want everyone to pay attention to our introduction time. Please do not forget our quiet seat watchers are watching.

Our lesson this morning is on Halloween. Most of us know a little bit about Halloween but few of us really know the true beginning of this holiday. The word Halloween means "holy or hallowed evening," and comes on October 31st. Halloween received its name because it came before All Hallows, or All Saints Day, on November 1st.

When Christianity started to spread in the 7th and 8th centuries a chapel was made in Rome to honor all saints on All Saints Day. As Christianity began to take hold enemies of the church made fun of the Christians. These people would worship the devil, make ugly altars and paint or write ugly things on the sides of churches.

Today when kids wear ghost costumes and do things not related to God, they are really following some old customs and practices of other religious beliefs.

A long time ago in France and some other parts of Europe there was a group of people who were Druid worshippers. They worshipped the great sun god and nature with odd and peculiar ceremonies. The Druid's new year began on November 1, so our Halloween was on their New Year's Eve. Because the Druids had many beliefs and ceremonies related to witches, the moon, fire, goblins, bones, and the like, it is easy to see how these customs became mingled. In the early days of the United States, Halloween was merely a time for fun. The religious connection to All Saints Day was soon forgotten.

Many of the special occasions we celebrate are good for us. They keep us alert to the different seasons and excited in our daily walk through the year. Most of the holidays are harmless to our Christian faith, but whether they are harmless or not, we should always keep in mind that our worship of God comes first over any holiday that is not based on a Christian occasion or principle. Halloween has become a non-Christian celebration, and we would do well to remember that. We can enjoy the fun of the occasion, but not get carried away with the evils associated with it. God does not want us to associate with any form of evil.

### BIBLE STORY

Our lesson is on Halloween. You have already been told a little about Halloween, but how many of you knew the Bible talked about witches and witchcraft, too? One such occasion can be found in I Samuel 28:1-25. In this passage, we find King Saul seeking a witch to help him. Samuel had died, and when he did, Saul discovered that he was without a mature man of God to give him the proper advice he needed to make decisions for the kingdom.

The Philistines had camped near Israel and had Saul scared. Since he was now without Samuel, Saul decided

to pray to God himself for an answer as to what to do. But God did not answer Saul nor did He give him a sign. When this happened, Saul gave up on God and decided to ask a witch for her help. At the first sign of trouble, Saul did not wait on God, but panicked and went to a witch who did not even represent a thing in relation to God. This witch was the witch of Endor.

As Saul talked to the witch he asked her to bring Samuel back from the dead that he might ask him for advice once more. The witch was able to do it, but what Saul had done was contrary to the ways of God. Samuel told Saul that God would let Israel fall into the hands of the Philistines. Samuel reminded Saul that by using the witch he had sinned and thus would have to suffer.

It is a lesson for us to learn from today. God did not tolerate our playing with sin or with things that were associated with evil. Saul thought what he was doing was a harmless act but it was very serious. He had decided to get a witch's help over using God. Saul was the loser in the end.

### MEMORY VERSE

**"Do not turn to mediums or spirits." Leviticus 19:31**

### OBJECT LESSON No. 1

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate how some things may look safe when they really may be dangerous.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A bottle of pills, a knife, a box of matches, an article of clothing from a doll you can set on fire, an orange and a flat pan to set on the table to protect it from damage.

**PREPARATION:** The matches you use should be the wooden kitchen matches. If your knife is real sharp make sure you do not let the kids near it.

**PRESENTATION:** I want everyone to take a good look at the things I have here on the table. I will hold each item up to let you see it better. I have a bottle of pills, some matches and a knife. Each one looks rather safe, doesn't it?

Let's take a look at the bottle of pills. I am going to read the label and see how many pills I should take each time. It says I should take two pills every four hours. I am not to exceed six pills in a day. What do they call taking more pills than you should? It is called taking an overdose. (*Pour a lot of pills into your hand.*) If I were to take all of these pills it could harm my body and possibly even kill me. The pills were perfectly safe if I took the right amount, but were extremely dangerous if I took too many of them.

Next, let's look at the knife. By itself, the knife looks innocent and harmless, but one edge of the knife is very sharp. (*Take the knife and cut the orange.*) I am going to cut this orange and perhaps that will tell me how sharp it really is. It cut right through with ease, didn't it? It was

sharp. It looked safe, but if I had not used it correctly, it could have hurt me.

Now I have one more item for us to look at. It is a box of matches. They look safe, don't they? When they are not being used or are used in a safe way the matches are safe. But if a person is careless with a match he can cause a lot of damage. Watch what can happen. (*Take the matches and set the dress on fire.*) Matches can destroy or mar many things. In this case, the dress was ruined by one match. At first glance the matches seemed safe but used wrongly, they were dangerous and harmful.

Witches and the things associated with evil seem innocent at first but they can be dangerous. We need to be very careful in our associations with things that are questionable. Evil can take on the appearance of good, but in the end, it will be revealed.

Halloween is a good fun holiday, but some of the things we have come to accept at Halloween time as being all right are really things we should try to avoid. They are evil in their origin and not good. Let's try to remember that this Halloween.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 2

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate how some things are not what they appear.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** Make a large zodiac chart. If you cannot find one, then write the names and symbols of the zodiac on a large piece of poster board.

**PREPARATION:** Make the signs as visible as possible and have a couple of horoscopes for the signs ready to read.

**PRESENTATION:** Every day in the newspaper you can find a section called "Today's Horoscope." This section is based on some signs in nature that some folk feel have a direct effect on a person's life. They feel that their particular zodiac sign and message for the day is true and has meaning for their daily lives.

(*Read a couple of the signs.*) Let's take a look at what my day is supposed to be like. I am a Pisces and here is what my horoscope says for today.

"Give free reign to your imagination. Influential person's increased interest in your creative or artistic talents could mean additional income."

Now I am going to read one for a person who was born between July 23 and August 22. He would be a Leo.

"Keep appointments on time. Lighten your work load to accommodate loved ones needs and share any good news with them."

Before we go any further let's realize that both of these pieces of information are good hints for anyone at any time. They may or may not have had a particular importance to someone born on that day. You see, they were not specific enough to have a real value. It may have "hit the nail on the head" for someone but it may not have either.

People who let their lives become ruled by someone else's opinion about what kind of day they are going to have have taken their own freedom to choose and live for that day out of their lives. It seems too unfair. A horoscope appears to rule your life but it doesn't. It cannot direct your life but only confuse it. Jesus and the Holy

Spirit control our lives. If you want to have the appearance of good stay away from evil. Stay away from the things that do not have lasting value. Only Jesus can give you a life of lasting value.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 3

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate illusion.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A pencil.

**PREPARATION:** Hold the pencil lightly between the thumb and index finger. Rapidly move your wrist up and down until you can make the pencil look like as if it is bending.

**PRESENTATION:** (*First hold the pencil up and show that it is rigid.*) I want everyone to notice my pencil. It is a real pencil not a trick one or a rubber one. Now watch what I can do with the pencil. (*Hold the pencil between your fingers and move your wrist rapidly up and down to make the pencil look rubbery.*) What has happened to the pencil? It looks like it is bending doesn't it? But we know it isn't. It is a real pencil. The rapid moving of my wrist and the pencil give the illusion that the pencil is rubbery.

That is the way the devil works in the world, too. He will give the illusion that witches and witchcraft are harmless when in fact they are serious evils to avoid. The devil will also try to make us think lying or stealing is okay sometimes, but it never is. God's word has taught us that sin is sin. We can never make it look good nor can the devil, no matter how he tries.

There is going to come a time in your life when you will be faced with making a decision about doing something with the gang that you know is wrong, or not doing it because you know it would please God not to do it. Going with the gang is going to look like the right thing to do, but it may not be. You must learn right now to not be fooled or pressured by others when it comes to disobeying God. Always do what is right and you will come out in the end all right.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 4

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate how associating with some questionable things could lead you into trouble.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** Any deck of playing cards and three or four quarters or fifty-cent pieces.

**PREPARATION:** You will deal the cards so practice a bit and you will be tossing the halves against the wall or against a box on the floor.

**PRESENTATION:** Sometimes the things we begin associating with soon lead us into bad habits and questionable activities. For instance, there are many innocent card games people play so we are not going to criticize those games or the people who play them. What I do want us to realize is that we must not let innocent things lead us into something worse. Several games are played with a regular deck of playing cards but one is called poker. In that game money is bet and played for. The winner really gets to keep the money and the loser really does lose all of his money. Many times the players cannot stop playing and they play every week. Sometimes they

even lose all the family's grocery money, bill money and possessions. They are gambling, which means they are taking a chance at winning or losing all their money. That is the part that is bad because they are being selfish and not caring about anyone but themselves. At the same time gambling could lead them into bad company, places and activities that are against the law. What started out as innocent led into something harmful. This is what needs to be watched. This is why you need to be very careful with the things you do. In all we do we must honor God.

The next thing I want to show you is another form of gambling. I have seen kids flip coins in the air and try to match "heads to heads" or "tails to tails." A match takes the other person's coin. (*Now flip the coins against the wall or side of a box, trying to get the closest to it.*) The other game kids play with coins is tossing them against a wall. The closest coin wins all the others. Soon this game is not enough and betting on other things begins. The one game led to another and that to another until gambling has taken over the person's life. He becomes controlled by his desire to gamble for money more than his desire to serve God or go to church, or work for a living, or to do any of the things that are right. This is how associating part way with things that are questionable can cause us to go into more serious ones.

Saul was warned about associating with the witch of Endor. God did not want Saul to think a witch could answer his problems because she could not. What Saul really did was make the witch his god instead of God. Associating with evil will always lead you away from God not towards Him.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 5

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate obedience to God.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** Two round type balloons, paper, string and a pin.

**PREPARATION:** Put as many small pieces of paper as you can into one of the balloons, then blow it up. Blow the other balloon up. Tie both balloons from the ceiling, a door jamb or the side of the table. This is going to have a pinata effect.

**PRESENTATION:** Saul was warned by Samuel and God's Word to avoid dealings with evil. He was especially warned to avoid witches and witchcraft. Saul knew better, yet he chose to ignore God's man and God's law. Saul went to the witch of Endor thinking a witch could help him instead of God.

I want us to pretend for a moment that these two balloons are things God has told us about. The balloon on the left is good. God has told me that I can play with it and even pop it if I wanted to. The balloon on the right God has told me not to touch. I am not to pop it or play with it because it is not good. It looks safe and innocent, but instead it is more than just air. It has more sin inside.

Watch, as I pop the good balloon. It was safe. It was good like God said it would be. Now let's see what would have happened if I had chosen to pop the bad balloon, the one I was supposed to stay away from. The balloon that represented sin. (*Pop it and let the paper fly.*) Wow! Look at all the stuff inside! It had more than it appeared to have, didn't it? We are pretending that everything that

flew out of the balloon was hidden sin. Once the balloon was popped I would have been exposed to more sin. God told me to stay away from the balloon because He knew more things were hidden inside. If it had been sin, I would have gotten into more trouble just as God knew I would.

Sin and evil always have a way of looking safe and innocent but hidden deep inside is the real sin which will always show itself eventually. The witch looked innocent to Saul but God knew and Samuel knew there was more evil involved. God wants you to know that witches, horoscopes, palm reading, gambling and the like are things to be avoided. A good rule to follow is, "When in doubt — don't." Remember to always please God first!

## PUPPET SHOW

### THE PAPER CAPER

**Puppets:** Ralph, Lance, Sally

*(The scene opens with Ralph reading a newspaper.)*

Sally: Hey Ralph, how ya doing? What are you reading? The comics? I didn't think you even read.

Ralph: Huh? What? Oh, hi Sally. No, to something you said there. I'm reading my horoscope. You know what? I think this thing is pretty good.

Sally: Wait a minute Ralph. Don't forget what our Sunday School teacher said about witchcraft, gambling, horoscopes and those other things. He said that we should stay away from them. He said . . .

Ralph: . . . they could lead us into trouble. I know. But listen to this, Sally. This is what mine said yesterday. "Be prepared for a surprise today." Well, I got to school and our teacher told us that our history test was going to be moved up to tomorrow instead of next Friday. Now that was a surprise! I haven't even studied.

Sally: But Ralph, that could have been a coincidence. That does not mean a thing. You better not mess with that stuff.

Ralph: You're just scared to admit that I might be right. Two days ago my horoscope said to be careful on that day and I ran into a door. Look, look at the scratch I have right here. See it?

Sally: Maybe you just weren't watching what you were doing Ralph.

Ralph: Okay, okay Mrs. Doubter. Yesterday it said I was to receive something special today. If I don't get something today I'll start doubting this thing. How does that sound?

*(Enter Lance carrying a ball glove.)*

Lance: Hi Wally. Hi Ralph. Hey Ralph, here is your ball glove I borrowed for that late summer game my team had. Thanks a lot for letting me borrow it. Oh, and my dad said you could have a free shake at his store for letting me use it.

Ralph: Thanks Lance. You're a life saver! What did I tell you Sally? What did I tell you? This thing is better than a crystal ball! I've hit on something

that may save me from having to study or work the rest of my life! This is too good to be true! Too good! Too good! Too good!

Sally: But Ralph, can't you see that Lance was going to return that glove to you anyway?

Ralph: But . . . is right. But the something special was the shake! See, I cashed in on the something special part. Explain your way out of that one.

Sally: Ralph, all I know is that it looks like its all coming true for you right now. I wouldn't put all my trust in it if I were you. I'd still make sure I was doing all I should to please God and my parents.

Ralph: Look Sally, I just read my horoscope for today's activities. "Good fortune is on your side." See, I don't even have to study today.

Sally: I think I would study if I were you, Ralph. Your horoscope isn't taking the history test.

Ralph: I'll show you Sally, then you'll see I was right. See you tomorrow after I pass the test.

*(Sally and Lance leave the stage. Then Lance and Sally come in carrying a large card with a big letter "F" right in the middle of it.)*

Lance:.. Ralph, I'm glad I found you. Mr. York wanted me to find you and give you your history grade from yesterday's test. I don't think you did too good.

Ralph: Well, let me see it. What? This must be a mistake. Is this a mistake? This isn't my grade. You're just kidding me aren't you? Say you are.

Lance: Nope. No mistake, Ralph. It looks like you didn't even study. Your test paper looks like someone bled all over it. I never saw so many red marks. Of course you could tell everyone you took the test in red ink and Mr. York graded in blue ink. You'd have less marks on your paper that way.

Sally: You did study didn't you Ralph? I mean you didn't rely 100% on that horoscope did you?

Ralph: Uh, no, I, I, thought my horoscope would, was true. What is my dad going to do to me now? Why did I do it? Why did I do it? I should have studied. Boo hoo hoo. Boo hoo hoo.

Sally: I told you, Ralph. Our Sunday School teacher tried to tell you. Those things can't be trusted. Those kinds of things only bring trouble.

Ralph: *(Still crying)* I know, Sally. I wish I had listened. I wish I had stayed away from the paper, then I never would have read my horoscope. I trusted it more than myself or God.

Sally: Well, maybe you did learn something, Ralph. You learned to stay away from questionable things.

Ralph: Boy, did I, Sally! I wished I had learned to study to stay away from that "F." I think I better get back to Sunday School next Sunday, I need it. Let's go.

## SLIDE STORY

### RACHEL'S HALLOWEEN SURPRISE

No. 1 — Rachel and her mother were eating dinner at the fast food restaurant when they heard some people at the next table talking about Jesus. Rachel was glad to hear others talking about her Lord. It made her feel that though they lived in a big city, they had friends and family everywhere.

No. 2 — Rachel's mother went over to the table where the other Christians were sitting and introduced herself, asking the names of everyone there. As they talked, she learned that they were having a Halloween party at their church that night. She was glad to hear that because she didn't have anything planned for Rachel to do on Halloween.

No. 3 — Back at the table, Rachel and her mother talked about Halloween. Their church was not doing anything special. Since Rachel's mother did not want her to dress up as a goblin and go door-to-door, perhaps this party at the church in their neighborhood would be just fine.

No. 4 — After they left the restaurant and stood by their car outside, Mother gave Rachel a choice. "Would you rather go to the Halloween party?" she asked. "Or would you rather stay home and pass out candy and tracts to the children who come to our house?"

No. 5 — Rachel thought for a moment. She knew that she would have fun at the party. But she couldn't get her mind off the children who didn't know Jesus. "What kind of tracts would we give them?" she asked.

Her mother answered, "The Christian bookstore is right in this shopping center. Let's take a minute to see what they have. Maybe that will help you make up your mind."

No. 6 — At the Christian bookstore, Rachel looked through some beautiful Halloween tracts. They had witches and goblins on the outside with big question marks beside them. Inside they told about Jesus' love for each and every child. Rachel didn't have to think twice. "These are so pretty," she said. "I know that kids would read them. I want to stay home and pass out these tracts and candy. Maybe someone will decide he wants to know more about Jesus and ask Jesus to come into his heart."

No. 7 — Rachel picked out the tracts that had the best pictures and messages about Jesus inside. As her mother paid for them, they were both excited about giving to the boys and girls who came to their door.

No. 8 — That night, whenever the doorbell rang, Rachel hurried with the candy and a tract for each spook. She smiled and said, "Jesus loves you," to each and everyone. The little goblins were always polite and thanked her for the tracts and candy.

No. 9 — The last group of boys and girls who came had their mother with them. Rachel gave them each some candy and a beautiful tract. Before they left, the mother who stood outside the door opened her bag up wide. She said to Rachel, "Can I give you something?"

Rachel smiled and nodded.

No. 10 — Then the mother at the door gave her a huge handful of candy — more candy than Rachel could hold

with both hands. She said, "Since you've been standing here giving treats to everyone in the neighborhood, I want to give you a special treat."

Rachel's hands were overflowing with candy and she wore a big smile on her face.

No. 11 — In a moment the goblins were gone. As Rachel and her mother ate popcorn and talked, she was very glad that she had stayed home and handed out tracts. Rachel knew that God was pleased with her choice. She felt a warm glow inside that was better than ten parties.

No. 12 — Then Rachel prayed with her mother and said, "Thank you, God for bringing all these people past our door today. I ask that everyone will read the little tracts that we gave them. And Father God, thank you for the

handful of candy that the trick-or-treaters gave me. That was a blessing I didn't expect."

## CLOSING

Boys and girls, we are not here to tell you to not enjoy Halloween today. The idea of our lesson was to tell you to be careful about all the things associated with Halloween. No one wants you to enjoy all the holidays and things of the world more than we do. But we do want you to be aware of the dangers so that you can avoid them. Saul knew better, but he still went to a witch over waiting on an answer from God. Saul lost his kingdom and eventually his life. Let's learn from Saul's life and our puppet story today and stay away from things that are questionable. Let's ask God to help us do that.

# FIRST FRUITS FOR THANKSGIVING ROOTS

## INTRODUCTION

Today we think of Thanksgiving Day as our own special holiday, but even before America was discovered and settled, other countries had been setting aside a special day or days to say thanks for what they had. Sometimes God was thanked if the people worshipped Him, and sometimes an idol, a person, or object of nature was thanked by those who did not know or worship God.

In our country, the first settlers were called Pilgrims. During the first few years in this new land called America, the Pilgrims had a very rough time making it. Some died of disease, some starved to death and some were killed by Indians. Each year of adjusting to this new country was difficult for them.

In the summer of 1623, the Pilgrims again faced starvation. They had barely made it through the winter and now a drought had threatened to ruin their crops. They would have no food to make it through the winter if they did not get rain.

Governor Bradford had the people pray and fast for rain. God blessed them with a rain that saved their crops. To show their thanks to God, the Pilgrims had a Thanksgiving Day on Thursday, November 29, 1623.

The custom continued to be a part of our country's heritage until Abraham Lincoln issued a proclamation in 1863 that the fourth Thursday in November of each year would be designated as Thanksgiving Day. Ever since that time, our presidents have over and over again reminded us in a speech that our country has a lot to be thankful to God for. Having a day set aside like Thanksgiving Day to tell God thanks is a holiday well worth having. It always reminds us that it is God who gives all we have.

Now before we begin our Bible story today I want everyone to pay attention and think about something for which you are thankful. Can you do that for me? Great! Okay, now pay attention, and you may even get the quiet seat.

## BIBLE STORY

Have you ever wondered if there was a Thanksgiving Day in the Bible? I know many times we have read in the Bible where men stopped to say "thank you" to God for something He did, but how about a yearly Thanksgiving Day? Do you think there was one? How many think that there was a Thanksgiving Day in the Bible? How many think that there was not a Thanksgiving Day in the Bible? It is pretty even. Some of you think there was and some of you think there wasn't. To be perfectly honest with you, I have to tell you there was one, but it was not called Thanksgiving Day.

You see, when Israel finally escaped from Egypt and that mean old Pharaoh, they were no longer slaves. For years and years they had been slaves. That means they

were told when to get up, what to do, when to eat and when to go to bed. If it was not that bad it was close to it. The point is that they were not their own bosses. The Egyptians controlled almost all that they did. Then one day all that changed. Israel crossed the Red Sea, and for the first time in years, they were a nation all to themselves. They must now rule for themselves, get their own food products, and initiate a system to run their social and business lives. With God's help they began to get organized.

After Israel left Egypt, God began to create in these people the sense that they were His people. Israel was to be a religious nation. They were to honor, worship and obey God. One way God began to instill within the people that they were His was by feasts. These were religious holidays. One feast was called Passover which celebrated their deliverance from Egypt. Another feast was called Trumpets and this celebrated their New Year. Then there was the feast called Tabernacles which celebrated their entering into the Promised Land. The fourth feast the Israelites celebrated was the Day of Atonement when everyone asked God to forgive them of their sins. These are the four major feasts but there is one more feast we need to look at. It was called the feast of First Fruits. In Exodus 23:16 and Leviticus 23:9-14, this feast is explained. God told Moses that when the people entered into the Promised Land and harvested their first crop, they were to take one day and give an offering to God. It was to be a bundle of wheat, an unblemished lamb, a meal and a drink offering. In this way, all areas of agriculture were represented. It was a reminder to the people that everything they got from the earth came from God who made and sustains it. It acknowledged God's ownership of all things. This feast of First Fruits was an expression of thanks to God. It was Israel's Thanksgiving Day.

## MEMORY VERSE

"Offer unto God thanksgiving." Psalm 50:14

## OBJECT LESSON No. 1

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate that thanksgiving is like saying, "I love you."

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A large bouquet of flowers or a large artificial arrangement of flowers and a card for the flowers.

**PREPARATION:** Write the words, "Thanks, from a friend," on the card and then place it in the flowers. Have an assistant carry the flowers to you on cue as you begin to talk.

**PRESENTATION:** There are a lot of ways to say thank you, aren't there? People sometimes just say thank you or they will call you on the telephone and tell you.

Sometimes people send “thank you” cards in the mail to say it. Gifts are given at other times to say thank you. There are a lot more ways I’m sure. (*Enter assistant with flowers.*)

Excuse me, what are you doing with the flowers? They’re for who? Me? Let me read the card. Hmmmm, It says, “Thank you, from a friend.” Now isn’t that wonderful!

I must have made someone very happy. It makes me feel good. In fact, I’m a little bit embarrassed right now to get these flowers in front of all you kids. But let’s use this as an illustration for today’s lesson. What else was this person, who sent the flowers, saying? Right, he cares, he likes me, he wants me to be happy, too. And what else? Someone said it. Just a little louder please. Right, he was saying he loved me, too. The person who sent these flowers was saying thanks because he loved me. You know what? Thanksgiving should be a time when we say, “Lord, I love you. Thanks for all you’ve done for me this year.” Isn’t that what Thanksgiving Day really means?

## OBJECT LESSON No. 2

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate how showing thanks is the natural return of love of a previous act of love.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A 4 to 5 foot piece of 2x4, two small house bricks, and some books to balance on the board.

**PREPARATION:** Set the bricks on your table and the board across them so that it balances itself on the bricks.

**PRESENTATION:** Almost everyone here has been on a teeter-totter so you know how it works. It is much like this board I have across these bricks. If I put a book on one end, notice that the board goes all the way to the table. The book took away the balance of the board. It overloaded one side. Now watch as I put a book on the other end of the board. When I place it in just the right place, the board balances once again. Now if I put another book on one end, what will happen? It will become unbalanced, won’t it? So to balance the board again all I have to do is add a book to the other end. If the books are positioned right, they will rebalance the board. A teeter-totter, when it is balanced correctly will move up and down if touched, but then will come to a balanced position again. In a give and take situation the teeter-totter I made here showed how this is done. Sometimes you can add a very small item, and it hardly moves at all. But the overweight side will lean down showing the imbalance.

That is the thing I want you to see. Thanksgiving is a teeter-totter effect. We remember to give thanks to God, and that puts our relationship with Him in a proper balance. Since God has more love for us than we could have for Him, that is why the balance bar leans towards God’s side. We can never outgive or thank God enough for what He has done for us. All we can do is bring a partial balance back into our relationship with Him. It is only natural to try and return thanks to God and balance things with Him, but to try to return a full balance of love with God can never be done. His love is greater than ours. We naturally want to love God for His love towards us. That is Thanksgiving!

## OBJECT LESSON No. 3

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate God’s blessings.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A pan of popped corn and a lunch sack or a McDonald’s or Wendy’s “Happy Meal” box.

**PREPARATION:** Pour the popcorn in the “Happy Meal” box and close it.

**PRESENTATION:** (*You are going to open this box from the bottom while holding it over your face. Be prepared for a clean-up.*)

Let’s have everyone’s attention on this next object lesson. I know most of you have eaten at McDonald’s sometime in your life and have either bought or seen someone else buy a “Happy Meal” box. Well, this morning I want you to imagine that this box is God’s blessings to us. I have filled the box with popcorn and we are going to let the popcorn be all the blessings and the box the blessings holder.

Now watch as I raise the box up over my head. The box was a part on the bottom that is folded together to keep things from falling out. You see these boxes are actually shipped flat and then the McDonald’s workers fold them into a “Happy Meal” box. So at the bottom you can see where all the little tabs and folds come together to make the bottom of the box.

If I wanted to receive one of God’s blessings, but the only way to get one was from the bottom of the box, what would happen? Let’s see what would happen. (*Begin to open the bottom of the box while holding it with the other hand. Let as much popcorn as you dare fall out as you try to catch one and shut the box back up. You may not be able to, so just lay the box on the table and finish the lesson.*) Boy, I found out you can’t get just one out of the box. God’s blessings come out in numbers! We cannot take one day and give thanks to God, because He gives us far more than we could ever give Him. We can, however, take Thanksgiving Day a little more serious than we do. A lot of people today think of it only as a day off of school or work, instead of a time to tell God thanks. This Thanksgiving Day, don’t you be guilty of doing that. For as an illustration just presented, God’s blessings truly outnumber our thanks to Him.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 4

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate that you cannot have a Thanksgiving Day without giving thanks.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** Banana, orange and a candy bar.

**PREPARATION:** For the orange, you may have to pre-groove the peel to make it peel easily for the lesson.

**PRESENTATION:** I have a couple of things up here that are going to appeal to you — an orange and a banana. They both have a peel! I also have a Hershey’s bar but it doesn’t have a peel. It has a wrapper.

Now that I have everyone’s attention, I want someone to tell me why I can’t take a bite of my banana, orange or candy bar right now? You’re right. Because they each still have their coverings on. I’ll just peel the banana part way down. Can everyone see it? I’ll take a bite of it. It’s really good. Next, let’s peel the orange part

way like so, and I'll take a bite of it, too. It's delicious! Well, let's see here. Oh yes. I have the Hershey bar to taste. I do not have to peel it but I have to take the paper off. I believe that is far enough. Hey, it tastes great, too. Boy, all three of those things tasted good but I would never have known that until I had uncovered them.

It is important that you understand how this relates to Thanksgiving. You see, before I could get the food I was after, I had to do something first. We cannot have a Thanksgiving Day without giving thanks. In fact, we can't thank God until we realize that it is He who has given us all of the blessings we receive.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 5

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate why giving thanks to God is important.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** A large healthy potted plant, one that is dying and a water pot.

**PREPARATION:** Place a lid or piece of plastic under each plant pot to catch any water that might leak through.

**PRESENTATION:** I want everyone to take a look at my two plants on the table. One is healthy looking and one isn't doing too well. At our house, my wife has several plants in different rooms. She always makes sure they are near a window in the different rooms so they will receive sunlight. She also always gives the plants plant food to keep them healthy.

In our kitchen, my wife has a water pot, like the one I have here, in a spot where she can see it. Everytime she goes into the kitchen and over to the area where the water pot is located she will notice it. It is a reminder to her that she needs to water her plants. She may not have to do it everyday, but the water pot helps her to remember not to forget her plants totally either. You see, you can give your plants plenty of sunshine and plant food, but if you don't give them water as well they will end up like our wilted one here. (*Take the pot and water both plants.*) Sometimes if you catch the plant before it totally dies you can save it. Watering the healthy plant will allow it to remain healthy.

Giving thanks to God is like having a water pot for our lives. Thanksgiving Day is a reminder that we need to keep our relationship with God healthy. One of the ways to do that is thank Him daily for all He does for us. That means thanking Him for our food, our parents, our country and everything! If we can remember to do that, then what the water does for the plant, our thanks will do for our lives. It will give us a healthy relationship with God. If we neglect this area of life then we, too, will begin to wilt spiritually. We will not have a healthy life for God. Giving thanks to God daily is important.

## OBJECT LESSON No. 6

**PURPOSE:** To illustrate that Thanksgiving Day is a reminder to give thanks.

**PARAPHERNALIA:** Bulletin board, push pins, a Thanksgiving bulletin board picture, and two or three notes that remind you to do something like "call Bill,"

"Pick up bread at store" or "Don't forget church at 7:00 P.M."

**PREPARATION:** If you do not have a bulletin board behind you or to the side of your platform area, then secure a small one or a piece of cork board to act as one. If none of these are available to you, then get a flannel board and easel and tape the items to it.

**PRESENTATION:** Look at the picture of the pumpkins, Pilgrims and all that other food. There is no doubt about what that picture reminds us of, is there? No. It is one of the first Thanksgiving dinners. That is a good reminder for us.

Hey, I have three notes pinned up here on the board, too. This first note says, "Call Bill." I'm glad I saw that note. I have some important news to tell Bill. That's a good reminder. I'll do that right after Children's Church.

This second note says, "Pick up bread at the store." Now I remember about that note. My wife is going to be late getting home from work Monday, and we'll be out of bread by then, so she wanted to remind me to or else I might have forgotten.

The third note says, "Don't forget church is at 7:00 P.M." Now why did she write that one? I remember. Because there is a football game on late this afternoon and I told her I was going to watch it. I don't get to see too many but I was going to make a special effort to watch one of my favorite teams play. She is going to be visiting a sick friend and then go on to church and she didn't want me to forget about church. She was reminding me that God comes before TV, sports and my own desires. I sure am glad to have a wife like her. She reminds me about stuff with love and with just the right words.

Do you know what Thanksgiving Day is? It is a reminder to tell God "Thank you" for all that He has done, is doing and will do for us in the future. Thanksgiving Day reminds us with a loving spirit about it and with just the right words. This year, let Thanksgiving Day be your reminder to be more thankful to God.

## FLASH CARD STORY

### THE RIBBON THAT SAID THANKS

No. 1 — It looks like Danny Domino is having a talk with his mother. It is about something his brother has done. We had better listen in to see what the discussion is all about.

No. 2 — "But Mom, I'm not going to school if Buddy is going to wear those silly ribbons on his shoes," complained Danny.

"They are not silly!" replied Buddy, defending himself.

Mother interrupted the argument in defense of Buddy's choice to wear the ribbons.

"He is only wearing them to help him remember to obey the Lord. I think it is a good idea. Now off to school with you two and not another word."

"But Mom," groaned Danny, "do I have to walk with him?"

"Yes, you do. Now no more talking or you will be late for school," ordered Mother.

No. 3 — All the way to school Buddy had to do his best to keep up with his older brother, Danny. While Danny kept

trying to get to school unnoticed, Buddy kept looking down at the ribbons on his shoes. Buddy thought his idea of a reminder about obeying God was a good one. He couldn't understand Danny's resentment.

As the boys approached the school yard, the very thing that Danny dreaded happened.

No. 4 — Bruce Domino and a couple of his bully friends caught sight of Buddy's new ribbons right away.

"Hey, where's your new dress to go with those ribbons?" asked Bruce.

"Now don't tease him," added Bruce's best bully friend, Dotts, "he may take a swing at you with his purse."

"What's with the ribbons, Cute Shoes?" asked Bruce.

"They are my way of remembering to obey God. Too many times we all try to get through difficulties on our own and forget to ask or thank God for being nearby," explained Buddy.

"Oh, I see," replied Bruce. "And you are going to need those ribbons after school because . . ."

Ding, Ding, Ding, Ding. All at once the bell rang for classes to start.

No. 5 — All day long Danny wondered what Bruce meant by "after school." As much as he too hated the ribbons on Buddy's shoes, he certainly didn't want his little brother getting hurt.

In the meantime, everywhere that Buddy went, he turned the heads of the other dominoes. His ribbons were drawing attention from just about everyone. In between some classes at break time a few of the kids would ask him about the ribbons, and it was then that Buddy had a chance to witness about God and tell the others how thankful he was to have Jesus in his heart.

No. 6 — By lunch time it was obvious that Bruce and Dotts had finalized their plans on making fun of Buddy after school. They made sure they sat next to him at the lunch table.

"Well, Goody-Two-Shoes," began Bruce, "after school I want you to meet us at the teeter-totter on the playground. Got it?"

"Be there!" added Dotts, poking Buddy in the chest.

As soon as Bruce and Dotts left, Danny and some of Buddy's friends came over to find out what Bruce and Dotts had said.

No. 7 — "What are you going to do, Buddy?" asked Luke, his friend. "Are you going to go tell the principal?"

"No, I'm going to meet them," replied Buddy calmly.

"I've got it," said Danny, "you want us to all show up and help you out, don't you? I told you not to wear those ribbons."

"I said I would meet Bruce and Dotts and that's what I mean," said Buddy. "God will help me. Look at all the things He gives us. I thank God everyday for all He has done for me, so I know He isn't going to leave me alone in this problem."

"Boy, you sure have more faith than I do," exclaimed Luke, with a new appreciation for Buddy.

No. 8 — Just then Buddy had an idea. "Listen you guys, if you want to learn to trust God like I do, then meet me at

our homeroom class right after school. You'll see why I am so thankful to God. At least I think you will."

Buddy's idea was to have a prayer meeting. He wore his ribbons to remind him to remember God. Now it was time to ask God for help. Buddy never dreamed that his ribbons would cause so much trouble the very first day he wore them.

No. 9 — After school and the prayer meeting, Buddy headed for the teeter-totter. A huge crowd had already gathered at the playground to watch Bruce and Dotts clean up on little Buddy. Some of the kids, however, wanted to see if little Buddy would be the one who did the cleaning up. Bruce and Dotts were waiting for Buddy too.

"No one here to help you, huh?" asked Bruce. "We are only going to do two things to you. "First we are going to give you a little teeter-totter ride and . . ."

"And then tie you up by your ribbons," added Dotts. "Now get on the totter."

Buddy got on first and then Dotts. But as Dotts climbed on, the board broke sending him sprawling into some old tires where he got tangled and trapped.

No. 10 — "Don't think it's all over," grinned Bruce. "Off with those ribbons."

As Buddy bent over to take the ribbons out of his shoes the most unusual event that could happen happened. Bruce had backed up against a fence to lean on it and wait on Buddy when the whole fence gave way and entrapped Bruce. Buddy's prayer had been answered. Bruce and Dotts had been defeated without a finger being lifted to fight.

After the principal, Mr. O, had been told what had taken place, Bruce and Dotts were reprimanded and did not cause anyone anymore trouble. But the neatest thing happened the following day.

No. 11 — When Danny and Buddy returned to school the next morning, Buddy had one of the biggest surprises of his life. Everyone in school was wearing ribbons on their shoes. They wanted to remember what God had done for Buddy, and they wanted to remember they needed to trust and thank God more, too. They wore the ribbons as a way of saying thanks to God for helping Buddy and to thank Buddy for showing them all how to trust God.

From that day on, anyone who wore ribbons on their shoes to school reminded everyone of their need to trust God more and to be thankful for what He has done. The ribbons were a good reminder to be thankful.

## CLOSING

Girls and boys, Buddy and his friends used ribbons to remind them to be thankful, and today we have a time called Thanksgiving Day. We should always remember to thank God daily for His many blessings. If you wait until a close call with trouble happens or for Thanksgiving Day each year, you have waited too long. Our thanks to God should be given daily. It is nice to have a special day to remind everyone that they need to thank God but God deserves more than a one time thank you. Remember at the beginning of our lesson today I asked you to think about something you are thankful for. As we pray, you tell God why you are thankful for that. It will mean a lot to Him and you.