

=BIBLE DOCTRINES=

Lesson 19

Separation

Objects to have:

A picture of many children—have the picture prepared so that you can pull a little child out of the picture and have him be separate from the others

Several similar objects; some stones or some little dolls or some buttons, etc.

Some pictures of liquor and cigarettes and people dancing and a movie house and a sign reading, “BAD BOOKS,” and another sign reading “TALKING BAD ABOUT PEOPLE,” (anything else that would depict sinful acts)

Your Bible.

Introducing the lesson:

(Hold up the picture of the many children.) Some children were playing together in Larry’s yard. They were having a good time together, playing some running games and playing on the swing set that was in his yard. Bill was getting tired of playing in Larry’s yard. Bill called out to everybody, “Hey, everybody, come on now and play in my yard.”

Larry said, “I can’t go. Mom says I need to stay home and play in my own yard today. Don’t go, anybody. Stay here.”

Bill said, “Aw, Larry, come on. Your mother won’t care. You don’t need to stay long. She may not even know that you are gone.” Bill begged Larry to come; the other kids begged him, too.

Larry said, “No, I can’t. You go on.” Larry was determined to obey his mother. He hated to have to play alone (pull Larry out of the picture), but he would rather be separated from the crowd than to disobey his mother. In his heart he wanted to make her happy, and he also wanted to make Jesus happy. So, the other children left his yard, and Larry separated himself from them. He did find some things to play with by himself; he was really kind of glad to be alone for awhile.

Mother called from the kitchen window, “Come to the back door, Larry.” Larry went to the back door. There stood Mother with a plate of freshly baked chocolate chip cookies and a big glass of milk. “I saw what happened, Larry. I am very proud of you. It is better sometimes to be separated from your friends because sometimes that is the only way to do the right thing. Have a treat.” How good the cookies and the milk tasted to Larry! How good he felt inside, too, because he had obeyed.

(Pull the similar objects from the container in which you have carried them.) See these. They are all together in a group. Now, I’m going to take one away from the group. We just learned what we call it when one is taken away from the group. We call that separating the one from the group. We could even take another one from the group and say that these two now are separated from the group.

(Put down your objects and pick up your Bible.) Our Bible story for today is about separation. Sometimes we need to separate ourselves from other people in order to live good Christian lives.

Telling the story:

Our story is about some people who were not living in their own country any more. (Put down your Bible.) Many thousands of Israelites were not in their own country any more. They did not choose to move from their own country—they were taken, taken by the enemy and made to be prisoners of war. Among those thousands of people who were taken prisoners were some young men.

The king of that country said to his helpers, “Go and get to know the young men who have been taken captive. I need to have some new young men work for our country. I do not want just any young men, however; I need a few special young men. I want some young men who have worked especially hard in school. I want young men who have sat in their classroom in school and have listened to the teacher and have done very well with the work that the teacher has given them to do. I want young men who have learned to read well, who have worked hard to learn science and practiced their math, and so forth. Choose those young men, and bring them to the palace.”

The king’s helpers obeyed the king, and went and learned about several young men who had done very well in school. I guess they went to the principal’s office at the school and looked at all the report cards. Those helpers chose some names of young men who had done very well in school. These young men were also strong, healthy young men. None of them were afraid to work and to work hard. They were all obedient young men, also. The king’s helpers said, “You and you and you and you and a few others—the king told us to choose some young men who could come and learn more than they already know and then to work in the government for the king. You have been especially chosen for this.” What an honor for these young men!

The Jewish young men went with the king’s helpers to the palace. When they were taken there, they were taken to some special rooms of the palace. They were told that in some of the rooms they would be sleeping and studying. In other rooms of the palace, they would be going to school. They would go to school for three years and work hard to learn all that the king wanted them to learn. The king’s helpers said to the young men, “Because you are such special young men, the king wants us to treat you just right. He wants you to have the kind of food and the kind of drink which he has. That will be special from him to you.”

Daniel, one of these special young men, said to the men in charge of them, “I am grateful for all that is being done for me. I cannot, however, eat of the king’s meat, nor can I drink of the wine that he has on his table. I have promised God in my heart that I would never drink wine or beer or whiskey (hold up these pictures), nor would I ever eat food that is not good for my body.” If Daniel lived today, children, he would also say, “I would not smoke cigarettes (hold up this picture), nor would I go to a movie theater (hold up this picture), nor would I ever go dancing (hold up this picture). I promised God that I would never do anything that would displease Him or bring dishonor to His name like gambling or cursing or talking bad about people (hold up that sign) or reading bad books (hold up that sign).”

Three other young men heard Daniel talking and they said, “We won’t eat of the king’s meat, nor will we drink of his wine, either.” And, they did not.

At the end of the three years’ training period that they had, these four young men all were healthier and had better minds than the other Jewish young men who had been chosen to serve the king. The king was most pleased with Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. The king gave Daniel the most important job in the country next to the king; the king gave Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego the next most important jobs in the country. All this was because they determined not to do as the rest of the crowd did; they made up their minds they would be separated from those things that were sinful and not pleasing to God.

One day, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego were really put to the test. I do not know where Daniel was at the time—maybe he was traveling in another country. One day some wicked men talked the king into building a great big idol, and they talked the king into commanding that all the people of the country bow down to this idol. These wicked men talked the king into writing a command that if there would be anybody who would not bow down to the idol, those people would be thrown into a huge furnace that had fire in it.

The idol was built, and the commandment went out. All of the people of the country obeyed the king. All, that is, except Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. These young men made up their minds that they would remain separated from the crowd of people who would bow down to the idol. They loved God; they would not commit this awful sin.

The king commanded, “Heat up the furnace! Heat it up hotter than it has ever been! In fact, heat it up seven times hotter than it has ever been!”

This is what was done. Then the king commanded, “I want my most mighty soldiers to tie up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego and to throw them into the burning, fiery furnace.” The strong soldiers obeyed the king.

As the soldiers threw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego into the furnace, the fire was so hot that it killed those soldiers as they threw these three wonderful young men into the furnace. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego fell down into the fire in the furnace.

The king could see into the furnace. He was so surprised at what he saw! “Did we not throw three men into the fire?” And the soldiers told him that they did. Then the king said, “Look! I see four men, not tied up, walking around in the fire! And they are not hurt! They are not burned at all! And the fourth one looks like He might be the Son of God!”

Then the king, whose name was Nebuchadnezzar, walked close to the burning furnace and called out, “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, come out of there!” These three young men who had determined to do only what God wanted them to do, jumped out of the fiery furnace. Everybody looked at them and saw that they were not burned at all. Not even their clothes looked blackened; their hair had not caught fire; they did not even smell like smoke! Then King Nebuchadnezzar praised the Lord, and he honored Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego.

Children, it pays to be separated. It pays always to do what God wants you to do. Do not be afraid to stand alone from the crowd if the crowd is not doing the right thing.

LEARN OUR BIBLE VERSE: II Corinthians 6:17, “*Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord...*”