

FROM BAD TO WORSE

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

LOVE OBEY SERVE CONSEQUENCES DISOBEDIENCE

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

1 Samuel 18-19; 28; 31.

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To understand that disobedience to God carries severe consequences.

MEMORY VERSE

“And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in obedience to him, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul” (Deuteronomy 10:12, NIV*).

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

Modern societies face an alarming and increasingly common problem: stress in preadolescents. Although they do not express it openly, they live in anguish, worried and confused by family problems, school pressures and the influence of the media. This often leads to rebellious behavior.

For preadolescents, bad behavior is common. They do not understand that they are establishing patterns of behavior for the future, and that small acts of disobedience can become major problems. They are not aware of the damage or the consequences, because many times public media gives a distorted perspective of the consequences, presenting sin as something acceptable and even desirable.

The story of Saul shows us very clearly the results of disobedience and the consequences that it entails in the long term. Through this story, preadolescents will understand that their decision to obey God is fundamental to maintaining a loving relationship with the Lord.

BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

Read 1 Samuel 18-19, 28 and 31. Saul was the man God had chosen to be the first king of Israel. Unfortunately, because of his disobedience, his relationship with God was severed, and he lost his peace of mind and his kingdom.

If Saul had faithfully served God, his end would have been different, and perhaps his family would have established a great dynasty. However, Saul broke his covenant with God. Repeatedly he disobeyed the divine word and, when problems arose, he blamed others.

The final chapter of his life came when he had to face his former enemies: the Philistines. Samuel had died, and Saul, filled with fear, tried desperately to seek help to resolve the conflict.

In those days, it was common for kings to consult oracles or sages before waging a battle. Some pagan priests killed animals and examined their entrails for signs of the future.

Divination and witchcraft were forbidden in Israel. God provided his people with the direction they needed, speaking to them through prayer, prophets and priests, dreams, or the Urim and Thummim. None of these methods gave Saul the answer he wanted. Finally, disobeying what Deuteronomy 18:9-11 teaches, he went to a fortuneteller's house and asked for Samuel to be "called up" (1 Samuel 28:11).

The response Saul received was discouraging, confirming once again that God had abandoned him. Saul's vision foretold the defeat of the Israelites, and that Saul and his sons would die.

As predicted, the Philistines defeated the Israelites the next day, wounded Saul and killed his three sons. Instead of facing capture and subsequent torture by his enemies, Saul was killed with his own sword. The first king of Israel died as a result of his disobedience and rebellion.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

What is going on?

Distribute Student Activity Sheet #351-A and ask the students to find the one for this activity. Choose seven students to read the phrases in the boxes. Then talk about Mark's behavior and ask them: "Do you think Mark can be a good friend?" Listen to their answers. Then, explain that although each separate incident seems unimportant, if the behavior is recurrent, people will think that person is dishonest and will not trust him/ her.

In today's story, we will learn about a man who disobeyed God many times, suffering sad consequences for his actions.

TEACH THE LESSON

For this occasion, we suggest that you ask two young people in advance to help you present the dialogue for this activity:

If possible, you can get tunics, swords or soldiers' costumes to make the representation more real.

Officer 1: What happened to the king?

Officer 2: I don't know, and I don't want to ask him. He is more and more quiet and he no longer trusts anyone.

Officer 1: You're right! It all started after David killed Goliath. Do you remember when the women came out to meet Saul? They sang: "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousand." Until then everything was fine, but his jealousy began when he heard that song.

Officer 2: That's right! Saul could not stand it. He is afraid that David will take away his throne.

Officer 1: What was that?

Officer 2: I didn't hear anything. Keep telling me the story.

Officer 1: Do you remember how Saul tried to nail David to the wall with his spear?

Officer 2: Yes! David was playing his harp when suddenly, Saul threw his spear at him and almost killed him.

Official 1: However, David managed to escape from Saul twice.

Officer 2: It seemed that Saul wanted to make things right when he put David in charge of a thousand soldiers.

Officer 1: Yes, but you know that Saul only wanted David to die in the war. That's why he sent him, along with his men, to the battlefield.

Officer 2: But that only made the situation worse. David's exploits made him even more popular.

Officer 1: Can you believe that King Saul told David that he had to kill 100 Philistines to marry Princess Michel?

Officer 2: Saul was sure that would be the end of David.

Officer 1: But that didn't work either.

Officer 2: Saul is getting worse. He has become more difficult. Now he suspects everyone!

Officer 1: I couldn't believe it when he asked us to kill all the priests of God.

Officer 2: How could we do that!

Officer 1: But now everyone is hiding, just like David and his men. Who do you think could advise the king now that the Philistines are attacking us again?

Officer 2: I wish I knew.

Do a general review with your students of the history of Saul, mentioning what were some of the mistakes he made during his rule.

Listen carefully to the dialogue between the two officers, and then ask them: "What pattern repeats itself in Saul's behavior? What happened when Saul became a jealous, destructive and bad-tempered person?"

Ask the students to read the passage in 1 Samuel 28:3-24 in their Bible to reaffirm learning.

CONNECT THE LESSON

What would have happened? What happened?

Divide the class into two groups to work on this activity using Student Activity Sheet 351-B. The first group will answer the questions in the first column, while those in group 2 will answer those in the second column. Make sure they have the correct answers before they write them in the blanks on the sheet.

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

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Have the students form a circle and you stand in the center with a soft item such as a plastic ball. When you throw the item/ ball to one of them, they must say the memory verse. Help those who have problems memorizing it. Repeat the game until everyone has participated.

WRAP-UP

Pray

We suggest that you set aside some time to guide your students to examine their own lives, seeing if there is something, they should confess to God for having disobeyed His Word. Direct them in prayer.

Encourage

Encourage your children to put into practice at home and at school the lessons they have learned during this unit and to honor Jesus throughout their lives.

Invite

Tell the group something of interest about the next session so they will want to attend and to invite others.

