

GREED IS DANGEROUS

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

COMMAND FOLLOW DECREE GREED HAPPY

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Exodus 20:13-17 and 1 Kings 21:1-29

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help the students understand what greed is and to be happy with what they have.

MEMORY VERSE

“Obey the Lord your God and follow his commands and decrees that I give you today” (Deuteronomy 27:10, NIV*).

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

Children have an attitude that’s influenced by a consumer society that says “more, more, I want more.” Advertisements in our modern societies bombard children with creative, fast, colorful and very attractive images. Everything to make them want the latest products on the market. Advertisers want children to want the new toy, electronic game, fashionable clothes, the latest computer or phone. Many children, adolescents and young people, as well as many adults, are consumed by unbridled desire to have more, larger and better quality.

This lesson is God’s response to the desire to have more, more and more. He commands us to be happy with what we have. He also warns us that coveting what we cannot have can lead us to sinful actions. During this session, help the children focus on God and everything he gives them. Tell them to look at him, to remember his commandments and thank him for all the good things he gives them. It is possible that this does not satisfy their desire to have the most beautiful and modern, but it will lead them to think or to have the idea that God has better things in mind for them than what the world can offer them.

BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

“You shall not covet” (verse 17). It was with this last commandment that the Israelites were terrified once more in the presence of almighty God. In fact, they pleaded with Moses, “Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die” (v. 19). The Israelites were afraid to be in the presence of their Creator.

Moses had become the mediator between God and the people. God spoke to Moses and then Moses gave the message to the people. This role of mediator was carried out by many leaders throughout the history of Israel. Moses, Joshua, the judges, the prophets, kings like Saul and David, were all important to God. The last and perfect mediator was Jesus Christ, his Son.

The covenant between God and his people was established with the giving of the law. The Ten Commandments are God’s rules to live in a right relationship with him and with one’s neighbor. The promises were made and the terms of the contract established. He would be the only God of Israel. He would be their guide, protector and leader if they lived in obedience and loyalty to him.

The rules were there, but could people obey them? Unfortunately not. Throughout the history of Israel we see many examples of disobedience. There were times in which all turned their backs on God, and others in which a single individual sinned and led a whole nation to do so. In each case, we see the evidence of God’s justice and grace.

Read 1 Kings 21:1-19. The story of Ahab is an example of how greed leads to sin. Ahab was the King in the north, of a divided Israel. As King, he was responsible for being the mediator between God and his people. But, Ahab did not take this responsibility seriously. He used his monarch role to get what he wanted and not to do his best for the people. One day, Ahab saw a beautiful vineyard and wanted it for himself. Not only did he admire the vineyard, he was willing to do anything to get it.

Ahab allowed the owner, Naboth, to be killed, in order to obtain the vineyard. And thus, he broke two commandments: the one of “not coveting” and the one of “not killing.” God sent his prophet, Elijah, with a message for Ahab. How many times when we refuse to listen to God does he send others to bring us back and make us understand what he wants from us? Ahab learned that even he, who was the king, must obey God. And now he would be held responsible for his sin.

In some societies, people are told that there’s no definite or absolute, that good or bad is only a matter of opinion. In arrogance, some believe that God does not see our sins or at least he overlooks them. But it is not like that. The God who gave the Ten Commandments as rules for life is the same creator and sovereign God of the universe. We cannot break his rules and do what we want. We must decide to live in obedience to him. And we can only do that if we reestablish our relationship with God, through Jesus Christ.

How did Ahab’s story end in today’s passage? Ahab humbled himself before God. In 1 Kings 21:29, we see again that the grace of God extends to those who humble themselves in obedience. God forgave Ahab and did not punish him immediately.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

Statutes: “Have you wished?”

Ask the students to form a circle. If the room is small, you can do it outside. Ask them to walk slowly to the beat of music, of a bell, or of clapping without breaking the circle until the sound stops. At that moment, they must stop walking and you will walk around the circle and touch a student’s shoulder. Ask her: “Have you wanted something with all your heart? What was it?” Continue the game until everyone has told what they want. If you wish, you can also tell what you have desired or want. Explain that it is okay to want something that we like. The trouble is in wanting something so much that it leads us to break the laws of God, that is, the Ten Commandments. That’s coveting.

TEACH THE LESSON

King Ahab coveted Naboth’s vineyard “What a beautiful vineyard!” Ahab said. “Look at all those grapes, what lovely clusters! They look delicious! These lands are perfect for my vegetable garden!”

The more he looked at the vineyard, the more he wished it was his. “That vineyard has to be mine. I’m the king, I must have the best lands,” he told himself. Then he went to see Naboth, the owner. “Hello, Naboth,” said Ahab. “I need to talk with you.” “What’s going on?” Naboth asked. “I like your vineyard. Actually, I love it, so you have to give it to me. You can have another one if you want. I’ll let you choose the one you want.” “No thanks,” said Naboth. “That vineyard has belonged to my family for a long time and I will keep it for my children.” This made the king very angry and his face reddened by the anger he felt. “Who do you think I am, Naboth?” The king scolded. “I’m the king, and I want that vineyard!”

The king returned to the palace and locked himself in his room. He went to bed, he did not get up, he did not eat or drink and he was still angry. He continually thought more about the beautiful vineyard. “It is perfect,” he thought. “It must be mine. I want it for myself. I’m the king.” He complained so much that Queen Jezebel got tired of listening to him. One day she decided to talk to him. “Why do not you eat?” she asked. “What’s your problem? Why do you grumble and grumble?” “I’m angry and sad,” the king

said. "I want Naboth's vineyard and he does not want to give it to me. I offered to pay him and he said he would not accept it. How can he be so selfish?"

Jezebel frowned when she heard the king. "Do not act like a baby. Are not you the king of Israel? Get up, eat, be glad. I'll get you Naboth's vineyard," said the queen. And, she made a terrible plan. She pretended to be King Ahab. She wrote letters and sealed them with the royal ring. Everyone believed that Ahab had written them. The king was not worried about what his wife was doing. The only thing that mattered was getting the vineyard from that man at any cost.

"Prepare a special meal and invite Naboth," the queen wrote. "Give him a special seat, then say that the guest said bad words about God and then kill him." The leaders did what the queen had written. They invited Naboth to a special meal. "Sit here," they told Naboth. "We have this special seat for you." Naboth sat down. Then two wicked men pointed to Naboth and shouted, "He spoke evil of God!" Everyone agreed that Naboth should die. They killed him and sent a message to Queen Jezebel. "They stoned Naboth and he died."

Jezebel was happy. She quickly went to tell the king that Naboth had died. The king went happily to the vineyards. Ahab rubbed his hands like a happy child with his favorite toy. "These vineyards are mine now!" He picked up some dirt and let it slide gently between his fingers, feeling the taste of victory.

While Ahab was celebrating, God spoke to Elijah, his prophet. Ahab killed Naboth and is taking over his property. Go where he is," God said to Elijah. Elijah found the happy king in his new vineyards. "God is very angry with you," said Elijah. "You have sinned, you broke his commandments! You disobeyed God! God will take everything from you and you will die!"

Suddenly King Ahab realized his wickedness and was very sad. "How could I have done this terrible thing?" he cried. Ahab knew that he had sinned. He knew he had done the wrong thing. Weeping and wailing, he repented and dressed in old clothes, and asked God to forgive him. God knew that Ahab was repentant. So he forgave him, but told him that his children would not be kings. Ahab learned that he could not break God's laws without paying the consequences. He understood how important it is to obey God.

CONNECT THE LESSON

Bouquet of contentment

Give your students Student Activity Sheet #231-A and 231-B. Follow the instructions to do the bouquet. You will need: scissors, sticks or green wires, large disposable cups, sand to fill the cups, tape and glue, for each child.

Say: "This is a bouquet of contentment. Beautiful flowers are a gift from God. Whenever you see a flower, stop to thank God for all the beautiful things He gives us."

Ask them to read each sentence that appears on the flowers:

Be content with what you have.

You shall not covet.

Say no to greed.

But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.

Thanks, God.

Happy.

Take this bouquet of contentment home. Put it in a place where everyone can see it. Every day give thanks to God for what you have. That will help you remember that we should be content and happy, and thank the Lord for not coveting what others have.

If possible, let the children have a light snack (fruit, cookies, sweets) as a "reward" for their attendance and participation in learning the Ten Commandments.

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

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"You shall not covet" (Exodus 20:17). Ask the children to repeat this verse several times. Since this is the last session in this unit,

do a special activity to review the Ten Commandments. Put the children in a circle. Let them pass a small light ball. Start soft music. When the music stops, the child holding the ball in her hand should say the memory verse. Put the music back on. The next child who holds the ball in his hand when the music stops should say Commandment #1, and so on. If there are children who do not remember the commandments, others can help them, or you can do so through keywords.

Sweet verses

You will need: Student Activity Sheet #214-C and 214-D, plus a (candy) jar, scissors, construction paper larger than the jar, and colored pencils or crayons. Throughout the year, you will find additional cut outs, such as the memory verse for each unit, in candy or candy forms with the verses written on each one. When a child has memorized the memory verse, allow him/ her to cut out the candy from that unit and stick it inside or around the jar. At the end of the year, they will be able to take the jar with "sweets" to their homes. That way they can repeat to their families the verses they learned.

WRAP-UP

Pray

With their eyes closed, direct a prayer with all children participating in it. Everyone can say short phrases like: "I thank you Lord for my mom". "I thank you Lord for my dad." (Keep giving thanks for all the things that God gives us: health, family, siblings, work, school, toys, friends, teachers, pastors, trees, flowers, animals, etc.) End by praying for the children - that the Lord would help them to be happy and grateful, instead of coveting things that others have. Thank the Lord that the children have learned the Ten Commandments and ask him to help them remember the laws that He left us to do and be happy.

Encourage

Encourage them to thank the Lord during the week instead of complaining. Before departing sing an appropriate chorus about happiness, contentment or gratitude.

Invite

Be sure to tell the children about the new unit which will begin in the next session. Encourage them to attend with friends.