

The Sunday School Lesson

by Bessie Wilbon

INTRODUCTION:

Repetition is a fine tool for learning. An elementary child learns the books of the Bible by repeating the listing over and over again. Such being the force of repetition, wonder why Israel did not learn the lesson God was trying to teach them - that faithfulness to Him would bring blessings, and disobedience would bring punishment. The description of Israel's desperate situation is given in verses 5 and 6: "For (the Medianites) came up with their cattle and their tents, and they came as grasshoppers for multitude; for both they and their flocks were without number; and they entered into the land to destroy it. And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Medianites; and the children of Israel cried unto the Lord." Once again God heard the cry of His people and raised up a deliverer to rescue them from their oppressors. In this lesson and the next, we learn of the exploits of their deliverer-Gideon.

THE LESSON:

Then the Lord's angel came to the village of Ophrah and sat under the oak tree that belonged to Joash, a man of the clan of Abiezer. His son Gideon was threshing some wheat secretly in a wine press, so that the Medianites would not see him. The Lord's angel appeared to him there and said, "The Lord is with you, brave and mighty man!" Gideon said to him, "If I may ask, Sir, why has all this happened to us? If the Lord is with us? What happened to all the wonderful things that our fathers told us the Lord used to do - how he brought them out of Egypt? The Lord has abandoned us and left us to the mercy of the Medianites." Then the Lord ordered him, "Go with all your great strength and rescue Israel from the Medianites. I myself am sending you." Gideon replied, "But Lord, how can I rescue Israel? My clan is the weakest in the tribe of Manasseh, and I am the least important member of my family." The Lord answered, "You can do it because I will help you. You will crush the Medianites as easily as if they were only men. (Vs. 11-16) That night the Lord told Gideon "Take your father's bull and another bull seven years old, tear down your father's altar to Baal, and cut down the symbol of the goddess Asherah, which is beside it. Build a well-constructed altar to the Lord your God on top of this mound. Then take the second bull and burn it whole as an offering, using for firewood the symbol of Asherah you have cut down." So Gideon took ten of his servants and did what the Lord had told him. He was too afraid of his family and the people in town to do it by day, so he did it at night. When the people in town got up early the next morning, they found that the altar to Baal and the symbol of Asherah had been cut down, and that the second bull had been burned on the altar that had been built there. They asked each other, "Who did this?" They investigated and found out that Gideon son of Joash had done it. Then they said to Joash, "Bring your son out here, so that we can kill him. He tore down the altar to Baal and cut down the symbol of Asherah beside it." (Vs. 25-30) From then on Gideon was known as Jerubbaal because Joash said, "Let Baal defend himself; it is his altar that was torn down." (V. 32)

God uses us for His service today. We may not be given power to work miracles, but nevertheless we can accomplish "miraculous" results as we try to do God's will in obedient surrender to Him. One does not find that Gideon himself worked any supernatural "wonder". But he became willing to follow God's instructions even when those directions were seemingly ridiculous. By doing as directed, tremendous results followed.

Gideon did not feel he could become the deliverer of his people. He was very aware of his inadequacy and was most hesitant to think of himself in heroic terms. When the angel greeted him as a "valiant" or "mighty" man, he was quick to answer that he was far from being any such thing. He just couldn't bring himself to believe God was going to use him and empower him. It required repeated proofs and "checking" by Gideon to be convinced. (Read the entire chapter of Judges 6; better still, read the book of Judges.) In such reluctance to accept a position of leadership, Gideon was in good company. (Read Jeremiah 1: 5,6) Exodus 3,4).

When we are called to tasks of leadership or responsibility in God's work today, a feeling of unworthiness and insufficiency is in no way a disqualification. Those who recognize the significance of the work and the demands for dedication made upon them are the most apt to be pliable in God's hands. We must realize how very much we depend upon God's help and blessings for the accomplishments of His purposes through us. There is a place for self-confidence and assurance, but it must not come from vanity or any sense of superior merit and ability. Rather, it should come from an awareness of our lack overcome by God's fullness, and of our inability ultimately made competent, through God's truth, His people's help and His indwelling presence.

Gideon could not defeat a false god until he believed the true One. Neither can we.

Father, May we be willing to accept calls to service and to trust so that our Savior's help and presence will enable us to fill them with-forefulness. Open our eyes to see, our wills to respond, and our lives to be devoted to those opportunities for growth, for service, and for fullness of life that are offered to us. In Jesus name, Amen.

Teens Are Getting Mixed Messages About Sex

If we adults really want to help prevent teen pregnancy, we have to stop talking out of both sides of our mouths about sex. Teenagers are bright, perceptive people, and they know when they are getting mixed signals from adults. Here are just a few examples:

We tell our girls to be chased, and our boys to score. Girls generally feel more hesitation about early sex than boys do. But the red light we are flashing at girls all too often fails to stop them from having sex before they are ready, and instead stops them from making sure they have birth control before they do. And the green light we flash at boys makes it very unlikely that they will delay sexual activity. Teens of both sexes need a yellow light: a strong caution from adults about the risks and consequences of too-early sexual activity.

We tell our teens one thing, and do another. Teens have not cornered the market on irresponsible behavior. Often, adult men in their early 20s are the fathers of teenage girls' babies. Adults have helped to spread sexually-transmitted diseases. Adult men by the millions have walked away from their child support responsibilities. We adults have to clean up our act before we can speak with authority to our children.

We bemoan the teen pregnancy problem, but deny that our children could be having sex. Most black adults will admit that our community, like our nation as a whole, has a serious teen pregnancy problem. But too often we fail to face up to that problem when it confronts us in our own homes. Many parents avoid discussing sex or birth control with their children in the mistaken fear



that this will "encourage" their children to have sex. They look

The Sin Of Self-righteousness

By J. L. Little

The last idol that a sinner will give up before he is saved is self-righteousness. Every sinner by nature is deceived by his wicked heart (Jer. 17:9), and thinks he has some goodness that God will take notice of and usher him into Heaven at the very last. That is why it is so hard for a religious soul to get saved. All your life you have prided yourself on the fact that you don't live in sin as others. But when the blessed Holy Spirit awakens a religious sinner, he sees that all his righteousness is just menstros rags, according to Isaiah 64:6. God's Word is very plain about the total depraved sinner that God says you are in His word, long before He saves you, if you ever are to be saved. The Lord is not going to save everybody. And once you get your eyes open to God's way of salvation you wonder why you could have ever been so blind to think that you could be saved on a profession or a mental decision for the Lord Jesus Christ. A self-righteous sinner is always looking down on others and patting himself on the back as did the old Pharisee. "And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." (Luke 18: 9-14).

The Pharisee patted himself on the back, he was a self-righteous devil but the Lord didn't save him. But the old publican saw himself as a lost sinner and the Lord saved him. If you never give up your idol of self-righteousness, you'll never get saved. That's why multitudes of our church members are not saved and never will be. You are self-righteous to the core. You think you are better than others.

If the sword of total depravity ever goes home to your heart, never again will you trust yourself and look down on others. The blessed soul who has come in personal contact with the Lord has a glimpse of himself as God sees him and you are humbled because you see your filthiness in the Face of Jesus Christ.

That is of a broken heart and contrite spirit. Where do you go to find souls truly broken and walking humbly before the Lord? You won't find them in our

the other way even when they see clear signs that their children have become sexually active. Denying to ourselves and others that our children may be having sex -- as 86 percent of all black teenage boys and 59 percent of all black teenage girls do by age 18 -- will not help our young people avoid the negative consequences of too-early pregnancy and parenthood. But initiating honest, open, two-way communication can.

churches, as a whole. Our church members are so hard-hearted and cussed.

Continue to listen to our late pastor, L. R. Shelton, with THE VOICE OF TRUTH BROADCAST, each Sunday morning at 7:30 over WAGI FM, 105.3 Mc.

The Prophet Column is a paid advisement.

POST OBITUARIES

BEASLEY'S FUNERAL HOME

Mrs. Jeanette Manuel, 76, 1120 Oaklawn Ave., Apt. 1 - died July 9, 1989, in Medical Park Nursing Home. Funeral service will be 2 p.m. at Beasley's Funeral Home Chapel. Burial will be in Beasley's Memorial Garden, Mt. Holly - NC.

Survivors are her son, Mr. Alfonso Johnson; devoted friend and care taker, Mrs. Willie Hart. **INCOMPLETE**

Ms. Barbara Campbell Miller, 47, of 6510 Westoria Dr., Apt. #6 - died July 7, 1989, in Mercy Hospital.

Mr. Ural Covington, of 2902 Parkwood Ave., Baltimore, MD - died July 7, 1989, in Marlan G. Hospital (Baltimore, MD).

Mrs. Asilee Grier, of 604 W. Kingston Dr. - died July 7, 1989, at her place of residence.

Classified Ads: HIGHLY VISIBLE DEPENDABLE MONEY MAKING

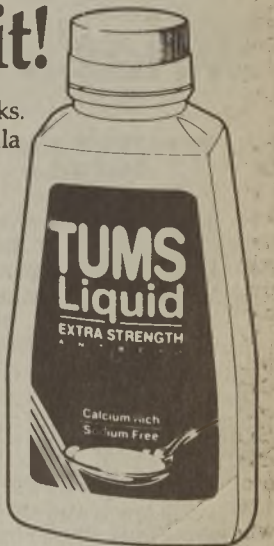
Classified Ads: FAST HIGHLY VISIBLE DEPENDABLE

Free Tums® Liquid! You have to taste it, to believe it!

50% Stronger First of all, Tums works. Ounce for ounce, its extra strength formula neutralizes 50% more acid than regular Maalox® or Mylanta®.

No Liquid Antacid Taste But best of all, Tums doesn't taste like a liquid antacid - it really tastes good.

Free Sample We're so sure you'll like Tums Liquid we want you to try it on us. To receive a free 2.25 oz. sample, fill out and mail the order form. We'll even send you a 50¢ coupon good toward your next purchase of Tums Liquid.



Free mail sample offer

MAIL TO: TUMS LIQUID FREE SAMPLE OFFER, PO BOX 1374, YOUNG AMERICA, MN 55394-1374

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Telephone () _____
Current Antacid Brand _____



BROUGHT BACK FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY

30-DAY MELT-AWAY

LOSE UP TO 20** POUNDS FOR ONLY

\$99*

INCLUDES:

- STEP 1 Super Start Melt-down™
- STEP 2 26 Days of Catabolic Breakdown
- STEP 3 30 Days of Life Management Series™

THE EXCLUSIVE 3-STEP FORMULA FOR FAST, SAFE, ACCELERATED WEIGHT LOSS!

WITH OVER 200 LOCATIONS TO BETTER SERVE YOU

CHARLOTTE PINEVILLE
5800-G North Sharon Amity 10512 Park Road • Suite 111
535-9822 543-9822

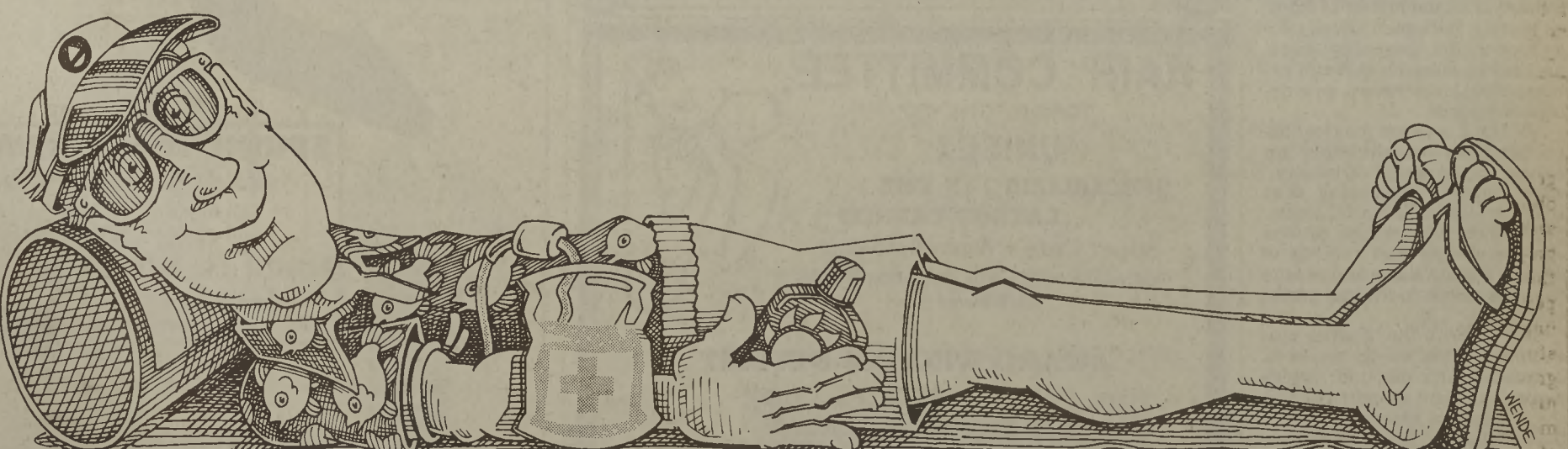


*Or 40% off regular program price which is based on a 52 week program that includes weight loss, lipolysis and maintenance. Additional purchases will be required and will vary according to the amount of weight lost desired. Special incentive discount always available and limited to first time visitors. Not valid with any other offer.

**Although the average amount of weight lost is 15 pounds per month, persons with more than an average amount of weight to lose can lose more.

© 1989 Formu-3 International, Inc.

We're Looking For Volunteers To Lie Around All Summer



It's our toughest time of year to collect blood. So tough, in fact, we need you to give two times this summer if you're able. But no matter how often you can do it, bring yourself, bring your family or bring a friend to donate blood. All you have to do is lie around.

American Red Cross