



Assisting Children's Evangelists Worldwide

Devotional

We have been reminded, in recent issues of Mini Mag, that God's great plan and purpose for an innumerable number of men, women, boys and girls is to make every one of them like His Son Jesus Christ. We are also learning from the Bible that He is accomplishing His plan in four stages—two in eternity and two in time.

1) THE FIRST STAGE took place in ETERNITY past when God chose and **predestined** us, as believers, to be holy (Ephesians 1:3,4) and to be "BE CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON." (Romans 8:28,29). His plan and purpose for us is to be like His Son.

2) THE SECOND STAGE, which we studied last month, takes place in TIME, when God the Holy Spirit regenerates us and "RENEWS US IN KNOWLEDGE ACCORDING TO THE IMAGE OF HIM (JESUS CHRIST) WHO CREATED US". (Colossians 3:10) The miracle of regeneration takes place when we trust Jesus Christ as our Saviour and, at that moment, we

THE THIRD STAGE IN GOD'S PLAN FOR MANKIND

receive a new man and new nature which is the image of Jesus Christ.

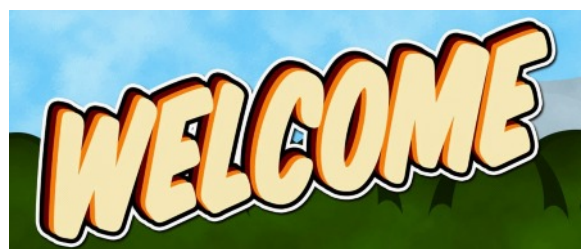
3) THE THIRD STAGE also takes place in TIME. The miracle of **regeneration** in stage 2 leads to a process called **sanctification** in stage 3, which commences to make us more and more like Jesus Christ. Regeneration imparts life and the birth of a new nature. Sanctification imparts growth and the development of that new nature. This process of sanctification is clearly summarised in 2 Corinthians 3:18.

"But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror, the Glory of the Lord, ARE BEING TRANSFORMED INTO THE SAME IMAGE from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord."

- Sanctification is a process which takes place **"from glory to glory."** It is a step by step process which lasts right from regeneration to glorification.

- Sanctification makes us more and more like Jesus Christ. We **"are transformed into the same image."**

- Sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit Who, little by little, makes us more holy and more like Jesus Christ. Our verse tells us that we are transformed **"by the Spirit of the Lord."**



We trust that you will find this month's Mini Mag both helpful and challenging. Do you know and understand God's great plan and purpose for mankind and the part you can play in it? Have you ever studied the teaching of the greatest ever teacher?

Can you identify the child in the Bible who deliberately turned from the ways of the Lord?

How many truths should you teach in a Bible lesson to children?

We will try to answer these questions in this month's issue. Thanks for joining us to-day.

- We are told that our main responsibility in sanctification is **"to behold the Glory of the Lord as in a mirror."** We are to keep our eyes on the Lord Jesus at all times, as He is revealed to us in God's mirror (the Word of God.) The more we focus on Him, the more we will grow in holiness and likeness to Him.

As we sincerely focus and keep our eyes on the image, example and teaching of the Lord Jesus, the Holy Spirit will make us holy, change us and enable us, little by little, to become like the Lord Jesus in our thoughts, words and deeds. He will sanctify us. We can never really become like the Lord Jesus in this world, but we want to become as much like Him as we possibly can.

Children in the Bible

We must be realistic in our study of children because we need to realise that the results of our evangelism may not always be encouraging. The Bible is realistic. It does not only give us examples of children like Samuel or Josiah, who grew spiritually and continued through their lives to serve the Lord. It also gives us an example of a young child who, after serving the Lord for years, turned back to idolatry and the forsaking of God's Word. His name was Joash and we read that, like Josiah, from the age of seven "he did what was right in the sight of the Lord" (2 Chronicles 24:1,2) and continued to do so for many years. But, in contrast to Josiah, the spiritual direction of his life was later completely changed and reversed and his life ended in tragedy.

Joash, like Josiah, became the king of Judah, when he was only seven years old. The kings who ruled before him had been evil men. The baby Joash was initially hidden and saved from death by the friends of Jehoiada, the godly high priest, (2 Chronicles 22:11) and as the only surviving member of the royal family Joash became king, six years later, at the age of seven. The Bible tells us that, like Josiah, "he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord." (2 Chronicles 24:2.) This verse also tells us that he did right all the years of the godly priest Jehoiada, his spiritual father and counsellor. Together, they rebuilt the house of the Lord according to its original design, and completed the work. (2 Chronicles 24:13) So long as Jehoiada lived, burnt offerings were presented daily in the rebuilt temple. But Jehoiada was now old. Soon after, he died at the age of 130, and left behind a wonderful testimony "he had done good both toward God and His house." (2 Chronicles 24:16)

JOASH

- the child who turned back



Unfortunately, the evil officials of Judah came to Joash after Jehoiada's death and successfully persuaded him to abandon God's temple and worship (2 Chronicles 24:17,18) and to spread the worship of idols once again. Then when Jehoiada's son warned them against idol worship and the way they were going, Joash ordered that he should be stoned to death. Soon afterwards the army of Syria invaded the land of Judah and defeated the Israelites. This was God's judgement on Judah because "they had forsaken Him" and it was also God's judgement on Joash who was severely wounded. (2 Chron. 24:24). He himself had not only forsaken God; he had encouraged the people he ruled to do so. As he lay in his bed, several of his officials conspired against him and killed him. And so, a life of great promise ended in tragedy.

Yes, it is a sad story, but it shows us what can happen to a child in later life, especially when he no longer has a godly counsellor. Children can have experiences with God and walk in His ways and yet it is possible for backsliding and tragedy to occur in their later lives. Only God knows if they were truly saved or if it was only a profession of salvation. However, if they were truly saved they will not lose their salvation.

May we be sure to counsel and help our children as much as we can, both now and in the future.



KEY QUESTIONS

PEOPLE ASK

Question: Why do you emphasise that we should teach one central truth in a Bible lesson? Should we not try to teach several truths—four, six or more—especially because children know so little and need to learn so much?

Answer: Our teaching is more effective if we teach less and teach it thoroughly. We want the children to really learn something and apply it to their lives. I, personally, face two challenges when teaching children.

- I do not have the time (in a 15 or 20 minute Bible lesson,) or the ability, to TEACH a number of truths. We have learned that teaching demands concentration, explanation, visualisation, illustration, repetition and application, and it is impossible for me to TEACH a number of truths effectively in such a short time. Mentioning, or stating, a truth does not teach it. We must avoid the philosophy that all we have to do is to say something and believe we are teaching. However, I feel that I could TEACH one truth in the time available, so that the children would understand it and know how to apply it to their lives.

- Most children do not have the ability to understand and apply a number of truths when they are presented to them in a Bible lesson. This is especially true when we are teaching children who have a very limited Bible knowledge, and to whom most of what we are teaching is completely new; and the number of these children, sadly, is on the increase.

I want my children really to understand what I am teaching, and really to know how to apply what they have understood to their own lives. Both I and the children need time for that to be accomplished. But if I try to TEACH a number of truths in my lesson, the possibility is that I don't really teach anything, and the children don't really learn anything.

It is important to remember that teaching one central truth does not eliminate other truths from our lesson. We should be free to MENTION other truths if they help us teach and apply the central truth. These other truths do not need to be in the passage we are teaching. We will TEACH these truths in other lessons. We should always remember the TMO formula when we are teaching.

Teach one truth. **Mention** other truths which help you teach this one truth. **Omit** all other truths.

We must not forget that we should always make it our goal to APPLY our one central truth in two ways. The result will be one central truth and two applications. We have two groups of children in our class—saved and unsaved. Therefore, we should, in our lesson, apply the central truth to the saved children and also apply it to the unsaved children. We should be able to find two such applications in the vast majority of central truths.

THE SUPREME EXAMPLE FOR TEACHERS

We are told that a principle is “the right way to do something.” Therefore, we have studied eleven principles of teaching. Understanding them will help us see “the right way to teach” and putting them into practice will make us better teachers. But there is one major principle which we have not studied. It is THE PRINCIPLE OF IMITATION. We can learn so much by watching skilled and experienced teachers while they are teaching. As we do so, we can see aspects of teaching which we could imitate and make them our own. I have learned so much in this way.

But the greatest Teacher of all has left us, in writing, a record of His teaching ministry, from which we can learn so much, and in which there is so much which we can imitate in our teaching. His Name, of course, is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the perfect example for teachers to follow and to imitate. The Lord Jesus spoke of Himself as a teacher and demonstrated His teaching in John 13:4- 17. He was recognised as a teacher by His friends (Mark 4:38) and by His enemies (Mark 12:13-17). He is referred to as a teacher 45 times in the Gospels, and He was called a teacher, or something similar, about 100 times. And it is interesting that those who followed Him were called disciples over 240 times. The word “disciple” means “follower” or “learner.” The One they followed and from Whom they learned was their Teacher.

He was the perfect teacher, and the model for everyone who would be a teacher. We will start to study the methods He used and the principles He followed in His teaching, in our next issues of



Mini Mag, and we will see how we can IMITATE them. In the meantime, we should ask God to enable US TO DISPLAY THE QUALITIES He displayed when teaching –His attractiveness, His friendliness and love, His patience, His sincerity, His courtesy, and His personal touch, interest and concern for each person He taught. We should also ask God to help us be ready for anything, and take every possibility to teach. Our model Teacher took EVERY OPPORTUNITY to teach. He taught wherever there was a need or a possibility-- in the temple, in homes, beside a lake, at a wedding and many more places. Sometimes He taught large groups, sometimes small groups and often individuals. But He always had TWO GOALS in mind: 1) To bring His listeners into a personal relationship with Himself and His Heavenly Father. 2) To help those who trusted Him to grow in that relationship.

These are the two same goals He commands us to have in our teaching of children (Matthew 28:19,20). Our first goal is, through our teaching, “to make the children disciples of the Lord Jesus”, and our second goal is “to teach them to observe and obey all that He has commanded us.”

And He promises “to be with us always” when we do so.

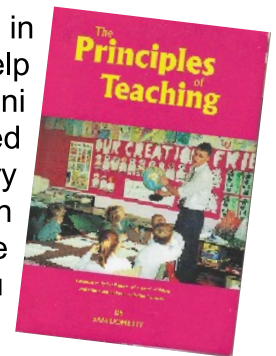
HELP!



ACEW CAN HELP YOU

One of the first training manuals we wrote was “The Principles of Teaching.” It has been widely used in English and other languages, and many have found it very helpful. I believe that you would also find it helpful, especially because we have been studying this subject in recent

issues, and you would find, in it, much more detail and help than we can give you in Mini Mag. It includes a detailed study of the teaching ministry of the Lord Jesus, which would follow up what we have studied to-day. You can download the complete book of almost 200 pages, free of charge, on our website at www.cefbookministry.com





I SEE IT

THE POWER OF SIN

*An Illustration
for children*

Sin takes over your life if you do not deal with it. An Arab sat comfortably in his tent, sheltered from the cold biting night air of the desert. His camel outside felt the bitter cold and put his nose through the canvas flap of the tent. His master did not scold him. So, he put his whole head through and his master moved over a little. After a while, the camel edged his forelegs and shoulder into the tent; and the Arab still slept and said nothing. So, the camel pulled his body into the tent, and the Arab moved over. Now there was very little room left for the uncomplaining master, but because the camel was still cold, he brought his hind legs in also. ALL of the camel is now in the tent. Where was his master? He was now outside the tent! The camel had taken over. That is what sin does when it has the opportunity. If it is not dealt with, it takes over your body little by little until in the end it controls it and ruins it completely. But if you trust the Lord Jesus He will deal with your sin.

72 Years and Still Learning:

Personal Advice from the Author:

“GIVE ME PATIENCE - RIGHT NOW!”

Patience is a quality I have sought during most of my years of ministry. Patience is one of the vital qualities which we children's workers need in our lives and ministry.

WHAT IS PATIENCE or longsuffering?

It is the ability to ENDURE and “suffer long” disappointments and difficult situations. It is the ability to WAIT, if we are pressed to react quickly to circumstances or people.

WHY IS PATIENCE SO IMPORTANT?

- Patience or longsuffering is an attribute of God (2 Peter 3:9) which we should imitate.
- Patience is part of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22) which we should develop in our lives.
- Patience is demonstrated by Jesus Christ in the Gospels (John 8:3-11, 14:8-11) as our example to follow.
- Patience, or perseverance, helps us grow during trials (James 1; 2-4, 12) and receive the crown of life.

WHEN AND WHERE SHOULD WE BE PATIENT?

- We should be patient at all times with our co-workers and helpers. Quick reactions can

cause problems, upset fellowship and harm the ministry. The hasty use of the tongue can ignite fires! (James 3:5)

- We should not be upset if our ministry is not growing the way we would desire. A ministry is like a tree, a flower, or a baby. It takes time to grow. We need to be patient and depend upon God for that growth.

- We need to be patient as we evangelise children. We challenge and invite them to trust the Lord Jesus. But we must not put any kind of physical or emotional pressure on them to trust the Lord Jesus. We need to trust the Holy Spirit to do His work in their hearts. An impatient evangelist might pluck the fruit before it is ripe, and cause the child involved spiritual harm.

- We need to be patient with our saved children. We must not expect too much from them too soon. We must not set our standards too high. It takes time to grow. Impatience and criticism on our part could stunt that growth and not develop it.

“Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus.” Romans 15:5

The Mini-Mag is published by Assisting Children's Evangelists Worldwide and written by Sam Doherty with the assistance and advice of Terry Flannigan, Administrator of the ACEW Trust, and Kenneth Martin, Chairman of the ACEW Trust.

All of them have occupied leadership positions for many years in the worldwide ministry of Child Evangelism Fellowship®. The contents of each Mini-Mag are based upon the author's 70 years of experience working with Child Evangelism Fellowship, successively as national director of Irish CEF, as European CEF regional director and as founder of the CEF Specialised Book Ministry. Contact can be made at www.CEFBookMinistry.com.

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