



Assisting Children's Evangelists Worldwide

Devotional

We all have problems of some kind, and many can be quite serious and affect both our health and our ministry. They might be spiritual problems, or personal problems, or ministry problems, or financial problems, or family problems, or health problems, or relationship problems. The list can go on and on. Are you facing any of these problems just now? Is there a biblical solution or an answer to such problems? YES! THERE IS!! In this issue and the issues which follow, we will seek to find this answer in God's Word

How do you react to your problems? Some of us just worry about the problem and keep on worrying. Some become bitter and rebellious. ("Why does this happen to me?") Some blame other people for causing

PROBLEMS ABOUND

the problem. Some talk to other people about their problems and listen hopefully to their answers. Some read books or listen to preachers hoping to find an answer. Some even decide to resign from the ministry to which God

called them and run away from the problems.

We all pray, of course, like Paul in 2 Corinthians 12: 8, asking God to take the problem away. However, it is very often the case that, no matter what we have done, the problem is still there, and we feel as helpless as ever to deal with it. Like yourself, I have experienced many problems during these last 72 years of life and ministry, and have struggled to find an answer to them. But I believe that I have found the answer in the Word of God, even though I have not always put that answer into practice the way I should. But I would like to share with you, in these issues of Mini Mag, what I have learned, and I would like to say that what I have learned has been a greater help to me in my personal life and in my ministry than anything else I have learned (apart from the wonderful truth of salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus.)

To start us off in our voyage of discovery, we are going to look at King David. He was a great man, and an outstanding leader of men. The Bible says that he was "a man after God's own heart". Yet during his life he faced many problems, and this reminds us that the most godly people can also have problems to contend with. You can read about his problems and his reaction to them in many of the psalms which he wrote. There is something I would like you to do this month, as a start to our voyage of discovery, and we will continue from that point in our next issue of Mini Mag.



We welcome you to this issue of Mini Mag with the words of Charles Spurgeon, the renowned theologian and pastor of a church with over 5000 members in 19th century London. "I have more confidence in the spiritual life of the children that I have received into this church than I have in the spiritual life of the adults thus received. I will even go further than that and say that I have usually found a clearer knowledge of the Gospel and a warmer love to Christ in the child converts than in the man converts. I will even astonish you still more by saying that I have sometimes met with a deeper spiritual experience in children of ten and twelve than I have in certain persons of fifty or sixty."

Isn't that a good way to begin this month's Mini Mag?

I would like you to read Psalm 13 as written by David and answer these four questions:

- **What were the three problems David had?**
- **What were the three prayers David prayed?**
- **What were the three truths about God which David remembered?**
- **What were the three results David experienced?**

We will continue our voyage in next month's issue of Mini Mag.

TIMOTHY THE BOY WHO UNDERSTOOD THE WORD OF GOD

Timothy was born into a very special home. His mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois were godly women, (2 Timothy 1:5) and women of faith. (Acts 16:2, 2 Timothy 1:5) They not only studied the Old Testament Scriptures, but they taught them to young Timothy. Paul writes to an adult Timothy "From childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:15). The word "childhood" or "child" in this verse is the Greek word BREPHOS or "baby." So, even as a baby, Timothy was under the influence of the Scriptures which the two ladies were studying in his presence, though he did not yet understand anything. But, as he grew older, he came, through their teaching, to know and understand the Word of God, and this understanding laid the basis for his response to the Gospel when he heard it preached. This probably happened when the apostle Paul came, some years later, to his hometown of Lystra and preached the Gospel there (Acts 14:6,7). As a result, Paul always regarded Timothy as his spiritual son. (1 Tim.1:2, 2 Tim1:2) Timothy was probably a teenager at the time, and the Word he had come to understand, through his family, made him "wise for salvation." (2 Timothy 3:15) Through the ministry of Paul, he trusted Jesus Christ and was saved. Then we read in Acts 16:1,2, that he



was "a disciple" and a highly regarded member of the local church.

Paul returned to Lystra, at a later date, and when he received a good report from the church there concerning Timothy, he invited him to join his missionary team. (Acts 16:2,3) As a result, Timothy became Paul's co-worker and a preacher of the Word of God for the remainder of his life. But it all started in those early days of childhood, listening to the teaching of the two ladies he loved. That was when the foundation of his salvation was laid.

This story of Timothy shows us that **CHILDREN, EVEN YOUNG CHILDREN, CAN UNDERSTAND THE WORD OF GOD WHEN IT IS WELL AND LOVINGLY TAUGHT TO THEM; AND THAT THIS UNDERSTANDING CAN BE THE BASIS OF THEIR LIVES AND SALVATION.**

This story also demonstrates how **God uses the simple teaching of two women** who had no training as evangelists and no experience as teachers to lead to the conversion of someone who would become a great evangelist and a gifted teacher. God can use this story to challenge parents and grandparents to teach the Word of God to their own children, and also consider starting a Good News Club in their home to reach local children. You never know what the result could be.



KEY QUESTIONS ASKED

BY CHILDREN'S WORKERS

Question: How can parents evangelize their children?

Answer: I would like to give you, as parents, nine guidelines or rules which you could follow in this most important task and ministry.

1) Be aware that your children were born with a sinful nature and that they need to be saved if they are to enter the Kingdom of God. Having Christian parents is a great blessing, but your children need to be saved.

2) Believe that they can be saved when still young. They do not need to wait until they are teenagers or adults. Children can be saved as children. (Matthew 18:6)

3) Be prayerful and pray that God will work in their hearts. True conversion is the work of the Holy Spirit. He gives conviction and understanding, and it is He Who regenerates. (John 3: 5-8)

4) Trust God for the salvation of your children. You can fully depend on Him. Nothing is too hard for a sovereign God. (Genesis 18:14)

5) Be an example to your children. It is most important that your deeds speak as loudly as your words. You are the main Bible which the children read. (1 Timothy 4:12)

6) Be diligent in teaching the Word and explaining the Gospel message and the way of salvation to them. It would be helpful to have a family time each day when, together, you read the Bible and pray. (Deut. 6:7)

7) Let your children know, from time to time, that if they want to trust the Lord Jesus, you are ready to help them. But they should come and ask you to do so.

8) Be careful never to put pressure of any kind upon your children to trust the Lord Jesus or to come and speak with you. You do not want them to trust the Lord Jesus just because they want to please you.

9) Be sympathetic and understanding towards your children if, and when, they trust Christ. Christian growth is a long, slow process, and they will need help, and sympathy rather than criticism. (Ephesians 6:4)

THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD

Last month we started a series of studies on how to help our saved children to grow. What should we teach them in our Good News Club? Much of what we teach will also help the unsaved children. It will, for example, help them to know more about what it means to be a Christian. The first truth to teach our saved children is that THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD, and we should do so because everything else we will teach them is based on that truth, and if they don't understand it and believe it, their spiritual progress will be very limited, or even non-existent.

WHAT SHOULD YOU TEACH?

You should teach them three main truths about the Bible. (Make sure that each child has a Bible.)

1)WHAT THE BIBLE IS:

- a) It is a book which is given to us by God, and which records what He wants to say to us. It is therefore completely true from beginning to end. (2 Timothy 3:16)
- b) It is a book which was written by a number of men like Moses, Matthew and Paul but God guided and directed them in what they wrote. (2 Peter 1:21)
- c) It is a book which has been preserved for thousands of years despite those who tried to destroy it or discredit it. (Matthew 24:35)
- d) It is a book which is possessed by more people and printed in more languages than any other book. It is a great privilege for us to have such a wonderful book.



2) **WHAT THE BIBLE DOES**, when you read it and believe it.

- a) It will help you to see what God is like. God has revealed Himself in this book. (Deuteronomy 7:9,10)
- b) It will help you to see what you yourself are like. It is like looking in a mirror. (Romans 3:23)
- c) it will help you to know how to be saved (if you are not saved) and become a new person. (1 Peter 1:23)
- d) It will be spiritual food for you if you are saved and it will help you to grow. (1 Peter 2:2)

3) WHAT YOU SHOULD DO WITH THE BIBLE

- a) Read it. Try to find a little time each day when you can read a few verses.
- b) Study it. Try to understand what you are reading. If you have a problem, ask someone for help.
- c) Try to memorise a verse which you have found helpful. In this way the Bible becomes part of you.
- d) Ask God to help you obey any command He gives you in the Bible.

That's **WHAT** you should teach the children about the Bible, dear reader. But don't be alarmed. You should not try to teach all of this at one time. Teach it gradually and systematically over a period of time. In the next issue of Mini Mag we will study **HOW** you should teach the children about the Bible. See you then!

HELP!



**ACEW CAN HELP YOU
TEACH EFFECTIVELY
AND ATTRACTIVELY**

If you are parents and have a short family time each day with your children to read the scriptures and pray, you want to make that time as interesting as possible. PowerPoint presentations, for use on your tablet or laptop, with pictures and a few words can make a Bible story or a Bible truth easy for the children to follow. We have produced a number of these, and they are available to you at our website www.cefbookministry.com.

I would especially recommend two of these series of lessons. If your children are not saved, you could use the 20 lessons called 'Salvation - The Gift of God'. Each lesson has several illustrations and a written text to follow. If your children are saved. I would recommend the 20 lessons on Christian growth called 'Growth - The Plan of God'. We believe that your children would find these visualised lessons interesting and easy to follow, and that they would also help you in your teaching.





TWO ILLUSTRATIONS ABOUT THE BIBLE FOR SAVED AND UNSAVED CHILDREN

1. Chuck's favourite subject at school was science. When his grandfather asked him what he was studying he replied "I am studying the different Means of Communication. I am studying about ways for people to communicate and to talk and keep in touch with other even if far apart. I am studying the telephone, the radio, TV, satellites and optic cables." His grandfather replied "That's interesting and very helpful but you have left out the most important form of communication" "What is that" asked Chuck. "Communication with God." replied his grandfather "Many years ago God in Heaven spoke to and communicated with people through dreams and visions and He often spoke with a voice which could be heard. But He speaks and communicates to us to-day through His Word the Bible. When you read it, He communicates with you. You are reading and hearing the very words of God as they were written by special men whom He chose and

guided. And the wonderful thing is that you and I can communicate with God though prayer and He will hear us no matter where we are. We can listen to His voice, and He will listen to our voices."

2. Tracy didn't like Monday mornings. It was so hard to get up out of bed and to have to go to school. But this Monday morning was different. Why? Because after she had had breakfast, she heard the plop of letters falling through the letter box. The postman had just arrived. What was exciting about that? One of the letters was addressed to her. It was the first time she had received a letter for months. She opened it quickly. It was from her best friend Laura who had left the country several weeks before to live in another country. And it was such a long letter. She started to read it, and on her way to school in the school bus, she continued to do so - and at every possible moment during the day, in between classes, she returned to it. Would you like to receive a letter like that, especially addressed to you. The Bible is a long letter from God to you and you and you. (Hold up your Bible) If you do not have a Bible, let me know. I hope you will read it and read it often, just as Tracy read her letter. It's from Someone Who loves you very much. If you start reading the part called Mark, and if you read a few verses from God each day, you will learn more about God and more about yourself and how you should live. I will help you with any problems you have.

72 Years and Still Learning:

The author's experience and the lesson he learned

Last month, we read about the JOY of the harvester (Psalm 126) and the JOY of ministering to children. In this issue of Mini Mag and the issues which follow, I would like to tell you stories about the JOY I have experienced ministering to children. I trust that these stories will be an encouragement for your ministry and will show you what God can do in the lives of children. We will also see if there is a lesson to learn from each story. Away back in 1950, we started our ministry with Child Evangelism Fellowship. I was a young 22 year old Christian, just saved 3 months, when God laid a burden on my heart to reach and teach children. I had no experience of such a ministry. My wife and I felt that the first step "into the unknown" was to start a weekly Good News Club in our home. We visited all the parents in our neighbourhood and asked them if they would allow their children to come, and just about all of them came. We prepared for hours for this very first step in our ministry. We were thankful for the good teaching materials we received from CEF. When the lesson book said "Do this" I did it. When the book said "Put a figure on the flannelgraph board" I did so. When it said "Stand up" or "Pray" I obeyed. I had no other way to know what to do. These lesson books were a great help to this new nervous

stumbling teacher. Everything went well for the first few weeks. Then I read in the lesson book that I should let the children know that, if they wanted to be saved, and didn't know how to be, they could wait behind and that I would be willing to help them. The book said so and therefore I did it. The meeting finished and the children left. No! Not all of them! Imagine my consternation when I realised that five of them were still sitting on their chairs looking at me. I asked them "What do you want?" and they all replied "We want to be saved" I looked at my wife and she looked at me. I did not know what to do. I had not got to that page in the book yet. But I asked God for help and sat down with the children, opened my Bible and, as best as I could and rather nervously, I showed them how to be saved. All five children eagerly said "That's what we want to do" and all five prayed and trusted Jesus Christ as their Saviour. AND I EXPERIENCED JOY, REAL JOY, leading my first children to Jesus Christ.

THE LESSON WE LEARN FROM THIS STORY IS THAT GOD IS PLEASED TO USE PEOPLE, WHO DON'T KNOW VERY MUCH, HAVE LITTLE OR NO EXPERIENCE BUT WHO WANT TO SERVE HIM, TO TEACH CHILDREN.

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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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