



Assisting Children's Evangelists Worldwide

Devotional

In our monthly devotions we have been trying to find the biblical solution to our problems. We have been studying Psalm 13 to find out how David handled and overcame the problems he was facing, and which were upsetting him. They didn't disappear. (They often don't) But he had learned and knew how to handle them and have joy again. Are you facing a problem just now in your life or ministry and lost your joy? Have you tried to solve this problem and failed?

The first step in the road to a solution is to realise that each of us has a greater problem than any we have been writing about, and, indeed, a problem which makes those other problems greater. Our main problem is that we are so self-centred and egotistical. We continually FOCUS on ourselves, our problems, our difficulties, our work, our future, our health. It is so easy to become focussed on ourselves and our needs, and, as a result, become depressed and unhappy. Isn't that what was happening to David in the opening verses of Psalm 13. He was focussing on himself and

IT ALL DEPENDS ON THE FOCUS

his problems. The strange thing is, and you can prove this is true from your own experience, that, as you focus on yourself, the problems become greater and more difficult to solve.

Please stop and ask yourself the question: **Is this true of me? I know that it has been true for me many times. When I was faced with a problem, I found it so easy, and so automatic, to FOCUS on it, to worry and worry about it, to blame myself, or to blame others for it. My mind was focussed on myself and my problem, but without finding a solution to it. Eventually I came to learn that the main problem, and the main hindrance to its solution, was really ME AND MY FOCUS. Both were facing in the wrong direction. It is of course normal and natural to be concerned about problems, especially when they involve our health or our family. But I will fail to find a solution to them if I worry, worry, worry and concentrate my FOCUS on them, and allow them to dominate my mind and my way of thinking, leaving me defeated and depressed.**

God wants us to reverse all of this. He wants to change our philosophy and our way of thinking. He wants us, in every situation, and especially in problem situations, and as a very FIRST reaction to such situations, to IMMEDIATELY FOCUS ON HIM. He wants us immediately to lift our eyes and thoughts heavenwards and whisper "It's in Your Hands, Lord, and I trust you". This change in thinking and focus will need much time and patient effort. It does not happen overnight. But we must START TO-DAY.



I read recently that the key words to use in a family situation, or in a relationship with co-workers or friends, should be SORRY, THANKS, and PLEASE. I believe that this is true and that, if these words were more used with sincerity, we would experience fewer problems. But I would like to add a fourth word, a word which is warm and inviting and which we always like to hear. You have already heard it; it is written above. You are very WELCOME to this issue of Mini Mag and the 41 issues which have preceded it and which are available on our website for you, free of charge or any kind of commitment, at

www.cefbookministry.com. Be sure to come back again and visit us, and we will do all we can to help you in your ministry to children.

As we FOCUS our thoughts more and more on Him, He will do one of two things. Either He will remove the problem, or more often, He will give you the strength to handle it, and not be depressed and upset by it.

NEXT MONTH WE WILL SEE EXAMPLES OF GOOD FOCUS IN THE BIBLE AND EXAMPLES OF GOOD FOCUS IN OUR LIVES TO-DAY.

As children's workers, we want and long for God's blessing upon our ministry. God has given us, in His Word, the information and guidance we need for that ministry. We have, in the earlier issues of Mini Mag, studied in much detail all the passages about children, and learned many helpful lessons. We then started, in more recent issues, a study of individual children in the Bible to see what lessons we could learn from them. We have studied 16 individual children plus three groups of children and have again been blessed and helped. There remains one more study to complete this series. We want to study THE MINISTRY OF THE LORD JESUS TO CHILDREN as revealed in God's Word.

1) Firstly the Lord Jesus taught, evangelised and ministered to MANY CHILDREN when He was speaking to, and teaching, multitudes of people. These groups generally included children-perhaps many children. For example, it is specifically recorded that the large groups of people which the Lord Jesus taught in Matthew 14:21 and Matthew 15:38 did not only include men and women but also children (PAIDION). We can imagine how children would always flock to crowds like these to hear what was being said, and



many would listen intently. We trust that God worked in many of their hearts in response.

The Lord Jesus also ministered spiritually to a group of children and infants brought to Him by a group of concerned adults (probably mothers). They asked Him to put His hands on them and pray, and, despite the objections of His disciples, He did so. He put His hands on them and blessed them. (Matthew 19:13-15)

2) Secondly the Lord Jesus ministered to children individually and physically. He healed a severely demon possessed Gentile girl (Matthew 15:22-28), a nobleman's son who was at the point of death, (John 4:46-54), a demon possessed boy (Mark 9:14-29), and He raised a dead twelve-year-old girl to life. (Mark 5:38-43) They were all completely healed. Can you imagine the thankful response there must have been from these four children, and from their parents! The Bible records that one of those children, as a result, trusted the Lord Jesus as his Saviour. We read in Mark 4:53 that the nobleman believed, and his whole household believed, which, of course, included the boy who was healed. There could have been other similar responses.

THE LORD JESUS, ONCE A CHILD, WANTS TO MEET THEIR NEEDS, AND WANTS THEM TO COME TO HIM.



KEY QUESTIONS ASKED

BY CHILDREN'S WORKERS

Question: How and where should we evangelize children? Part 2

Answer: We saw, last month, that the main responsibility for evangelising the children, in a village, town or any area lies, or should lie, with the local church. We also saw that the church can help fulfil that responsibility by inviting the local children into the Sunday School which the church has organised to give spiritual help to children. However, we also have found that most of the children attending this "school" on a Sunday are the church children, and that most of the local children are still unreached.

But there are at least three other well tried and approved ways of bringing the local children into the church to be taught the Scriptures.

1) **Holiday Bible Clubs** have been used by many churches and found to be very successful. A two-hour teaching programme is planned every morning or afternoon or evening for five consecutive weekdays. Many church members could be involved-inviting, bringing, organising, cooking and teaching. For the first hour, all the children are together and under key leadership they sing, learn a memory verse, listen to a Bible lesson, and have a Bible quiz. After a short break, they divide into age groups for the second hour, each group with a teacher from the church, to fill in worksheets and do craft work.

2) **A children's rally** in the church can be very exciting and effective. Once or twice a year a special speaker can be invited to challenge the children, a little music group from the young people in the church can take part, and a short DVD can be shown. If well-advertised, this could prove really successful.

3) **A special children's mission** can be organised in the church to run for five evenings, and if well and attractively prepared and widely advertised, many local children could be reached.

Last month's issue also emphasised that the church can go outside and reach children where they are. Two ways to do this were outlined last month—church members opening their home for a weekly Good News Club for the local children; and, in the summer, Five Day Clubs held each of five days in the open air and conducted by young people from the church. Several other projects outside the church could be considered as possible ways to reach the children.

1) **An annual camp** for one week would prove very popular to the children you want to reach.

2) **Distribute specially printed calendars.** Ask the principals of local schools if you could give all the children in each class an attractive scripture calendar for the year and also ask about the possibility of an after school Good News Club.

- It would be wonderful if your church had a full-time Youth and Children's Worker to organise all these programmes. But you can always ask CEF for help, for training and for materials.

- The ultimate goal of all these ministries is that children will be saved and that they will become members of the local church.

- I want to assure you that all the methods outlined last month, and this month are practical and possible, and proven. They are not "castles in the air". I personally have been involved with almost all of them.

FEEDING THE HUNGRY

We have been studying in recent issues of Mini Mag how we can help our saved children grow. They need to learn how to eat, how to walk, how to talk and how to obey. The Bible is a letter or book written by God which gives them spiritual food, spiritual guidance, spiritual language and spiritual attitudes. We must, first of all, show and teach our children that this Book contains the very words of God, written by men under His direction, that these words are completely true, and that they were written to help us become better Christians. Be sure therefore, in the early stages of your ministry, to explain what the Bible is, what it does and what they should do with it. There are several ways you can teach these truths about the Bible.

1) A very good way, and perhaps the best introductory way, is to prepare a set of 8 flashcards each of which has a short sentence about the Bible and these sentences should follow each other in a logical order. You could add appropriate pictures to the sentences if you wish to make them more interesting and even helpful. Here are eight such sentences. "Do you like to receive letters?" "The Bible is a letter from God to you" "All its words are God's words and are completely true." "it tells you how to have your sin forgiven, and have eternal life." "It tells you how to become a better and stronger Christian." "It tells you how to be happy in this sad world." "Do you have a Bible? Read it every day." "Obey what God tells you to do."



Or you could make up your own sentences. You could use these 8 flashcards to give you a good 20 minute lesson. Spend a little time on each flashcard and add extra thoughts or illustrations here and there.

2) You should know that we have produced a series of five lessons on "The Bible." They could be a great help for your ministry. They are available free of charge on our website www.cefbokministry.com.

3) You will find that there are Bible stories which could help you teach some truth about the Bible as you tell the story. For example, the story of the temptations of the Lord Jesus (Matthew 4:1-11) show the power of the Word of God against Satan. And in the story of Joshua's call to service in Joshua 1 you can explain God's promise that if Joshua read and obeyed God's word, his life and ministry would be successful.

4) Be sure to use and read from your Bible as you teach. This will show its importance to you and the children, but always handle it reverently.

5) In your club, get the children to learn key memory verses each week like Psalm 119:11 and explain them.

6) Encourage the children to bring their Bibles with them to club and have a competition each week to see who is the first to find the references you give.

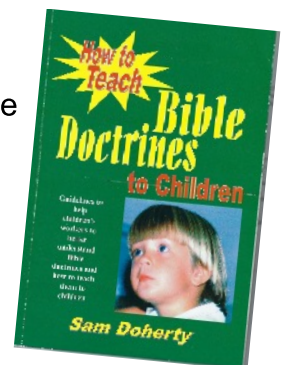
7) Encourage the children to read a few verses of the Bible daily on their own. You could give them a leaflet or booklet with a short, simple reading plan to be followed.



ACEW CAN HELP YOU

We all know the importance of teaching Bible truths to our children and not just telling Bible stories (although they do have a major part to play.) Three steps are necessary. We must understand these truths ourselves; we must believe them; and we must learn how to teach them in an interesting and attractive way. We have a book which will help you do all three. It was one of the earliest books we

published, and it has proved very popular (and helpful) all over the world. It is entitled "How to Teach Bible Doctrines to Children." We would strongly recommend you download it quite freely at our website: www.cefbokministry.com. It will help you understand and believe these truths for yourself. It will also give you ideas and methods for teaching them to your children.



Two illustrations of the Bible for children



THE BIBLE IS OUR GUIDEBOOK

1) A traveller was setting out on a long and dangerous journey over some mountains, and he was not sure about the way. So, he found a guide, someone who knew the way very well, and asked him to show him the way to go. His directions were a great help and he started off on his journey. Just then he heard a voice behind him. It was the guide. He had followed him and now he said, "Don't worry young man, just follow me." He not only showed him the way. He went before him and asked the traveller to follow him. And the traveller did so and reached his destination safe and well.

We are all on a journey. You could call it the journey of life. It is a long and sometimes dangerous journey, and we

really need help to know where we are going and how to get there. Our Guide, the Lord Jesus, wants to help us on our journey. So, He has given us a Book called the Bible which tells us our destination and how to get there safe and well; but He also comes with us and says "Follow Me."

2) A man was driving his car along the motorway. He came to where the road he wanted to follow turned off the motorway. He turned off but when he was about two miles down that road, he saw a sign which read "ROAD CLOSED. NO WAY THROUGH." He decided to ignore and disregard the sign, drove around it and drove on down the forbidden road. Three miles later the road ended at a broken bridge over a river, and he had to turn around and go back. When he came back to the sign which blocked the road, he read some words on the back of it which said "It really was closed. Wasn't it?" We need to be sure to heed God's warnings when we read them in His Word, the Bible, and when He tells us not to go in a certain direction, we should not do so. (It could have been worse for the car driver. He could have finished in the river!!!)

72 Years and Still Learning:

The author's experience and the lesson he learned

TAKE EVERY OPPORTUNITY

Many years ago, when I was working with CEF in Ireland, I received an invitation from a large church to be the speaker at a special children's service in their church. I was surprised to receive this invitation because I knew no-one in the church; and I was especially surprised because this church was liberal in their beliefs and not evangelical. But I gladly accepted the invitation. The "big day" came, and I was warmly welcomed. I had decided to use the Wordless Book, with its five colours, as the basis of what I would say to the children –the gold page (God), the black page (sin), the red page (the death of Christ), the white page (justification by trusting Christ) and the green page (growth).

The children listened very well (as did the adults). When I came to the end of my presentation, I did something I had never done before and have never done since. I said "We will close with prayer. If God has spoken to your heart and you want to trust the Lord Jesus as your Saviour, you can do so now as I pray." I started to pray "Dear Lord Jesus," and as I

hesitated a moment, a little voice, the voice of a boy, rang out all over the silent church "Dear Lord Jesus" he said, and that little voice continued to repeat all I prayed "I have sinned" ("I have sinned") "Thank you for dying for me." ("Thank you for dying for me.") "I ask you to come into my life and make me clean." ("I ask you to come into my life and make me clean.") "Thank you, Lord Jesus." ("Thank you, Lord Jesus") "Amen" ("Amen")

That was a very special blessing for me. I will never forget it. The church officials thanked me for coming and for speaking. I had no opportunity to meet that little boy that day, nor have I ever met him. But I can still hear his voice, and I trust that God has blessed him.

What did I learn from this experience? I learned that we should take every opportunity given to us by God to reach children. You never know what the result could be.

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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