



Assisting Children's Evangelists Worldwide

Devotional

In our recent devotionals, we have been seeking to find the biblical solution to the problems we often face in our lives and ministries. So often, we worry, and become sick when problems come, fall into depression and our health suffers. We have found that the simplest biblical answer is to FOCUS ON GOD the moment a problem arises, and not, as we usually do, on the problem itself. But we also found that the God we focus on should be a God Whom we know and understand. It is a recognised fact that many of us, as Christians,

THREE STEPS TO TAKE

He can solve our problem, that He knows what He is doing, and that He wants the very best for us. Why then should we worry? Can we not leave it with Him? Therefore, as we face up to the problems and challenges of modern life and service, there are three steps which God wants us to take -in chronological order.

1) HE WANTS US TO UNDERSTAND HIM more clearly, His attributes, and as He really is. Our first responsibility is to have, from His Word, a clear and correct concept of God and what He is really like.

2) HE WANTS US TO KNOW HIM MORE INTIMATELY on the basis of what we have understood about Him.

3) HE WANTS US TO FOCUS ON HIM in every situation.

We are now in a position, when problems come, to focus on the God whom we understand more clearly and are learning to know Him more personally. As a result, we will have peace. It does not necessarily mean that the problem is gone; but He gives us the grace we need to handle it without stress or worry. If you want to follow God's plan for solving problems, you need to realise that, for many of us, this is a new way of thinking and a new philosophy, and it will take time to make any changes which are necessary.

We can see in the Bible many men (and women) who had a clear vision and understanding of their God, who knew Him personally, and who focused on Him when troubled, and enjoyed peace. We have already seen, in Psalm 13, how David overcame his three problems when he focused on God, and God, in turn, reminded him that He was merciful, powerful and good and, as a result, David's peace and joy were restored. We see this understanding and knowledge of God, and their focus on Him, in the lives and ministry of godly men like Joseph (Genesis 45:4-8), Moses (Exodus 33:12-23) Nehemiah (Nehemiah 1: 5-11, 6:9), David (Psalm 36:5-10), Isaiah (Isaiah 26:3,4), Daniel (Daniel 9:1-19, 11:32), and Paul. (2 Corinthians 12:8-10)



We welcome you to the forty fourth issue of Mini Mag with the words of a beautiful and challenging poem by an unknown author:

*Some would gather money along
the path of life.
Some would gather roses and rest
from worldly strife.
BUT I would gather children from
among the thorns of sin.
I would seek a golden curl and a
freckled toothless grin.
For money cannot enter in the land
of endless day.
And roses that are gathered soon
will wilt along the way.
But, oh the laughing children as I
cross the sunset sea,
and the gates swing wide to
Heaven I can take them in with
me.*

This does not mean that they never had doubts and fears (as David did) but the tenor and goal of all their lives was to understand, know and focus on their great God.

MAY WE FOLLOW IN THEIR STEPS. MAY WE UNDERSTAND OUR GOD MORE CLEARLY, MAY WE LOVE OUR GOD MORE DEARLY, MAY WE FOCUS ON OUR GOD, AND FOLLOW HIM MORE NEARLY.

It is amazing how many isolated references there are to children in the Bible, and all these references teach us something about children and our ministry to them. But, first of all, we must find them. Last month we located 5 references in Exodus, Deuteronomy and Joshua, all of which emphasised the importance and effectiveness of using visual aids in our ministry to children, and our responsibility to answer the questions which they often ask. This month we will continue our search. I will give you the references, which you can look up in your Bible and I will share my suggestions concerning the lessons we can learn from them.

1) **2 Chronicles 36:9.** This is a remarkable verse because it states, both in the King James and New King James translations, that this boy, Jehoiachin, was only eight years old, and yet he did evil in the sight of the Lord. He only reigned for three months (2 Kings: 8,9). This verse reminds us that children are sinners, and that, if they have reached an age of accountability, and have rejected God's salvation, they will be under God's judgment.

(However, there is debate about his age. Other translations, such as the NIV say, "eighteen years old.")

2) **Joshua 8:34, 35.** These verses state that the whole nation, all the people, were assembled to hear the reading of the Law, and they specifically state that the little ones or children (TAPH) should be present. Both the blessings and the cursings of the Law were to be read, and therefore would be heard by the

children. This shows us that children should hear and be taught about sin and the judgment of God, and not just about His love. An understanding and conviction of sin is always the best preparation for the faith which leads to salvation.

3) **Joel 2:15-17** In response to God's call to the nation to repent and return to him, a sacred assembly was called to gather ALL the people together and give them the opportunity to hear God's word, to pray and especially to repent of their sin, and avoid judgement. These verses tell us that ALL were to be there, and it specifically states that all the children and even the babies should be present. The babies obviously could not repent but could still be influenced by the atmosphere. The older children who had sinned wilfully should repent along with all the others. The younger children could witness the repentance of the older ones, and this would help them understand the meaning of sin and repentance. Modern psychology would say "Leave the children out. This is no place for them". God says, "Bring them in, help them understand sin and repentance and encourage their participation."

These verses remind us of the fact that children have a sinful nature, that God judges sin, and that when they reach the age of accountability they need to repent and be saved. But they also show us the importance of preparing very young children for their future need to repent, by encouraging them to witness those who are doing so now.



KEY QUESTIONS ASKED

BY CHILDREN'S WORKERS

Question: How would you counsel several children who came at the same time to speak with you about how to receive the Lord Jesus?

Answer: The best solution is to have trained counsellors in your team to each of whom you would allocate a child for personal counselling. However, if you have no one to help you, here are some guidelines to help you in what is a wonderful, but not an ideal, situation. First, group all the children together and make sure everyone is quiet and attentive.

Step 1: Ask each child individually the first question "Why have you come to speak with me?" and listen carefully to the answers. If there are any who, you can see from their answer, are too young, or insincere, or curious or because they came with someone else, counsel them briefly as a group, tell them how important it is to trust the Lord Jesus, and that you will always be ready to help them when they are ready to do so—and then let them go.

Step 2. Ask each of those who remain the second question: "Have you ever sinned?" Bring together those who say they have never sinned and counsel them briefly together as children who don't understand, and tell them you are always ready to help them and let them go.

Step 3 Ask the children who are still there the third question: "Have you already trusted the Lord Jesus?"

Bring together those who say "Yes" and ask them to tell you about it. If you are reasonably certain they have, tell them they do not need to be saved again and that you will speak to them later. You could also suggest that they wait and listen while you counsel the children who are not saved.

Step 4 Counsel those who remain as unsaved children together as a group. This is not difficult when all are in the same group, and all have the same need. You can follow the counselling plan included in issue 43 of Mini Mag. If it is a large group, when you have completed your counselling, you can lead them in a prayer to trust the Lord Jesus which they can repeat after you.

Step 5 Talk to them, and the saved children you dealt with in the third step, about assurance of salvation.

This is not an ideal counselling situation. But you need to do something, and we have found, from experience, that these guidelines, while not perfect, are the best solution. This counselling takes time. You might want to ask a co-worker to let the parents of the children know they will come home later than usual. These outlines might seem complicated at first sight. But they can be easily followed, and do not forget that you will be greatly helped by the Holy Spirit Who will be working in their hearts and minds

Your Ministry to Children:

HOW TO TEACH ASSURANCE OF SALVATION



Last month we concluded that, if we wanted our saved children to grow spiritually, the first step is to teach them that their salvation is secure, and that they will never lose it. We also saw WHAT, WHY, WHERE and WHEN we should teach it. We need, now, this month, to think about HOW to teach it.

1) WITH FLASHCARDS I believe that the best way to teach assurance and security, is to prepare and use a simple logical flashcard presentation. A flashcard is a piece of light cardboard on which you have printed a short sentence and a picture which illustrates it. You need eight of these flashcards to enable you to teach your lesson in a logical but interesting way. You would show them, one by one, as you teach, explaining the sentence and picture with added comments where appropriate. Here is an example of eight sentences you could use for one such lesson on assurance. 1) Have you ever broken a promise you have made? 2) God never breaks any of the promises He has made in the Bible. 3) God promised He would open a way through the Red Sea and He did. 4) God promised to raise the Lord Jesus from the dead, and He did. 5) God promised that everyone who trusted the Lord Jesus would receive EVERLASTING LIFE. And they do. 6) If you have trusted Him God promises that you will live for ever. 7) You cannot lose EVERLASTING LIFE no matter what happens. 8) A change in your life will also help you to be SURE that you are saved.

2) THROUGH YOUR BIBLE LESSONS. You can teach assurance of salvation in many of the exciting Bible lessons you teach. It could often be the central truth of your lesson and allow you to teach it thoroughly and attractively throughout the lesson. Here are three examples of lessons you could use in

this way;

➤ God promised Noah that He would keep him and his family safe when the flood came; and He did:

➤ God promised Joshua that He would conquer and occupy Jericho, and He did.

➤ The Lord Jesus promised that He would raise Lazarus from the dead, and He did.

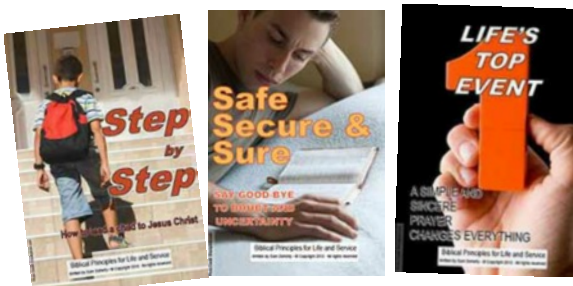
3) THROUGH THE SINGING AND EXPLANATION OF CHORUSES Children can learn and understand truths when they sing about them. But it is necessary for you to take time to explain what these choruses mean. There are several choruses which give an opportunity to speak about assurance of salvation such as "My God is so big and so strong and so mighty there's nothing my God cannot do" or "The B-I-B-L-E Yes that's the book for me. I stand alone on the Word of God, the B-I-B-L-E."

4) THE MEMORISATION OF KEY BIBLE VERSES

This is a wonderful way to encourage a belief in the assurance of salvation. If children learn by repetition verses like John 3:16, John 3:36a, John 10:38, Romans 10:13 or Revelation 3:20 accompanied by your brief explanation, they can understand the truth of assurance. These verses are the pure Word of God, and we know that it will "never return unto Him void" (Isaiah 55:11)



ACEW CAN HELP YOU



Did you know that we have produced a series of fifty-one 8-page booklets which deal with the subjects which affect the life and ministry of every Christian and especially every children's worker? There are several which will give you more information and help on the subjects in this issue of Mini Mag. For example, you will get much more help about counselling children in the booklet "Step by Step", which shows how to counsel unsaved children and, in the booklet, "Helping Christian Children in Need Part 1" which shows how to counsel saved children. Another booklet "Life's Top Event" gives much help and instruction about salvation. You will find the booklet "Safe, Secure and Sure" a great help on the subject of assurance of salvation. You can download these booklets free of charge at our website www.cefbookministry.com for your own use; but you could also download a supply to give to your co-workers.



SAFE, SECURE AND SURE

1. The little girl looked at the old lady who sat opposite her in the train and felt so sorry for her. She looked so worried and nervous. Suddenly the train entered a tunnel with a wild squeal and the old lady cried “Oh dear.” She was trembling. The child pressed close to her and looking up at her in the dim light of the lamp, she said “You don’t need to be afraid. My father is the driver of this train, and he won’t let any hurt happen to me.” She trusted her father to keep her safe and secure. How much more can we who know the Lord Jesus as our Saviour trust our heavenly Father Who is faithful, and Who loves us and cares for us at all times. He will never let us down. He will always look after us and keep us safe right through to the end of our life’s journey, --no matter what happens.

2. Matt kicked his football too hard, and he broke a window in his home. His father was not pleased with him and told him so. But Matt was still his father’s son. He was still a

member of his family. His friendship with his father was not so good, but he was still his father, and his father forgave him when he said he was sorry. If you have trusted the Lord Jesus as your Saviour, and you have decided to turn from sin, you do not want to sin, to tell lies or lose your temper. If you do, your heavenly Father will not be pleased with you, but you are still His child. You are still a member of His family. Your friendship with God is not so good, when you sin, but He will always be your Father and He will always forgive you when you ask Him to do so.

3. Have you ever seen a birth certificate? Here is one. It is mine. It tells me when and where I was born and who my parents are. This is proof of my birth. No one can deny it. It will always be true no matter what happens. If you have trusted the Lord Jesus as your Saviour, you have been born again and this book, the Bible, is your second birth certificate. When and where did this new birth take place? The Bible says that you were born the second time and received everlasting life when you trusted Jesus Christ as your Saviour (John 3:16). It also says that, at the same time and in the same place where you received the Lord Jesus, God became your heavenly Father. (John 1:12). Your new birth is recorded here, and for ever, in the Lamb’s Book of Life. Don’t doubt it. It is absolutely sure. No one can ever deny it—not even yourself.

72 Years and Still Learning:

The author’s experience and the lesson he learned

NUMBERS DON’T COUNT

God is interested in the ones and twos. This is a lesson we need to learn in our training ministry. We would like to see scores, even hundreds, come to our training programmes; but sometimes the opposite happens, and, if we have done everything we can to attract them, we should not become discouraged.

It was to be the first training class I had ever held in one of the bigger towns in Northern Ireland. I prepared thoroughly for it during the weeks which preceded it. I booked a hall which would seat 60 or 70 people. I contacted every church and Christian group in the area about this training class which would be held every Monday evening for ten weeks. I even put a notice about it in the local newspaper. I went to the first class with great excitement and expectation only to discover that only two ladies were present. They looked so isolated in that big hall. However, we proceeded with the class that evening and the following nine weeks, just as if there were 60 or 70 present. Several others came and went

from time to time, during those ten weeks, but those two ladies never missed a class.

Miss Annie Cross was one of those two ladies who attended every week. She became interested in the work of Child Evangelism Fellowship: and soon after that, she became the first full-time CEF worker in Ireland. It’s not often that one half of those who attend our training classes come into the work full-time!!! God blessed her ministry in a wonderful way over the many years which followed, and she played a big part in the growth of CEF in Ireland. To-day there are almost 70 full-time workers with Irish Child Evangelism Fellowship.

Do not be discouraged if the numbers who attend your training classes are small. God’s emphasis is on quality not quantity. Remember that the Lord Jesus had only twelve “students” who “attended His training classes” over a period of 3 years and look at what He did through eleven of them.

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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