

THE CHURCH IN NEW YORK CITY CHILDREN'S MEETING LESSON

DATE: January 27, 2019

SUBJECT: HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS: GOD FEARERS (2 of 2) - The Importance of Fearing God

SCRIPTURES: Daniel 3:1-30; Daniel 4:28-37; Daniel 5:1-31; Daniel 6:1-28

AIM: To lead the children to develop an appropriate fear of God, to understand that God protects and blesses those who fear Him, and brings consequences upon those who do not.

MEMORY VERSES: Psalms 103:11 (For as high as the heavens are above the earth, So great is His lovingkindness upon those who fear Him.); Proverbs 14:27 (The fear of Jehovah is a fountain of life, That one may turn aside from the snares of death.); Daniel 4:34b (I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honored the ever-living One; For His dominion is an eternal dominion, And His kingdom is from generation to generation.); Proverbs 3:7b (Fear Jehovah, and depart from evil.); 1 Peter 1:17 (And if you call as Father the One who without respect of persons judges according to each one's work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear.); Romans 8:28 (And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.)

SUGGESTED SONGS: 9313 *Bible Story Songs Daniel #13* (Our God is Living); 9314 *BSS Daniel #14* (We will Not, Not, Not); 9317 *BSS Daniel #17* (On Top of My Palace); 2829 (Honor and Respect for Authority); 7621 (Who Will You Listen To); 4 (Be Careful What You Do); 10 (Inside Me); 11 (Oh, Be Careful); 65 (God's Word); 69 (Thy Word Have I Hid In My Heart); 192 (We are Different)

CRAFT IDEA: Make an origami lion. The children can "shut the lion's mouth" like the lions in the den. Bible verses are printed on the inside, similar to the "fortune teller" origami that many children like to make. The craft directions and a pre-made printable template is available at <http://ministryark.com/craft/lion-origami-bible-craft/>, or we can design our own if we want to add other Bible verses.



BACKGROUND AND PERSPECTIVE: *Note - we do not need to share this with the children, but it may be helpful for us as serving ones to understand the importance of fearing God.* Since most of the children have not yet known the conviction of the Spirit concerning sin nor been regenerated, our teaching is to help prepare them for salvation by leading them to be "God-fearers". In the New Testament, we see Cornelius was "...devout and one who feared God with all his household..." (Acts 10:2) before his salvation. To be a God-fearer is halfway to salvation. When one has the proper fear of God, the Spirit has the ground to come to convict them and lead them into the reality. The fear of God, expressed through proper morals and relationships, preserves the children's human vessels from the corruption of this present evil age until Christ comes to fill it with Himself.

CONTENT: Last week we saw some examples of God fearers—the Hebrew midwives, Daniel, and Peter and the apostles. Their proper attitude of respect and fear toward God controlled their conduct. The choices they made were based on their knowledge of God as their Creator, His preeminence above all things, that He would one day be their Judge, and their desire to please Him.

In fact, the name "Daniel" means "God is my Judge". Daniel and his companions were ones who feared God and allowed Him to be the Judge of all of their actions. Some accounts from the book of Daniel show how God protected and blessed those that fear Him, and also the consequences faced by those who did not. *Note to serving ones: We should not cover all the examples below. Please consider the age group of the children you are serving, and select just one or a few examples as appropriate.*

Hananiah, Azariah and Mishael (Daniel 3). The children of Israel were in captivity in Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, had made a massive statue of gold about 90 feet tall. He sent word

to all the leaders to come to the dedication ceremony, and a herald proclaimed loudly the king's commandment. At the sound of the music, everyone was required to fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. Whoever did not fall down and worship would be thrown into a blazing furnace of fire. So when all the people heard the music, they bowed down as commanded, but three of the children of Israel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah (referred to in the story by their Babylonian names, Shedrach, Meshach and Abed-nego), who were companions of Daniel, stayed standing.

When the king found out that they had disobeyed his command, he was furious! He commanded that the three men be brought to him. And he questioned them and threatened them with the fiery consequences of not bowing down. But Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah answered the king in a way showing that they had the utmost fear and respect for God. They could not obey the king's command to bow down to an idol. "O Nebuchadnezzar, there is no need for us to give you an answer in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the blazing furnace of fire, and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods nor worship the golden image that you have set up." (Daniel 3:16-19). Nebuchadnezzar was so furious that he commanded the furnace be made seven times hotter. Though they were ready to die standing for what was right before the Lord, eventually they came out of the furnace completely unharmed without even the smell of fire.

King Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4:28-37). God allowed Nebuchadnezzar to conquer the children of Israel because of their sinful and idolatrous ways. Through his dealings with Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, Nebuchadnezzar gained some understanding of God's power and sovereignty (Daniel 3:28-30, 4:2). However, Nebuchadnezzar eventually became proud and cast off all fear of God, saying "Is this not Babylon the great, which I have built up as a royal house by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?" As soon as he said this, while the words were still in his mouth, a voice came from heaven, saying "King Nebuchadnezzar: The kingdom has passed on from you." God judged King Nebuchadnezzar causing him to lose his sanity and his kingdom. He was cast out from human civilization, even living as an animal for a period of time. Eventually, Nebuchadnezzar regained his reason and acknowledged the sovereignty of God and honored Him: "I praised and honored the ever-living One; For His dominion is an eternal dominion, And His kingdom is from generation to generation; And all the inhabitants of the earth are considered as nothing, But He does according to His will...and there is no one who can resist His hand..." (Daniel 4:34-35)

Daniel (Daniel 6:1-28). Daniel was also one who feared God at the risk of his life. Daniel was one of the leaders in government under King Darius, and Daniel was excellent, distinguishing himself among the chief ministers and satraps. He was so good that the king considered setting Daniel over the whole kingdom. In order to "trap" Daniel because of their jealousy, the chief ministers and satraps came up with an idea. They knew he prayed to God every day, so they tricked King Darius into signing a law that said within the next thirty days, anyone who prayed to any god or man besides the king himself, would be cast into a lions' den. But Daniel feared God more than man. When he found out about that law, he went to his house with his windows opened toward Jerusalem, knelt and prayed and gave thanks to God, three times daily, just like he did before the king's new law. So Daniel was caught breaking the law and thrown into the lions' den. He risked his own life doing what He knew was right in God's eyes. He was saved because God sent His angel to shut the lions' mouths. The next day, the king commanded that Daniel be taken out of the lions' den and that the men who accused him be thrown in instead. King Darius even made a law that in all his kingdom, men would tremble and fear the God of Daniel. "For He is the living God and enduring forever; And His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed, And His dominion will be unto the end. He delivers and rescues, And He does signs and wonders In heaven and on earth; It is He who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions." (Daniel 6:26-27)

King Belshazzar (Daniel 5). Belshazzar was a descendent of Nebuchadnezzar. One day he had a party where he mocked the children of Israel and dishonored God by using the vessels he captured from the temple for food and drink. God judged Belshazzar: “At that moment, the fingers of a man’s hand came forth and wrote...upon the plaster of the wall of the king’s palace” (Daniel 5:5). No one could understand what the writing said except for Daniel. Daniel explained that even though Belshazzar knew that his forefather Nebuchadnezzar had been judged for dishonoring God, Belshazzar had not learned the same lesson, and in fact further dishonored God: “But you have exalted yourself against the Lord of the heavens; and they have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your lords, your wives, and your concubines have drunk wine from them; and you have praised the gods of silver and of gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone, which do not see nor hear nor know. But the God in whose hand is your breath and to whom all your ways belong, you have not honored” (Daniel 5:23). Daniel interpreted the writing on the wall to mean that God had judged Belshazzar: “*MENE* - God has numbered your kingdom and brought it to an end; *TEKEL* - You have been weight in the scales and found lacking. *PERES* - Your kingdom has been divided and given to the Medes and Persians.” On that same night, Belshazzar was slain, and his kingdom was inherited by King Darius the Mede.

SUGGESTED APPLICATIONS TO CHOOSE FROM: *Please pray and fellowship over which applications to cover. Please do not try to cover all the applications. It is sufficient to cover just **one or two applications** which are appropriate for the age group of the children you are serving.*

- **We should be those who fear God.** We should have a proper fear of God. He is our Creator and the highest authority in the universe. He is omniscient (all-knowing), omnipresent (ever present) and omnipotent (all-powerful). In the world we are in now, many do not fear God. They seem to do whatever they want, even openly and proudly sinning, and speak whatever they feel like. We need to be warned. God’s love is so great and vast, but we need to also realize He is a righteous God. We should know Him through His Word so that we do not sin against Him. If we do sin, we should repent and confess our sins.
- **We should learn to follow our conscience.** God is our Judge. Very often, He speaks to us in our conscience, telling us what is right and wrong. Very often, He reminds us of what we have read in the Bible, have been taught by our parents, or have learned in the children’s meeting. We should always obey our conscience because that is one of the primary ways God speaks to us.
- **To fear God is to recognize His sovereignty in all things.** God is the One ruling all things from the heavens. We should accept that each relationship is arranged by God according to His plan for us. Sometimes we might criticize our parents, and even wish someone else’s parents were ours. We must realize that our parents were selected by God to bring us into this world and to raise us, train us and mold us. God also arranged for us to be born in our particular family. He chose each of our siblings, and decided whether we would be the firstborn, the second born or the only child. God arranged for us to have a relationship with each member of our family.

Adapted from the Church in New York City Children’s Meeting lessons, 1/18/98; 1/20/02; 1/27/02; 1/27/08. Craft source acknowledgement: <http://ministryark.com/craft/lion-origami-bible-craft/>