

Lesson 57

TEXT Daniel 6:1-28

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURE Psalm 118:4-14

OBJECTIVE The students will recognize that virtue includes moral excellence and spiritual fortitude. They will realize that it takes courage to be able to stand for the things they know are right.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. — 2 Timothy 2:1

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. — 1 Corinthians 15:58

ANSWER TITLE: **The Importance of Saying No**
SEARCH TITLE: **Virtue**

REFERENCE INFORMATION

Daniel had been a high officer of the Babylonian Empire throughout its whole seventy years. Though now a very old man, probably over ninety, Darius the conqueror of Babylon immediately placed Daniel in charge of the Babylonian government. What a compliment to his wisdom and integrity! Yet he was unswerving in his personal devotion to his own God. What faith! What courage!

The historical authenticity of Daniel the prophet is confirmed, both by the words of Christ in Matthew 24:15 and

by references to his righteousness and wisdom, as witnessed by his prophetic contemporary Ezekiel. See Ezekiel 14:14,20 and 28:3. Modern critics have attempted to relate the latter passages to a mythological Daniel of legend. Those, however, who stand committed to the truth of Scripture, find in Daniel a timeless demonstration of separation from impurity, of courage against compromise, of efficacy in prayer, and dedication to Him whose "kingdom is from generation to generation" (Daniel 4:34).

YOUR OPENER

Virtue

TEXT: Daniel 6:1-28

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURE: Psalm 118:4-14

KEY VERSE: Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

— 1 Corinthians 15:58

RESPONSES

1. Allow students to respond, guiding the discussion toward the thought that Daniel’s life was a positive testimony of his faith in God (Daniel 2:23). Because he stood for all that was morally and spiritually right (Daniel 1:8), he was known to have an “excellent spirit.” Ask the class to discuss the importance of a starting point in one’s Christian experience, that place where faith was embraced. How does one build on that experience?

2. Direct the class discussion to the fourth verse of the text: “they could find none occasion nor fault . . . neither was there any error or fault found in him.” Daniel was showing spiritual fortitude in maintaining a godly life before all men. Ask the students to explain the importance of living (not just talking about) a virtuous life. Their comments should bring out that one’s testimony is at stake.

3. The word *faithful* denotes Daniel’s consistency in courageously standing for what he knew was right. Help the students to realize that the key to developing virtue is to be unwavering in one’s stand for what is ethically correct. Ask the class to cite some hypothetical examples, exploring the results of a consistent versus an inconsistent stand for right. Be prepared with an example or two if needed.

4. Allow the class to develop the thought that there are no “extremes” when it comes to maintaining one’s virtue before God and man. There is never an excuse to yield to sin, even in the face of adversity and danger. Help the students to realize that when they stand for what is right, they don’t have to stand alone or in their own strength. God has promised to be with them and to be their strength. See Psalms 29:11; 118:6.

The Apostle Peter adds virtue to the foundation of faith (2 Peter 1:5). Virtue is the quality that will help the Christian stand for what is morally and spiritually right. The word *virtue* as used in our text means, “all moral excellence, especially courage and spiritual fortitude.” A person must stand for the faith that he embraced at salvation by showing forth the courage to do what is right.

1. Explain what is meant by the portion of today’s text about Daniel which states that “an excellent spirit was in him.”

2. Show evidence of how Daniel’s life exemplified virtue.

3. Explain how the word *faithful* in verse 4 of the text relates to virtue.

4. Daniel maintained his spiritual fortitude even when doing so meant possible death. Does God expect Christians today to go to such extremes? Explain. See Revelation 2:10.

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ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

5. Entrapment was used against Daniel. How might this device be used by the devil against a Christian today?

6. List ways in which God assisted Daniel because he maintained his spiritual fortitude.

7. List some ways in which Christians will be blessed when they maintain their virtue at all times.

8. Using Daniel's success as an example, how might standing fearlessly for the things that are spiritually right affect the lives of those a Christian comes into contact with?

5. The devil will try to entrap people in their own minds through doubts and accusations. A Christian might become a target for entrapment by sinners as a way for them to prove that the Christian is no better than they. Ask the class how they can best avoid entrapment. Emphasize the importance of consistently maintaining one's virtue and avoiding questionable situations as ways of avoiding the traps of the devil. See 1 Thessalonians 5:22; and James 4:7.

6. Responses may include: Daniel was protected from the lions (verse 22); he remained in favor with the king (verse 23); his God was lifted up (verses 26,27); and he prospered (verse 28).

7. The students' responses may include: They will receive help from God in times of trouble (Psalm 46:1). They will abound and be fruitful (2 Peter 1:8). They will have right to the tree of life (Revelation 22:14). Others will be able to see Jesus through their lives (2 Corinthians 3:2). As a follow-up to the responses given, ask the students to contrast these blessings to the effects of not standing courageously for the right (in both Daniel's case and the Christian's life today).

8. Students will see that just as Daniel influenced many lives as he stood true and continued to do what was right at all times, so will a person who faithfully stands for God today. Because of Daniel's consistency, the king recognized that God was the true and living God. Because he was victorious, his enemies were defeated, and all the people in the kingdom of Babylon were able to pray to the true God. Summarize the lesson with the thought that if Christians always courageously stand true to their convictions, even in the face of adverse circumstances, God will use their lives as testimonies to the world. Others will be able to see that God has the ability to keep a person living victoriously in this world. Best of all, eternal life will be their ultimate reward.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

Discuss some other Bible characters who added to their faith virtue and courage, and stood for what they knew was right in the face of opposition. Examples: two of the spies Moses sent to “spy out the land”; Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego; Peter; Paul.

What are some of the characteristics that made Daniel an outstanding man?

What do you know about the life of Daniel that would indicate he early exhibited prayerfulness, faithfulness, courage, and moral responsibility?

If you don't have a high position like Daniel, do you think it is important to cultivate these attributes? Explain.

How may we relate the circumstances of our lives, and the need for these same moral characteristics, to the times and circumstances in which Daniel lived? Can these attributes be so very important in ordinary, everyday life? Explain.

What would indicate that King Darius respected the God of Daniel? before Daniel was cast to the lions? afterwards?

In our ANSWER story, what problem did T.J. face at school?

Explain how the situations at school, on the job, or under some of the oppressive forms of government in our day, take the same kind of courage and faith that Daniel displayed in his times of trial.

Do you think that our attitude in facing trials, whether courageous or complaining, could have an effect on those around us? Explain.

THINGS TO DO

Bring a box of toothpicks to class, and a figure of a person cut from paper. Explain that the paper figure represents a new Christian. He is whole and complete, but he isn't too strong yet. (He can easily be bent, turned, folded, etc.) The toothpicks represent each chance he has to take a stand for Christ or do what he knows is right, even in the face of opposition. Describe some trials or tests that may come his way, adding a toothpick against the back of the paper figure for each time he withstands. Describe how our spiritual fortitude and courage is strengthened a little each time we do right. Conclude by showing how difficult it is to break the number of toothpicks you have accumulated when they are all together.

On your chalkboard, draw a figure of a person with an empty speech balloon above it. Have a list prepared of

hypothetical situations where a Christian might need to take a stand for the right. Read the situations one at a time and allow your students to suggest responses which could be written in the speech balloon.

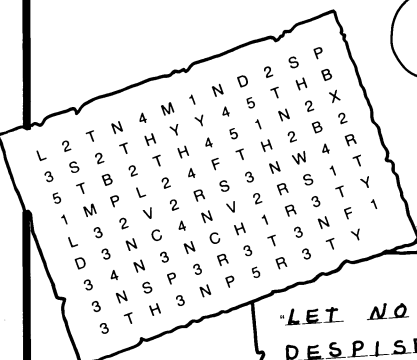
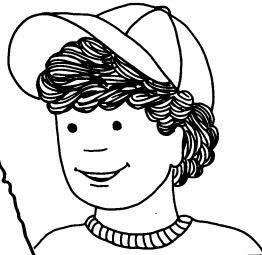
Bring to class some “Slime” (a commercial product which comes in a container and is sold as a child's toy). Let the children watch it ooze through your fingers. Compare it to a person who doesn't stand up for what he knows is right. As Christians, we must have courage to take a stand no matter what others around us do.


Explain to your class that although we will probably never have to face a den of lions, we probably will have to face some situations in life which may cause us to feel afraid. But God will be with us, just as He was with Daniel. Pass out pieces of paper cut in the shape of a lion. A pattern can be found in Primary Pals, lesson 8d. Ask each student to write on one side of the lion a situation where he might be tested. Collect the lions and redistribute them. Then ask the students to read what is written on the lion they now have, and then write on the reverse side how they should respond. Discuss the situations and responses together.

Answers for ANSWER

A Challenge for You

Paul wrote Timothy some good advice which applies to us also. To find out the advice, decode the message. Write the first L on the first blank line below and continue to write the letters in the order given. When you come to any numbers remember that they represent letters (1 - A, 2 - E, 3 - I, 4 - O, 5 - U). Change them back to the correct letters so you can read the entire verse.



LET NO MAN
DESPISE THY
YOUTH; BUT BE THOU
AN EXAMPLE OF THE
BELIEVERS, IN WORD,
IN CONVERSATION,
IN CHARITY, IN
SPIRIT, IN FAITH,
IN PURITY.

1 Timothy 4:12