

Lesson 77

TEXT 1 Kings 19:19-21; Matthew 10:37-42

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES Exodus 35:29; Isaiah 1:19; 2 Corinthians 8:12

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to describe Elisha’s call and will understand that our service to God should be offered with a willing and uncomplaining spirit.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men. — Colossians 3:23

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest. — Ecclesiastes 9:10

ANSWER TITLE: **A Willing Helper**
SEARCH TITLE: **Elisha**

Reference Information

Elisha was a disciple and successor of Elijah; he held the prophetic office for 55 years. At Horeb God directed Elijah to anoint Elisha who was to aid Israel in taking vengeance on the enemies of God. Elijah left Horeb and on his way north found Elisha plowing with twelve yoke of oxen. (The number of oxen indicated the wealth of the family.) Elijah cast his mantle on Elisha, who understood the significance of the act. He was chosen to succeed the older prophet.

Elisha was like his teacher in many ways. Both men parted the waters of Jordan, brought rain in times of

drought, increased a widow’s supply of food, raised a boy from the dead, pronounced doom upon kings, and destroyed their enemies with supernatural power. But the “double portion” Elisha received, no doubt, accounted for many of the differences between them. While Elijah fell under times of depression, Elisha had an attitude of triumph and confidence. He never seemed to complain or lose courage. The Scriptures show that he performed more miracles than any other prophet of the Old Testament.

The name *Elisha* means “God is Savior.”

YOUR OPENER

Elisha

TEXT: 1 Kings 19:19-21; Matthew 10:37-42

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: Exodus 35:29; Isaiah 1:19; 2 Corinthians 8:12

KEY VERSE: Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest. — Ecclesiastes 9:10

RESPONSES

1. He cast his mantle on Elisha. As the students give the answer, help them realize this was the "call of God" on Elisha's life. Ask students to list ways that God calls Christians to service today.

2. He told him to go back, asking, "What have I done to thee?" Elijah's response might have caused some to feel a rejection. But Elijah's reaction was only to test the depth of Elisha's response. No doubt the human reaction would have been to feel "rebuffed." Does a Christian ever run into obstacles while answering God's call? Bring out that sometimes God allows obstacles to test our willingness and determination.

3. The students will see in Elisha's "burning his bridges" behind him (burning the plow, sacrificing the oxen, saying goodbye to the family), and his willingness to be a servant, that this is the attitude they should have today. They must be willing to give up material things, and consecrate their present and future to God.

4. Have different ones read their remarks, then discuss in depth what it means to give all to the Lord and what results may be if one does this. You may wish to develop the thought that the results may not always be immediate benefits in an outward or material sense. Elisha filled a humble place of service, perhaps for as much as ten years, after he left his home and family.

In the first portion of our text we see the willingness of Elisha to follow the man of God, Elijah. Elisha burned his plow, made a sacrifice of his oxen, said goodbye to the family, and was on his way. Let's take a look at how important it is to have a willing and uncomplaining spirit in the service of God.

1. What did Elijah do when he passed by Elisha? What was the significance of this?

2. How did Elijah respond when Elisha followed after him? What would the natural human reaction be to the response Elijah gave?

3. Elisha proved his willingness by his actions. What were these actions? What do they tell us about how we should respond to God's call for service?

4. Paraphrase Matthew 10:38-40.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

5. What was Moses willing to give up and what was he willing to do? For what reason? See Hebrews 11:24-26.

6. What was Ruth willing to do to serve the Lord? See Ruth 1:15-17.

7. What do you think is most important in our service to the Lord?

8. We not only need to be willing in our service but also uncomplaining in our attitude. The Children of Israel often complained in the wilderness. What does it mean to be uncomplaining, and why is it so necessary?

9. There are rewards connected with service for the Lord. What does Isaiah 1:19 tell us about this?

10. How do our attitudes toward God's service affect those around us? See Colossians 3:23.

5. Moses gave up the pleasures, prestige, and power of Egypt, to be counted as one of God's chosen people, and to be in a position to help their plight. The students will ascertain the final results of giving up temporal things of life. Even having to go through hardship is nothing compared to the reward that awaits the one who is true and faithful.

6. Help the students recognize the determination in Ruth's heart to make the sacrifice of leaving all, including her home. Ask students if the same type of commitment Ruth made is ever required of people today.

7. Answers to this question could go in several different ways. As different answers are given, help your class realize that "willingness" is a vital factor in acceptable service to God. Unless one is willing, he will not even make the initial step of responding to God's call. Furthermore, if one is engaged in doing service for the Lord but does so unwillingly, he is in danger of losing his reward (1 Corinthians 9:17). See also 1 Peter 5:2-4.

8. To be uncomplaining is to show our willingness. A person may have accomplished a task, but if he did so with a complaining attitude, he was actually unwilling. Ask the class if a person can complain and still receive the blessing. The class can be shown that to complain about their service to God is to lose the blessing they could have received.

9. Ask for a volunteer to read the Scripture, and relate this to the aspects of service mentioned in verse 17. Students will know the Lord recognizes willing service, and gives rewards. But also, as in verse 20, the result of refusing is eternal damnation.

10. Help your class see that those around them can recognize a service that is done willingly and heartily unto the Lord. What is their responsibility? Conclude your lesson by discussing how they can guard against causing someone else to be discouraged in the Lord's work.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

How do everyday duties prepare us to do greater things for Christ?

Why is it important to do our everyday duties efficiently and neatly?

From the ANSWER story, what valuable lesson did Sam learn from his Uncle Bill in regard to doing his homework? What lesson can we learn from this story?

Who was Elijah? What was the “mantle” he cast upon Elisha?

What was implied by Elijah’s action? Was he merely looking for a manservant?

What did Elisha leave behind when he went to follow Elijah?

Are people today ever called upon to leave their homes to follow the Lord? Explain.

Is there any service to God that does not entail some sacrifice? Explain.

How might one’s commitment to God affect others? Does this sometimes bring opposition? Explain.

What examples in the lesson indicate that “working for the Lord” may include some very small, seemingly unimportant acts?

As long as you do what you are asked to do, does it matter whether you wanted to or not?

How important is attitude and faithfulness in the work of the Lord?

THINGS TO DO

Make a list of things that we can do for the Lord at home, on the job, or at school. We know that we can’t do them all, but have the students circle ONE that they will try to work on this week, and report next week how it went.

How does what we do for the Lord at church affect others? Describe what a Sunday morning service would be like if . . .

- the pastor stayed home.
- the usher refused to attend the door.
- the violin players played the horns.
- the janitor went on a strike.
- you didn’t show up.

Work may sometimes be considered too hard or too heavy. Fill a shopping bag (with two handles) with heavy

objects and label each one with a task: chores, homework, music practice, etc. Have one of the students try to carry this heavy bag by himself, then help him by taking one of the handles to show him that the load is no longer heavy. Show the class that Jesus shares our loads.

Make a mini “trivia” game for your class, with questions concerning various duties around your Sunday school. Some questions might be: Who teaches the fourth grade boys? Who leads the singing? Who gave the review last Sunday? Then discuss what would happen to your Sunday school if these people had not been willing to perform these duties. Stress the importance of being willing to do whatever God calls us to do.

Bring a toolbox to class, with a number of tools in it. Explain that these are all good tools, capable of accomplishing the job they were designed to do—but someone must use them to make them effective. The worker must be willing. Then pick up the tools one at a time. Have taped to each tool something one could do for the Lord: for example, pray for one in need, sing in the youth choir, testify. As each tool is examined and the message read, reinforce the thought that the worker must be willing to use each of these tools.

Answers for ANSWER

Are You Willing?

Read each statement and decide what your reaction is. Color the happy face if it is willing. Color the sad face if it is complaining.

If I react like this . . .	my service is . . .
It’s my night to wash dishes again. Why do I always have to do them?	
I’m going to finish my homework as best I can because I want to please the Lord.	
There goes my Sunday school teacher. I’d better run to ask her if I can help with the lesson for next week!	
Boy, I can’t wait to finish raking the yard. Maybe I’ll just hide the leaves under the bushes. No one will ever know.	
Well, I’m going to offer to do a song for next Sunday because I love to do the Lord’s work.	

Write the Key Verse for this week on the blank lines. Unscramble the circled letters to complete the statement below. The last letter is already in place.

**AND WHATSOEVER YE DO, DO IT
HEARTILIY AS TO THE LORD
AND NOT UNTO MEN. Colossians 3:23**

I am **WILLING**, Lord!