

The Old Hickory

Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

841 Old Hickory Blvd.

Jackson, TN 38305

(731) 668-1794

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Go Tell A Story

Berry Kercheville

AFTER TWENTY-SIX YEARS OF PREACHING I thought I hit the big-time. It was something I thought I would never attain to, beyond the reach of most modern males. For one ten-week period of time I was given my own Wednesday night first grade class. Well, actually it was my wife's first grade class and she invited me to come in and help teach. The class was studying the Old Testament and my job was to tell the appointed story in such a way that the kids would remember some of the great lessons from the law and the prophets. My wife had informed me that over the years many teachers simply read the story to the children out of a lesson book and that the children usually fidgeted and were bored. I needed to find a method of teaching that would bring God's word to life in little minds.

I tried to remember when I was this age and what turned me on toward God. My father loved to tell a Bible story. He would paint the scene with such graphic words and animation that we could feel the thunderous sound from the falling of the walls of Jericho. I had been practicing this same technique on my own children and now it was time to try it out on a bigger group. As the children filed into the classroom it was amusing to see their amazed looks. "You are going to be our teacher." a child exclaimed in shock. One shy little girl had to be pushed and coaxed in by her mother. I could barely hear her words uttered through clinched teeth, and lips that didn't move, "But it's

the preacher!" Actually, I think the mother was as concerned as her daughter. Now I was becoming apprehensive. "I hope these kids don't freak out," I thought. But as the lesson unfolded I could see their eyes brighten just as mine had done so many years before when my father had told me these same stories.

Some Observations:

1. There is a very small window of opportunity to teach our children about the Lord. If Bible lessons and stories have not been made a major item in their lives by their ninth birthday, other interests (sports, video games, etc.) virtually crowd out any thoughts of God. It was sad to see many children who were hearing some of the most basic Bible stories for the first time. It was obvious during question periods that their parents rarely if ever worked on teaching them about God's word. Moses had said, "*You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up*" (Deut 6:7). When Israel did not do this, "*another generation arose who did not know the Lord.*" Unfortunately, many parents are shirking their responsibility, expecting the church to do what is required of them.

2. *Fathers* need to be telling these stories to their children. When men speak with interest about spiritual things, children learn that faith in God is even for the big and strong. Paul Faulkner, in his book *Achieving Success Without Failing Your Family*, reports that if both father and mother go to church, seventy-two percent of the children will go when they are grown. If only the father goes, that figure drops slightly to 55 percent. But if only the mother goes to church, only 15 percent of those children will go when they are grown. It is any wonder that the Lord said, *Fathers, raise your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*?"

3. To tell a story, one must know the story. Many parents and Christians think they could not tell a Bible story in such a way that would keep a child's interest. Usually the reason for the lack of confidence is because they do not really know the story. It takes many hours of careful reading of the scriptures and meditation on the biblical scenes to have a grasp of the feelings and movements of a Bible story. But the time invested is well worth it, not only in terms of your own children, but others as well. I have taught many neighborhood children and their parents by inviting them to the weekly class I have with my own children.

4. Everyone loves a good story. For children especially, the Bible needs to be unfolded before them with the excitement, intensity, and joy that only the word of God deserves. We scream and holler and "high-five" when our son or daughter scores a goal or catches

a pass. Where is the same energy when we tell of Caleb going up on the mountain of Hebron at age 85 and defeating Kirjath Arba, the greatest man among the Anakim? If we cannot get excited about these great stories, our children will get the message loud and clear as to where our priorities lie.

Why not make a resolve to your children, to all our children, to go and tell a Bible story of what the Lord has done?

"Note Those Who So Walk"

There surely have been some scoundrels among the Lord's people.

Judas Iscariot was one. Jesus chose him to be an apostle and sought to train him, but Judas was a covetous man. Placed in charge of *"the money box"* for Jesus and the apostles, *"he used to take what was put in it"* (John 12:6). Judas, of course, betrayed the Lord for thirty pieces of silver and *"became a guide to those who arrested"* Him (Acts 1:16).

Or how about Ananias and Sapphira, a husband and wife who lied about their financial contribution to the church in order to get a little more praise from men? Hypocrites they were (Acts 5:1-11).

Then, there were Hymenaeus and Philetus, who overthrew *"the faith of some"* by spreading a false teaching (2 Timothy 2:16-18).

And who could forget Diotrophes? Here was a man who was solely after power and prestige in the congregation, one who wielded what he had with lawless abandon (3 John 9-10).

Yes, there have been some rogues in the midst of the Lord's disciples. Doubtless there are some today.

But, brethren, they are in the minority.

For every 'Sapphira' there are many times more sisters in the mold of Dorcas or Phoebe, women who go about doing good for others, regardless of who gets the praise. (In fact, they would rather avoid any glory from men.)

For every 'Diotrephes' there are hundreds like Timothy, who selflessly and "*sincerely care*" for the spiritual wellbeing of others (Philippians 2:19-21).

For every covetous 'Judas' there are an innumerable host like Barnabas, Gaius, and Demetrius, all givers and encouragers!

For every 'Hymenaeus' there are scores of gospel preachers like Titus and Apollos.

Yes, as Romans 16:17 instructs, let us "*note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.*" But let us not become jaded in our thinking about the Lord's people. Read the whole of the 16th chapter of Romans and see all the good! Let us not allow the few hypocrites and traitors to blind us from seeing the thousands of saints who are "*faithful in Christ Jesus.*" What an encouragement they truly are!

*"Brethren, join in following my example, and **note those** who so walk..."*
(Philippians 3:17).

--Mike Noble

Children Learn What They Live

By Dorothy Law Nolte, Ph.D.

If children live with criticism, they learn to condemn.
If children live with hostility, they learn to fight.
If children live with fear, they learn to be apprehensive.
If children live with pity, they learn to feel sorry for themselves.
If children live with ridicule, they learn to feel shy.
If children live with jealousy, they learn to feel envy.
If children live with shame, they learn to feel guilty.
If children live with encouragement, they learn confidence.
If children live with tolerance, they learn patience.
If children live with praise, they learn appreciation.
If children live with acceptance, they learn to love.

If children live with approval, they learn to like themselves.
If children live with recognition, they learn it is good to have a goal.
If children live with sharing, they learn generosity.
If children live with honesty, they learn truthfulness.
If children live with fairness, they learn justice.
If children live with kindness and consideration, they learn respect.
If children live with security, they learn to have faith in themselves and in those about them.
If children live with friendliness, they learn the world is a nice place in which to live.

SUNDAY'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: “*Every Act Counts!*” (text: Eccl. 12:13-14); Sunday evening: Jesus Christ: A Closer Look – *The Chosen Company!* (Mark 3:7-19).