

Depart From Evil and Do Good

(Focuses on Not Being Wise in Our Own Eyes)

Part 2

Goal for the Lesson

Depart From Evil and Do Good, Part 1, focused on peer pressure as a reason why children have a difficult time departing from evil and choosing to do good. The children in the examples had a difficult time walking away from their friends when their friends became engaged in doing something wrong.

In this lesson we will talk about another related temptation that children face. This temptation is thinking that they are wise and mature enough to handle situations which their parents know they cannot. This is a very dangerous thought pattern that the evil one loves to suggest to our children. This incorrect thought, “I can handle it,” is what Eve’s problem was. She thought she could, but she couldn’t. Many folks seem to think they can handle a little temptation. However, they often cannot and little temptations can grow into big sins. The truth is that even we adults cannot handle a little temptation.

Scripture for the Lesson

“Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.” —Proverbs 3:7.

Definitions

Ask the children what they think the words mean in this verse, and then explain the correct definitions.

Wise -a way of doing or being (wisdom - accumulated knowledge and the ability to use it)

Fear -to be afraid of

Depart -to go away from, to leave

Evil -morally wrong, harmful, injurious, wicked

Ask the Children

Ask the children questions to prod them to think about how the verses can apply to them.

- (1) What does it mean to be wise in your own eyes?
- (2) What are some ways that children can act wise in their own eyes? (Ask the children to give specific examples.)
- (3) What does it mean to “fear the Lord”?
- (4) What does it mean to “depart from evil”?
- (5) Do you fear the Lord?
- (6) Do you depart from evil?

A great story is included in this lesson, the Rope-Cable Cut. It is about two boys who are impatient and think they are wiser than their father. Dire consequences follow their misjudgement. There are excellent spiritual applications, which can be applied to this story.

Skit 1

Brad meets a new friend, Jason, at the homeschool picnic. Dad and Mom know this family, and they instruct Brad not to be friends with Jason. Brad should be nice, but avoid him as much as possible. Brad listens to his parents, but to him, Jason is cool and nice, and he thinks his parents just don't know Jason well enough to judge. Jason struggles with math so Brad begins to help him. Before long, Jason just wants Brad to give him the answers.

Teacher Notes (explanation of skit)

This is a classic case of “child knows best.” Brad thinks he has more wisdom than his parents, and acts on his own wisdom. And, of course, problems develop.

Ask the Children

- (1) Do you think that Dad and Mom may have had reasons for telling their son not to make friends with Jason?
- (2) Even if Dad and Mom did not share their reasons with Brad, should Brad have obeyed them and followed their instructions?
- (3) Why do you think Brad disobeyed his parents?
- (4) How did disobeying his parents create future problems for Brad?
- (5) What do you think Brad should do at this point?

Personal Application Questions

- (1) Have you ever doubted or questioned your parents instructions? Why?
- (2) Have you ever thought that you were wiser than your parents?
- (3) What would make you think that you are wiser than parents who are 20 to 30 years older than you?
- (4) How does the verse “*Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil,*” apply to Brad’s situation?
- (5) “*Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right*” —Ephesians 6:1. This is what God’s Word says. When you disobey God’s Word are you truly “fearing the Lord”? Why not?

Sharing Thoughts With Children

It is a serious thing to do what is right in our own eyes instead of what is right in God’s eyes. We are operating in our own wisdom. It is a serious sin for children to disobey their parents and do what is right in their own eyes. They, too, are being wise in their own eyes. This can lead to very serious trouble, especially in later years. Encourage the children to not ever begin the habit of doing what they think is right, especially when their parents have instructed them otherwise.

To rectify this situation, Brad should be nice to Jason, but cease being his friend. He should not give him the answers to his math problems.

The Beginning of Wisdom

The Bible tells us that “*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding,*” Proverbs 9:10. We won’t be wise until we “fear the Lord.” This is essential to wisdom. There is no other way. God says for children to obey their parents, even when they do not understand why they should do so. However, if young people fear the Lord, they will be obedient children. If they are obedient children, they will not be wise in their own eyes.

Skit 2

Shelly loves to read. Her parents only let her read books of which they approve. Shelly dislikes being limited, and feels that she is wise enough to see or discern anything wrong in a book.

A friend gives Shelly a book at a homeschool meeting that Shelly knows is not Christian, but she has heard how interesting and entertaining it is. She takes the book and reads it at night. After finishing it, she now dreams of being an actress and resents her parents' restrictions all the more.

Ask the Children

- (1) Why do you think that Shelly dislikes being limited by her parents?
- (2) Do you think that she is right in feeling so?
- (3) Is a young person ever wise enough to discern all errors?
- (4) Because something looks interesting, is that a reason to read it?
- (5) Do you think that Shelly thought the book would have that much influence (dreaming about an ungodly career) upon her?
- (6) Do you think that Shelly thought a book could cause her to resent her parents more than she already did.
- (7) Did Shelly display any "fear of the Lord," obedience to God or parents, or any wisdom?

Personal Application Questions

- (1) Do you like it when your parents limit what books you read?
- (2) Do you like to be limited or do you resent it?
- (3) Do you trust your parents?
- (4) What sin or sins are behind such a resentful attitude?
- (5) Do you think that God was in error when He placed young people under the wisdom and authority of their parents?
- (6) Why do you think that God put "*Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil,*" in the Bible?

Be Not Wise in Thine Own Eyes

"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding." If we could but learn this great truth, to trust in the Lord with all our hearts and lean not to our own understanding or be wise in our own eyes, then God would be our ultimate authority; we would fear Him, obey Him, and depart from evil. He would truly be Lord of our lives and King of our hearts. Won't you today begin to trust Him?

Teacher Notes (explanation of skit)

Again, this is the old story of children knowing best, and disliking the limitations, which their parents place upon them. Shelly shows a lack of trust in her parents as well as an independent spirit, and a strong sense of self-will. Shelly reaps wrong aspirations, which would eventually destroy her life, and all because she read a book. Words and ideas are powerful.

Sharing Thoughts With Children

Words are powerful. Satan uses words through the medium of stories, books, magazines, conversations, music, and videos to lure mankind into his paths of destruction. Lies are made up of words. You cannot believe what you read, unless you know the source, and even then it needs to be compared with "all truth" which is the Bible.

In Hebrews, it says, ". . . *even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*" Discernment is a valuable skill to possess, and until it is developed, young people would be wise to trust their parents in guiding them.

Shelly has probably already read way too much of the wrong books to have developed her attitude. What she needs to do is repent, fear the Lord, and depart from this evil of being wise in her own eyes!

The Rope Cable Cut

“I can’t stand this waiting for Father any longer!” exclaimed Jack Carp, the fisherman’s son. He looked from the deck of his fishing smack, the *Wild Bird*, for the hundredth time toward the shore, in hopes of seeing a well-known form in a pea jacket hurrying down over the shingles.

“We’re losing the finest breeze that ever swelled sail!” cried Ben, his brother.

“We’re losing all chance of falling in with the mackerel shoal,” muttered Jack. “There are John Downe and Will Blacket. They’ll be coming ashore with their craft full of the shiners, and their wives and children will have fat bacon hanging from their rafters enough to last ’em till Christmas, and plenty of coals to cook it with, while we’ll be starved with hunger and cold!”

“What can keep Father?” cried Ben, stamping his bare foot on the deck with impatience.

“I say, Ben, why shouldn’t we pull up the anchor, hoist sail, and be off without him,” suggested Jack. “You and me have been long enough aboard this here little craft to know how to manage her, I guess.”

“I should say we have,” cried Ben proudly. “We be not just able-bodied seamen yet,” he added, with a laugh, “but for steering a boat, or casting a net, we know as much as the skipper himself.”

“Wouldn’t it be a lark to be off by ourselves!” exclaimed Jack.

“Prime, but Father wouldn’t like it,” replied Ben.

“But we’d like it!” cried Jack. “And Father will like a good haul of mackerel if we manage to get it. I say, let’s pull up the anchor, and be off over ‘the sea, the sea, the open sea!—the blue, the fresh, the ever free!’ ” And Jack began whistling a well-known tune as he hurried off to drag up the anchor which kept the *Wild Bird* riding on the waves not many yards from the shingly beach.

Ben had some scruple of conscience about helping his brother, for he knew that for the two boys to go out to sea by themselves was contrary not only to the wishes, but to the strict command of their father. Ben would never of his own accord have slighted the wishes or broken the command, but he was led easily astray by his bolder and less scrupulous brother, who cared for no will but his own. The two lads were soon pulling and straining every nerve to get up the anchor, but they, as Ben had observed, were not yet able-bodied seamen, and their young muscles had not the needful strength.

“I say, this will make the matter shorter!” cried Jack, who had paused, out of breath from his vain exertions. He pulled from his pocket and then opened a large clasp knife.

“You don’t mean to cut the cable! What would Father say?” exclaimed Ben. “Why, we should lose both anchor and cable, and I don’t believe any haul of fish that we’ll get will make up the loss.”

“You mind your own business, my lad. I know what I’m about!” cried Jack, and he began to cut away at the rope which kept the vessel riding at anchor.

Again Ben yielded, against his better judgment, because his own inclination drew him strongly in the same direction as that of his brother. The cable which held the fishing smack to its safe moorings was like conscience keeping the soul to duty. Jack and Ben were breaking loose from both. The boys were choosing their own will and way—and a foolish will and a troubled way they were both to find them.

“There, down under the green with ye! You’ll never more tie us to shore!” exclaimed Jack, as the cable he had cut through dropped under the brine to lie at the bottom, still held by the faithful anchor.

“Now let’s hoist sail and be off,” cried Ben, looking anxiously toward the shore, for he did not *now* wish to see his father trampling over the shingles.

With some difficulty the boys succeeded in hoisting the sail of the *Wild Bird*—they had often helped their father to do so. There was no lack of wind, the breeze blew fresh from the shore, and soon filled the

sail, and the fishing smack, much to the delight of her young crew, went dancing over the waves. The way of self-will may seem pleasant at first, but woe, woe to those who have cut the cable of conscience!

“There’s Father at last!—I know him by the pea jacket—he’s a-clambering down yon cliff,” exclaimed Ben, after the little vessel had gone some way on her course, so that objects on the shore appeared very small to those on her deck.

“There’s Father—I hear him!” cried Jack, as a distant “holloa!” came on the breeze.

“He’ll be mighty angry,” said Ben.

“He’ll be a bit uneasy about us young chaps,” laughed Jack. “But we’re old enough to do something now for ourselves, and not be kept back by—”

“Ha! What’s that?” exclaimed Ben, starting as the vessel suddenly struck against something unseen, which caused a shock that almost threw the boy off his feet.

“I say, we’ve gone bump on the sunken rock which the buoy was set to warn us off!” cried Jack, looking with some alarm at a great shining black object, something like a barrel, which rocked up and down on the waves.

It was the boys’ turn to be “a bit uneasy,” and Ben turned pale, while again, more faintly from afar, the father’s shout was heard over the waters. “Never mind, no harm done. We’ve passed the dangerous place. We’ve left the black buoy behind us!” cried Jack. “We’ll soon come up to the mackerel shoal. Just get the net ready, will ye? I fancy I see yonder the silvery gleam of the fish!”

No harm done!—was it so? There is ever harm done; there is grief won, when we cut the cable of conscience!

Still on, on went the vessel, in the course of self-will, over the green rolling waves. But suddenly Ben cried out in alarm, “I say, Jack, there’s water coming in fast! Just look here—the bottom of the boat’s like a well, and don’t you hear the gurgle?”

“There’s a leak somewhere in the craft!” exclaimed Jack, a shade of anxiety coming over his bold sunburnt face. “That there sunken rock must have knocked a hole in her side!”

“Let’s get back to the shore as fast as we can!” cried Ben.

“Father will thrash us,” muttered Jack.

“Never mind that—I’d rather be thrashed than drowned!” exclaimed Ben. “The water is coming in faster and faster! Let’s make for the shore—let’s make for the shore!”

The thing was said more easily than done. The two boys had been able to set the little vessel on her dangerous course, but it was quite a different matter to turn her round, and steer her back in the teeth of the wind; and all the more so as she was getting waterlogged, as seamen term it—that is to say, very heavy from the quantity of water within her.

“Let’s work the pump—quick, quick!” cried Jack, who had not lost his presence of mind, and remembered the means sometimes employed by his father to bail out water.

The boys rushed to the pump. They worked it with all their might and main until the sweat streamed down their faces, and their arms ached, and they gasped for breath from the violence of the efforts which they were making. But the seawater came in faster than they could pump it out. The fisherman’s sons grew weary, but the green gurgling water, which was rising higher and higher in the hold, never could tire. The struggle was an unequal one indeed, and it soon became only too clear that it would not be a long one.

“She’s settling! We’ll go down!” exclaimed Jack.

“And in sight of shore!” groaned his brother.

“It’s all my doing,” muttered Jack. “I would that I’d hacked my hand off afore I’d touched that cable!”

“Father’s looking on!” cried poor Ben, making another despairing effort to work the pump.

In dismay, in misery, the father stood on the shore, watching the *Wild Bird*. Carp knew but too well what had happened. He saw the peril of his boys, and he had no power to help them. They were much too far away for him to be able to distinguish their faces, but he could see two figures, looking not much larger

than bees. He marked that these figures were in violent action, and in terror he observed that the hull of the smack was sinking lower and lower down to the level of the water.

“She’s gone! They’re lost!” Who can tell the anguish of that cry from the lips of a parent, as hull, sail, mast, all disappeared under the water, and only the waves were sparkling over the spot where once the white wing of the *Wild Bird* had glanced in the sunshine! There was nothing now but that cry to tell that beneath these bright waves had perished two young beings, who not an hour before had set sail full of life and hope and spirit.

This story is a kind of parable of what, alas! has too often happened on the wide sea of life.

Dear reader (I now especially address myself to boys), it may seem to you pleasant to follow your own will, and get your own way, and manly to break from restraint. But fearful, often fatal, peril lies before those who take self-will and pride for their guides, and who get loose from the moorings of duty by cutting the cable of conscience.