

To Play or Not to Play—A Lesson on Courage

Introduction

Read the following or relate it in your own words.

Every boy and girl needs courage, the courage to do right and to obey God, in little and big things. It is a matter of decision to act courageously or cowardly. There is no middle of the road here. It is “be not afraid” or “be afraid.” God commands us to have courage, and if we do, He will be with us, wherever we find ourselves.

The Scripture

Read the Scripture to the group.

“Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.” —Joshua 1:9

A Real Life Example

Read the following or relate it in your own words.

To Play or Not to Play

Tom went running down the sidewalk to the park. It was a beautiful day, and he had an hour to play before it was time for dinner. He was hoping that there would be a game of baseball going on. There had been a regular group of guys playing on and off after school, and he was hoping that he would be in time to play a game with them. As he entered the park, he saw that there was a game started.

“Hey, Roger!” he called to the pitcher.

“Hey, Tom!” hollered Roger, “you want to play?”

“Sure,” replied Tom, “I have some time before dinner, so I thought I’d see if you all were playing.”

“Sure,” said Roger. “Pete, why don’t you let Tom hit after you, since you’re the last at bat?” Tom took his place behind Roger. The boys played hard. After a bit, Tom noticed the sun going down behind the trees.

“Tie game!” yelled Roger. “We have one more inning to play!” The two teams switched places.

“Come on, Tom!” yelled Ben. “We need you at bat!” Tom looked at his watch. It was getting late. He knew that if he stayed to play another inning, he would be late for dinner.

“Sorry, guys, I need to go home. It’s getting late, and I’m supposed to be home for dinner.”

“Awww, c’mon Tom. If you go home, we won’t have enough people on our team, and it’s a tie! With you at bat we could win this game—you hit the last home run!” said Pete. “So, you’ll be a little late for dinner. That’s okay!”

Tom knew that the guys really wanted him to stay and help them win the game, and he didn't want to disappoint them. He also knew that his parents expected him home for dinner.

Questions for Discussion

1. What problem was Tom facing?
2. Tom made the right decision, but then he faced the peer pressure of the guys who wanted him to play ball. What is peer pressure?
3. Tom was going to disappoint someone: his parents or the guys. Why was that a difficult decision for him?
4. Does it matter what other people want you to do, when you have a choice between right and wrong? Should it matter?
5. Do you think it took courage for Tom to leave the game and go home? Why?
6. Explain the difference between cowardice and courageous.
7. When God tells us to be "strong and of good courage," do you think that when we are afraid to do right, and therefore disobey or do wrong, we are sinning? Why?

Conclusion and Resolution

Read the Scripture again. Read or explain the conclusion in your own words. Ask the group to suggest what specific changes that they can resolve to make in their daily lives that will help them to implement needed changes in this area. Ask them to especially consider things they have learned in the Bible to use as scriptural guideposts to a more competent and productive life.

"Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." —Joshua 1:9

God commands us to be strong and have courage regardless of what we are facing. God will help us, but we are the decision-makers. Do we obey God and do right in every situation, regardless of fear, or do we yield to our fear and sin? And, we must admit that most of our fear is fear of man, and what he will say or do. The Psalmist said, *"In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me."* This would be an excellent Scripture to take as a motto for our life.

Teacher's Notes
