

Lesson 1B

WHY CHILDREN NEED BIBLE TEACHING

We have seen that the Christian teacher's main aim is to teach children to be Christ's disciples. We have also seen **how** this can be accomplished — by teaching them the Scriptures, i.e. the Bible. In this Study we will see five reasons why we must teach children the Bible. These five reasons are:

- 1) Jesus considers children important.
- 2) Even children can be Christ's disciples.
- 3) The Bible itself commands us to do this.
- 4) Children face many pressures in the world.
- 5) Today's children will become tomorrow's leaders.

Let's take a close look at the **FIRST** reason why we should train children as Christ's disciples by teaching them the Bible.

1) Jesus considers children important

1. Read Matthew 19:13 and answer these questions.

- a) Why did these people bring little children to Jesus?

- b) What was the disciples' response?

2. Here we see two kinds of people. Some brought the children to Jesus so that he would bless them and pray for them. These people considered the children important. But other people, the disciples, considered the children of no importance, even a nuisance perhaps, so they tried to keep them away from Jesus. Sadly the disciples' attitude to children is all too common in our churches today. Some Christians think that what matters is for the adults to enjoy the worship and understand the message; it doesn't matter what the children think. All too often we think that the children's role is to sit still and not create any disturbance, but we forget that they are also people. They too need to enjoy the worship and to understand the message. But what was Jesus' attitude to children? Read on in Matt. 19:14-15 then check the correct answers:

Continued

Answers

1. a) Because they wanted Jesus to place his hands on them and pray for them.
- b) They rebuked those who had brought the children

2. Continued.
- a. Jesus refused to see the children.
 - b. Jesus rebuked those who had brought the children.
 - c. Jesus rebuked the disciples for hindering the children.
 - d. Jesus said the kingdom of heaven is only for adults.
 - e. Jesus said the kingdom of heaven is for such as these.
 - f. Jesus placed his hands on the children to bless them.
3. If you had been with Jesus at that time, would you have been among those who brought the children to him, or among those who tried to hinder them? Think about it and give your own personal answer:
-
-
4. If you wrote that you would have brought the children to Jesus, then well done! But remember, it is easier to say this in theory than to do it in practice. You will often meet adult Christians who are like one of the descriptions below:
- a) In church, they only want the children to sit quietly.
 - b) They care more that their children complete their homework for school or look after the animals each day than that, as disciples of Jesus, they read the Bible daily.
 - c) They consider that evangelistic work among children is less important than among adults.
- Which of the above people consider children important:
a, b, c or none of them? _____
5. We should check ourselves to see whether we really give as much importance to children as Jesus did. We have seen in Matthew, chapter 19, how warmly Jesus welcomed the children who came to him. On that occasion he gave them his attention, even when the adults wanted to exclude them. He considered the children to be “people” in their own right.
- So which of the following is our **FIRST** reason for teaching children the Bible?
- a. It’s a good way to entertain children.
 - b. Jesus considers children important.
 - c. It’s nice to be able to tell Bible stories to children.

Answers

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------|----|--------------|
| 2. | c. e. f. | 4. | None of them |
| 3. | Personal answer | 5. | b. |

6. Just think. Jesus was a famous preacher. From morning to night adults came to him for teaching and for healing. He had no time to relax. He was a very busy man. But even in these pressurised circumstances, he still gave importance to the children. He said, *“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these”* (Matthew 19:14).

Write out this verse and learn it by heart, with its reference:

“

_____” (Matthew ____ : ____)

7. The verse we have just learned comes from Matthew, chapter 19. Matthew, chapter 18 also contains much about Jesus’ teaching on children. Read Matthew 18:1-6 and 10-14. For each of the following statements of Jesus, write the relevant verse by the side:

- a) *“Whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me.”* _____
b) *“Unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”* _____
c) *“Your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should be lost.”* _____
d) *“See that you do not look down on one of these little ones.”* _____

8. Which two chapters in Matthew’s Gospel especially teach about Jesus’ attitude to children? Matthew, chapters _____ & _____

9. Not just once, but again and again with such statements, Jesus emphasized to his disciples that he considered children important.

Jesus said, *“See that you do not look down on one of these little ones”* (Mat.18:10). Remember this, that whoever looks down on a child as insignificant is breaking Jesus’ command! What is Jesus’ attitude to children?

He considers them _____

10. Yes, our first reason for teaching the Bible to children is that Jesus considers them important. From which two chapters of Matthew have we learned this?

Chapters _____ & _____.

11. Today too, he is still calling the children to come to him. He is even calling the children in your family, in your neighbourhood, in your church to come to him. So what are you doing about it? Stop and pray about this now before continuing.

Answers

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| 6. Memorize Matthew 19:14 | 8. Chapters 18 & 19 | 10. Chapters 18 & 19 |
| 7. a) v.5; | 9. important | 11. Stop and pray |
| b) v.3; | | |
| c) v.14; | | |
| d) v.10 | | |

12. Think about your own church where you are a member. How much importance does your church give to its children? (Check your personal response)
- a. Much importance.
 - b. Some importance.
 - c. Little importance.

13. What is the **FIRST** reason for teaching children the Bible?
 Jesus _____

Now let's look at the **SECOND** reason for teaching children the Bible:

2) Even children can be Christ's disciples

14. Some think that children are too small to understand the Christian message in the Bible. Here are some common views expressed about children's spiritual state:
- "We should not worry about children's salvation until they grow older."
 - "Children's sins do not matter."
 - "Children are too young to belong to God's kingdom."

But all three of these viewpoints are wrong! Read again what Paul wrote in 2 Tim.3:15 about the childhood of his young colleague Timothy.

- a) Through his faith in Christ, what had Timothy received? _____
- b) Through the teaching of which book had he come to this faith? _____
- c) At what stage of his life had this occurred? _____

15. According to Paul's words to Timothy which of the following are true about children, even from the earliest age?
- a. Children can come to faith in Christ.
 - b. They are too young to believe in Jesus.
 - c. Children can be saved.
 - d. They can understand the basic truths of the Bible.
 - e. They understand complicated points of theology.

16. Clearly children can receive salvation through faith in Christ. Indeed not only can they enjoy such faith but, just like adults, they too are sinners and NEED a Savior. According to Romans 3:23, who have sinned and fallen short of God's glory?
- a. Only some adults.
 - b. Only a few children.
 - c. All people, both adults and children.

Answers

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| 12. Personal response | 14. a) Salvation | 15. a. c. d. |
| 13. considers children important | b) The holy Scriptures, or the Bible | 16. c. |
| | c) From infancy | |

17. Yes, **ALL** have sinned and fallen short of God’s glory — that includes adults and children. Which of the following children need salvation?
- a. Children born in a secular home.
 - b. Children born in a Muslim home.
 - c. Children born in a Christian home.
18. Being born in a Christian home does not make a child a Christian. Only being “born again” does that, including children (John 3:3), and this does not happen automatically. We have to fight for every child’s soul to be saved by our Lord. Children are capable of trusting in Jesus from a very early age. Before a child reaches adolescence he (Note: Throughout this course “he” includes “she”) should have a tested life of faith, a personal relationship with God and the experience of answered prayer. He should know how to rely on the Lord and to share all his joys and sorrows with the Lord. Which of the following is our **SECOND** reason for teaching children the Bible?
- a. Jesus said that children are too young to be his disciples.
 - b. Even children can be Christ’s disciples.
19. Check the correct answers:
- a. Children are too young to trust in Jesus.
 - b. Children can experience answers to their prayers.
 - c. Children should be taught the Bible from an early age.
 - d. Children can be full members of God’s kingdom.
 - e. Children are unable to hear God’s voice.
20. In the Bible, we read of various children who learned to trust in God from an early age. For instance,
- a) Who heard God’s voice in the middle of the night?
(1 Samuel 3:4) _____
 - b) Who studied the Holy Scriptures from an early age with his mother and grandmother? (2 Timothy 1:5, 3:15) _____
 - c) Who gave witness that God could heal Naaman’s leprosy? (2 Kings 5:2-3) _____
 - d) Who provided the food from which Jesus fed 5,000 people? (John 6:9) _____
 - e) Who was just a boy when God chose him to be king? (1 Samuel 16:11-13) _____

Answers

- | | |
|--------------|-------------------------------|
| 17. a. b. c. | 20. a) Samuel |
| 18. b. | b) Timothy |
| 19. b. c. d. | c) A captive girl from Israel |
| | d) A boy |
| | e) David |

21. Yes indeed, the Lord wants to have fellowship with children and he loves to hear the praises of children. Psalm 8:2 says *“From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise...”* In church, the contribution of children to the worship is as important as the adults’ part! So far, what two reasons have we looked at which show that children need Bible teaching from a young age?

- 1) _____
2) _____

A **THIRD** reason for teaching children the Bible is:

3) The Bible itself commands us to teach children the Bible

22. Many references in the Bible stress how important it is for us to pass on the faith to children. For instance, when Moses was preparing the people of Israel to enter the land of Canaan, he knew that the next generation would easily forget all that God had done. So again and again in the book of Deuteronomy he reminded the parents of their responsibility to teach their children. Fill in the gaps in the quotations below:

- a) Deut.6:6-7: *“These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. _____ them on your children...”*
- b) Deut.11:19: *“_____ them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.”*
- c) Deut.32:46: *“...so that you may _____ your _____ to obey carefully all the words of this law.”*

23. What does the Bible command us concerning children?

- a. To teach children.
 b. To ignore children.

24. Without doubt the home is the best place for children to learn the Christian faith. There they will learn from the practical example of their parents as well as from their words. God’s word is not like a school lesson; rather it is part of everyday life.

Where do those of us who are parents find the command to give practical Christian training to our children?

In the _____

Answers

21. 1) Jesus considers children important
2) Even children can be Christ’s disciples
22. a) Impress
b) Teach
c) command; children
23. a.
24. Bible

25. But often other things make us so busy that we do not find time to teach our children the Bible. We have to earn money, do the housework, deal with guests, attend functions, etc. Somehow or other we make time for such tasks, but it is hard to find even ten minutes a day to teach our children from the word of God. What do such parents forget?

That the Bible c _____ us to teach our children.

26. Maybe you are not a parent yourself. But you are still a member of the Christian family, i.e. God's church. So you can play your part in helping to teach children the Bible. If you are doing this, you are indeed obeying God's _____. And remember men as well as women can do this.

27. What is our **THIRD** reason for teaching children the Bible? Check one:

- a. Jesus considers children important.
 b. Children are capable of being Christ's disciples.
 c. The Bible itself commands us to teach children the Bible.

Now we come to our **FOURTH** reason for teaching children the Bible:

4) Children face many pressures in the world

28. Children are like boats on a fast flowing river, pulled this way and that by currents of non-Christian influence. Just think about the influences a child in this society absorbs each day, from the time he gets up until he goes to sleep. This is a day in the life of a typical ten-year old; let's call him Peter.

After waking up, Peter washes and dresses as quickly as possible. After swallowing down his breakfast, he goes to school. On the way he overhears the gossip and sometimes swearwords of others. In school he studies different subjects all day, but not once in his class is there any mention of Jesus Christ.

He comes home from school and then hurries out to play with his friends. Later his mother calls him to come in to do his homework. Peter's parents pay great attention to his studies because they want him to succeed academically, but they give little thought to his Christian education.

After finishing his homework and eating his supper, Peter listens to the radio and hears news of murder and war; he switches to a music station and hears songs of love and sex. Yet all day long he has not received the slightest bit of teaching from the Bible.

Answer the following questions about Peter and be ready to share your answers in the group discussion:

Continued

Answers

25. commands

26. command

27. c.

28. Continued.
- a) Do you think that this is a typical account of many children in our country? _____
- b) What non-Christian influences affect Peter each day?

- c) What do you think will be the effect of these influences on Peter over the years?

29. This picture shows some of the things that exert good or bad influence on children, daily.
 Think about the children in your household. On average each day, how many hours do they spend:
- a) at school? _____
- b) watching T.V.? _____
- c) learning about Christ? _____



30. So why should we teach children the Bible?
- a. Because they face many pressures in the world.
- b. Because they live in a Christian environment.
31. Check the things which you think exert non-Christian influence on young people today:
- a. Television or radio.
- b. Friends.
- c. Drink and drugs.
- d. Sexy or violent films.
- e. Materialism.
- f. _____
 _____ (add your own ideas)

32. These days society offers many other attractions which may seem more exciting to youth than the Christian faith. These influences start even when they are children. It is never too early to teach children the word of God.

Now review the first three reasons we have studied at so far for teaching children the Bible and fill in the **FOURTH** one.

Continued

Answers

28. Be ready to discuss this in the tutorial 29. Personal responses 31. All of these
30. a.

32. Continued.

- 1) Jesus considers children important.
- 2) Even children can be Christ's disciples.
- 3) The Bible itself commands us to teach children the Bible.
- 4) Children face many _____

33. A child may be kept steady and secure by the word of God just as a boat is kept secure by an anchor. The winds and waves may crash upon that boat but they will not sweep it away because the boat is held securely. In the same way children need an anchor to keep them steady and secure against the pressures of the world.

In this example, what does the anchor represent? _____

34. The Bible encourages us with examples of those whose faith was strong enough to withstand the pressures on them. Think about Daniel. Growing up as a child, he was taught to trust God in all circumstances. But when he was still a very young man, the city of Jerusalem was captured and he was taken into captivity in Babylon. There he was, alone in a foreign country, with a strange language, religion and culture, far from his parents and from everything that he knew and loved. The Babylonian king tried to turn Daniel away from his faith, but he remained strong because of what he had learned as a child. He remained in Babylon for at least the next seventy years, but he never left the faith he had learned in his childhood.

Such an example reminds us why we should teach children the Bible: because children face _____

35. To protect children from the pressures of the world, it is not enough just to teach them the verses and stories of the Bible. A Christian child not only needs to know about Jesus theoretically but also to know him personally. That child should now have the experience of the God who answers prayer, and of the Holy Spirit guiding his life. Then he will be better equipped to withstand the pressures of the world.

What four reasons have we looked at so far for teaching children the Bible?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

Answers

32. pressures in the world

33. The Bible, the Word of God
34. many pressures in the world

35. 1) Jesus considers children important
2) Even children can be Christ's disciples
3) The Bible commands us to teach our children
4) Children face many pressures in the world

A **FIFTH** reason we can give for teaching children the Bible is:

5) Today's children will become tomorrow's leaders

36. As you read the next paragraph, think about the people it is describing.

“They enter _____ (write the name of our country here) unnoticed, one by one. They don't need permission to live here, and they penetrate all parts of society; in every town and village, even to the far-off corners of the country. They are educated for different jobs and positions. Before very long, they will take their places in business, education, industry and homes all over our land.

Some will even become members of the government. They will control the media. They will make decisions about the future of our nation. Nobody realizes the extent of their influence. Have you guessed who they are?”

In your opinion, who are they? _____

Turn to the feedback to find out!

37. Think of the children in your home or in your Sunday School or Bible Club. What potential they now have for the future! Perhaps one of them will win many souls for Christ, another will become an effective Bible teacher, another will have great influence as a Christian mother. Some may be leaders in the church, others may be leaders in society. It is exciting to think that today's children are tomorrow's _____.

38. Children have their whole lives ahead of them. Theirs could become a life of faith and service, a life that God can use mightily for his glory. Or it could become a life that has been twisted by sin and is unfit for service even before it is fully grown.

This incident is told about William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army. Once, after an evangelistic convention, someone asked him if anybody had been saved during that night. “Yes”, he answered, “Two and a half people”. “Oh,” his friend replied, “You mean two adults and a child”. “No”, came William Booth's reply, “I mean two children and an adult. Two whole lives and one that is already half wasted!”

Let's remind ourselves of the greatest aim of the Christian teacher that we considered in Lesson 1A. What was this?

Answers

36. Today's children in our country 37. leaders 38. To teach children to be Christ's disciples

39. Children have their whole lives ahead of them. What potential they have for future service! So what is the **FIFTH** reason we have seen for teaching children the Bible?

Today's children

40. Proverbs 22:6 says, "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." But none of this will happen automatically. Not a single child will come to know the Lord by himself. We will have to fight for every child's soul to be saved by the Lord. We should invest much prayer, time and effort in the Christian teaching of children. What a great challenge that is for us!

List five reasons for teaching children the Bible.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

41. You may know that in a game of football all the players have to work together as a team, passing the ball from one to another but always trying to get nearer to the goal. In the same way, in the Christian life we have to pass the message on to our children and they to the next generation until Christ comes again in his glory.

That is the challenge before us! In the rest of this course, we will learn how we can more effectively pass on our Christian faith to children.

Now please read Psalm 78:5-7 slowly and prayerfully, and then commit yourself afresh to this sacred task.

42. Do Test 1B. From now on, after completing each Lesson, do the respective Test without further prompting.

Answers

39. will become tomorrow's leaders
40. 1) Jesus considers children important
2) Even children can be Christ's disciples
3) The Bible commands us to teach our children
4) Children face many pressures in the world
5) Today's children will become tomorrow's leaders