

Adult Explore the Bible EXTRA Choose Wisely

Psalm 1:1-6

Introduction

To supplement Step 1 "Introduction," (p. 108, Explore the Bible Adult Leader Guide, Fall 2009), introduce the idea that we find stability and protection when we choose to live in relationship with God by sharing the following article excerpt about a Sam Houston State wide receiver who is working hard to overcome a history of bad influences and bad choices.

Drug dealing, gang violence and murder. That is the harsh reality Sam Houston State senior Darnell Jones faced every day of his childhood while growing up in Galveston's Palm Terrace housing project. Each day was a struggle and Jones was caught in the middle of it.

Jones says he was tempted to join a gang. He hung out with gang members and was headed toward a life on the streets.

But things were about to change. During Jones' freshman year, his mother met Larry Ballard and the two were married. Finally Jones had some stability in his life, and things were starting to look brighter.

Everything was going according to plan for Jones. He was working toward his degree and was starting to produce on the field during his junior year in 2007. He was the Bearkats' fourth-leading receiver with 20 catches for 261 yards and two touchdowns.

Then his past caught up with him. In the offseason, Jones let his judgment slip and he failed a drug test. He was suspended for his senior year and was forced to redshirt.

"Last year, I made some personal bad choices that got me suspended for the season," Jones said. "I had to go work for TDC at the Walls Unit. Seeing all that and what they go through in prison, I don't want to be a part of that. I could have easily gone back to Galveston and got in trouble, something that could have put me in prison for a long time.

Jones did everything the Sam Houston State coaching staff asked. He went to class, kept his grades up and left his old life behind him.

After he graduates, Jones plans on getting his teaching certificate and wants to be a high school football coach. His ultimate goal is to show kids that it is possible to get off the streets and make a better life for yourself.

Source: Cody Stark, "Bearkat Gameday: Not just another statistic,"
The Huntsville (Texas) Item (online), 10 October 2009

Ask: * In your experience, do people who live wisely generally end up happier and better off than those who make foolish lifestyle choices? Are there exceptions? If so, how do you account for them? * What would you say to convince a young friend to "live right" even if doing so seemed to be less lucrative and less fun than living with no regard for God's ways? * If a person's delight is in God's law or instructions, how will that be demonstrated in his or her life?

Explain that during today's session learners will be encouraged to commit their ways to the Lord, living according to His Word, because doing so leads to blessing and happiness, while living for self leads only to judgment.

Conclusion

To supplement Step 5 "Conclusion" (p. 114, Explore the Bible Adult Leader Guide, Fall 2009), share a summary of the following article excerpt about an NFL referee who knows from experience that doing the right thing and making the right call doesn't always make him popular.

NFL referee Walt Coleman, speaking to a gathering of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes at Little Rock Central, drew from personal experience to illustrate how the Biblical admonition to do the right thing doesn't necessarily equate with popularity.

He said he has translated Biblical principles to the often-controversial life of a pro football official.

He added, "Just because you're right doesn't mean anybody is gonna agree with you. But Jesus said, 'Do what is right.' Because of the desire to be popular, we all have the tendency to get off the beaten path."

Coleman told of his experience as referee for the Pittsburgh Steelers showdown last season with the Baltimore Ravens in Baltimore, a regular-season game that would decide a division championship and would assure the winner of a home berth throughout the playoffs.

The Pittsburgh quarterback scrambled and found Santonio Holmes running from the end zone toward the field. Holmes catches the pass, gets hit and the ball is spotted inside the 1. Then, the replay buzzer goes off. "What I see [on the replay] is Santonio Holmes catches the pass with two feet down and the ball breaks the plane of the goal line," said Coleman.

"What am I supposed to do?" Coleman said. "I'm supposed to do what is right."

He overturned the original call and awarded Pittsburgh the game-winning touchdown.

"You'll be criticized for being a part of [FCA]," Coleman said. "But it's better to do what's right and let them butcher you. In the long run, you're better off."

He noted what someone told him when he first started officiating, 'All we expect out of you is to be perfect and then to get better,'" Coleman said. "But there was only one perfect person who ever roamed on the face of the earth. And fortunately, he didn't have to referee a football game."

Source: David McCollum, "Coleman describes how Christian principles translate to NFL decisions," The Log Cabin Democrat (online), 13 October 2009

Ask: * What are some of the decisions you face at work or personally that give you the opportunity to apply Christian principles to your own life? * Have you made choices for moral or faith reasons that made you unpopular with your friends, family, or coworkers? Was it worth it in the long run? Why or why not? * What advice would you give to a young man or woman today who is trying to decide whether to do the right thing or to fit in with the crowd?

Biblical Insight

Meditating in the Lord's instructions (Psalm 1:2)

The Hebrew words for meditation primarily were derived from two separate roots. The first (hagah), used in this verse, literally means "to utter in a low sound." The word is used to denote the growling of a lion (Isa. 31:4) or the cooing of a dove (Isa. 38:14). Therefore it has been suggested that in ancient Hebrew meditation Scripture frequently was recited in a low murmur. The second root word (siach) has the basic meaning of "to be occupied with," or "concerned about." Thus meditation is the repetitious going over of a matter in one's mind because it is the chief concern of life. The constant recollection of God's past deeds by the learning of Scripture and repetition of thought produces confidence in God (Pss. 63:6-8; 104:34; 119:15,23,48,78,97,99,148; 143:5).

Source: Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary (Nashville, Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), s.v. "Meditation."