

=SEPARATION=
Lesson 5
Evil Companions

Scripture: II Chronicles 18:1-19:2

Objects to have:

A mounted picture of a crowd with people of all ages in it
A pair of scissors
The boy or girl figure with hands or mittens added
Your Bible.

Introducing the lesson:

(Hold up your picture while talking.) All the people in the world could be divided into two groups: Christians and non-Christians. (Cut the picture in half.) Christians are people who have asked Jesus to be their Saviour. (Hold up the half of the picture that you have decided represents Christians.) There are two kinds of Christians: Christians who want to please Jesus and Christians who don't care about pleasing Him. (Cut in half the picture of Christians.) If we really love Jesus, we will want to learn all we can about how we can please Him and be good Christians.

In Sunday school we've talked about some things that good Christians will never do: They will never lie or say bad words. Good Christians never take dope or narcotics. Good Christians will never read bad books. There is something that good Christians never have. We'll find out about that as I tell you a Bible story.

Telling the story:

King Jehoshaphat was a king many years ago. One day some of King Jehoshaphat's guard saw the army of the enemy coming into their land. The king and his people prayed and asked God to protect them from the army that was even then marching toward them. The army of King Jehoshaphat started out to meet the enemy. Another group of people went ahead of the army. It was a choir. A group of singers went out ahead of Jehoshaphat's army. God told them to do that. That was a strange group of people to go to war! But they did not have to fight! Jehoshaphat's army did not have to fight at all. God caused the enemy army to start fighting each other. God took care of King Jehoshaphat and his people. King Jehoshaphat was a good king who always wanted to do as God wanted him to do.

One day, though, Jehoshaphat made a mistake. I want to tell you about the very bad mistake that Jehoshaphat made. The mistake had to do with some friends of King Jehoshaphat's.

God said, "Don't make friends with anyone who does not love the Lord." That's a very simple rule. God said, "Make friends with only God's people." God said, "Choose for your friends those people who love the Lord and go to church and act right." Whenever God makes a rule we better keep it!

King Jehoshaphat had lots and lots of money and a big fancy palace and beautiful clothes. He had gotten rich. He had become very important. King Jehoshaphat was honored by lots of people.

Wicked King Ahab in the Northern Kingdom saw how important good King Jehoshaphat was in the Southern Kingdom. Wicked King Ahab also saw how rich King Jehoshaphat was. Wicked King Ahab thought, "I'd like to have King Jehoshaphat be a friend of mine. "He could help me a lot." So he said to King Jehoshaphat, "I'd like to be a friend of yours."

King Jehoshaphat said, “All right, we’ll be friends.” Uh-oh, King Jehoshaphat did something that God said not to do. He is becoming a friend with somebody who does not love the Lord. He is making friends with somebody who does not go to church. He is making friends with somebody who does not act right.

But King Jehoshaphat did not see anything bad happen because he broke God’s rule. That is, for a few years he did not see anything bad happen.

Then, one day, King Ahab sent an invitation: “King Jehoshaphat, you are invited to come to see me. Come to the Northern Kingdom. I would like to meet with you there.”

King Jehoshaphat packed his suitcases and got ready for his trip and his meeting with King Ahab. King Ahab was getting ready for King Jehoshaphat’s coming, too. He made plans for a great big dinner party to be held in King Jehoshaphat’s honor.

Now, you and I can know something that King Jehoshaphat did not know. King Ahab was going to start a war with the king of Syria. King Ahab knew that he needed help—his army was not big enough to win the war. He thought that if he got King Jehoshaphat to fight with him, then he would surely win the war.

King Jehoshaphat came to see King Ahab. King Ahab met him with open arms. I think that he grabbed him and hugged him and kissed first one cheek and then another. When our men meet each other, they usually shake hands. Ladies sometimes shake hands with each other, too. Ladies who are very, very dear friends hug and kiss each other. Men sometimes pat each other on the back as well as shake hands. (You could demonstrate shaking hands with pupils in your class.)

I think that King Ahab said, “Welcome, King Jehoshaphat. We are so glad to see you. We have prepared a great big party to honor you. Come, I will show you the way.”

King Jehoshaphat enjoyed the party very much. There were all kinds of good foods to eat. People talked and laughed and were very loud. People told King Jehoshaphat that they thought he was a good king. They honored him.

While the party was going on, I think that king Ahab leaned over and said, “Good friend King Jehoshaphat,” (try to sound flattering and sincere) “you and I are good friends, aren’t we? I have a small favor to ask of you. How about bringing your army to my country and joining together in a little war against the country of Syria? They have some land that I would like to have. You’ll help us out, won’t you?”

King Jehoshaphat said, “Oh, yes, King Ahab, you and I are good friends. I will be glad to help you anytime that I can.” Then King Jehoshaphat remembered God. “King Ahab, have you asked any of God’s preachers about whether you should fight this war?”

So, King Ahab decided to set a meeting time with some men who called themselves God’s preachers. There were four hundred of them who pretended to be God’s preachers.

On the day of the meeting King Ahab and King Jehoshaphat put on their fancy kingly robes. King Ahab ordered that thrones be set up near the gate of the city. King Ahab and King Jehoshaphat stepped up to these thrones and sat upon them. They looked so important and so elegant! Then the great big crowd of preachers came near the thrones. King Ahab said to these preachers, “We are gathered here today to ask your opinion about something. Would you advise that we go into battle against the king of Syria? Will we win the battle if we go? What does God say about it?”

Those men who called themselves preachers did not really know what God said about it; they just said that it would be all right to go to battle against Syria. Somehow, King Jehoshaphat began to feel like things were not quiet right. God’s people never feel quiet right when they are doing something wrong. So, another preacher was called to this meeting. He was really one of God’s preachers—this man said that they should not go into battle.

King Ahab was so wicked that he would not believe the preacher that spoke God's Word. King Ahab was so angry with this man who really preached God's Word that he had him sent to jail.

They got ready to go to war, anyway. But King Ahab got just a little bit worried. He said to King Jehoshaphat, "I am going to put on a costume. I don't want to look like myself. You put on your kingly clothes, though, and let's go to battle." Boy, he didn't think much about King Jehoshaphat! He wanted King Jehoshaphat to look like a king, but he didn't want to look like one because he might get killed.

The battle started. King Jehoshaphat was in his chariot, dressed like a king. King Ahab was in his chariot dressed like a soldier. Arrows were flying through the air; men were using their spears and their swords against each other. Suddenly, someone saw King Jehoshaphat. "Let's go after that chariot. Look, it's the king. If we kill him, we will win the battle." Many chariot drivers made their horses gallop toward the chariot where King Jehoshaphat was riding. The soldiers in these chariots were out to kill King Jehoshaphat, thinking that he was King Ahab. King Jehoshaphat saw these chariots start to drive toward him! He realized that they were out to get him! He cried out and the Lord helped him. God made the soldiers turn around and not harm King Jehoshaphat. Even though we might be disobedient to God, He still loves us. He still loved King Jehoshaphat even though he had made the wrong kind of friend.

By chance one of the Syrian soldiers shot an arrow from his bow at another soldier. It turned out that this was not just another soldier who had been struck by the arrow. The arrow went into the body of King Ahab. King Ahab died in the war that he started with the Syrian king.

King Jehoshaphat and his army went home. When they got near home, one of God's preachers came out to meet him. "King Jehoshaphat, I want to tell you something. God is angry with you for making friends with King Ahab. You have loved God and done right in many things. In this one thing, however, you have done wrong. Shame on you. You should never make friends with anyone who hates God."

King Jehoshaphat, I think, was sorry that he had to be scolded. He should have known better than to break God's rule.

You've all noticed the hands on our friend today. (Refer to the figure of the boy or girl.) When most people become friends, they shake hands. With what kind of people would we want _____ to become friends? I think that if he/she makes friends in Sunday school, that's the best kind of friends he could have, don't you? We should make friends with someone who comes to church all the time, someone who talks right, and someone who acts right. Then, let's love our friends.

LEARN OUR BIBLE VERSE: "A friend loveth at all times...." Proverbs 17:17.