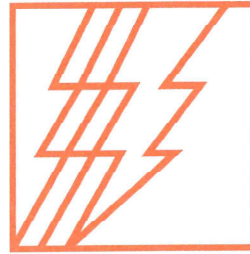


Question 18

Will God allow our disobedience and idolatry to go unpunished?



Answer

No, God is righteously angry with our sins and will punish them both in this life, and in the life to come.

Big Idea

God will judge and punish all those who sin against him.

Aim

To help the children understand that God will judge all people, and he will punish those who have sinned against him.

Bible Passage

Ephesians 5:5–14

Memory Verse

“For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.” (Eph. 5:5–6)

Virtue

Awe





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Leader's Notes

It will be obvious to the children that many people today live lives that are inconsistent with God's Word and God's standards. It may appear to the children that these people are enjoying great lives; they are living the way they want to with idols occupying the place of God. The children may wonder how people get away with living this way. Does God allow it? Are there no consequences for disobeying God? The apparent lack of consequences may be attractive for some children! This question will help them to understand that God hates sin and idolatry and that he has clearly stated in the Bible that he will judge and punish all those who turn away from him. This lesson aims to help the children to have a greater understanding of how God will deal with those who disobey him and encourage them to be concerned for those who have not yet responded to the gospel.

Things to remember when planning and teaching:

- For some children this will be a difficult and worrying topic, particularly if they have family and friends who are not Christians. Children will be anxious to talk about what God's punishment is like.
- Wisdom must be employed when explaining the concepts of justice, judgment, and punishment. Be careful to reinforce the understanding that God is a just judge.
- The world will think that the idea of eternal punishment is nonsense.
- Remember to mix and match the activities in the lesson to fit your time frame (see p. 12 for some sample outlines). You won't have time to do them all. Feel free to adapt each activity based on your class's strengths and weaknesses.

Leader's Prayer

Gracious God, thank you that I have found forgiveness through Jesus Christ, and that I am now in a living relationship with you. Help me to glorify you in my life through obedience. Grant understanding to the

children who will hear this lesson. May they be conscious of areas in their lives where they disobey you, and may we all have a greater concern for the lost. In Jesus's name. Amen.

Leader's Tool Kit

- Pieces of paper with numbers one to eighteen printed individually on them
- Newspapers from newspapers or TV news reports about a crime
- A gavel
- Markers
- Paper
- Large piece of paper



Catechism Recap

Print numbers one to eighteen on individual pieces of paper and place them upside down in the room. If you have fewer than twenty children in your class, use fewer numbers. If you have eighteen children use sixteen numbers; if you have ten children use eight numbers, etc.

Have the children line up against the wall, and tell them that when you say “go” they have to run and stand on a piece of paper. The children who don’t find a piece of paper to stand on must move to the side of the

room. Ask the children to look at their paper and see what number is written on it. If they think they can remember the question and answer, they should stand still. If they don’t remember it, they can swap places with one of the children at the side of the room. Invite a few of the children to recite the question and answer that links to their number. Play a few rounds of this game, reducing the pieces of paper each time. Try to work your way through as many questions as time allows.

Introduction to Question 18

Prepare some newsclips that detail a crime and show the perpetrator of the crime. (RB)

Play or read a newsclip for the children, and ask them to decide if the criminal should be punished. Ask the children why they think that the criminal should be punished.

Ask the children if they’ve ever been punished for anything. Ask them if they think the punishment was justified.

Explain to the children that in both cases, punishment was imposed because a law has been broken.

Introduce Question 18: “Will God allow our disobedience and idolatry to go unpunished?” Remind the children that God hates sin and idolatry, and explain that this question will help them to understand what God is going to do about all the sin and idolatry in his world. Acknowledge to the children that sometimes it seems as if God is not doing anything, and that he’s letting people get away with disobedience and idolatry, but reassure them that God will do something about it.

Activity

Tell the children that you are going to set up a courtroom. Assign one child to be the accused, one to be a guard, and one to be his or her lawyer. Pick a child to be the

prosecuting attorney. Lastly, pick a child to be the judge, and give him or her a gavel. Arrange your chairs and tables to make it feel like a courtroom, and let anyone

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who is not assigned a part be the audience (there is no jury).

Ask the child who is the defense attorney what his or her role in the courtroom is. Ask the prosecutor what his or her role is. Ask the same of the guard and the accused, and end with the judge. Emphasize to the children that it is the judge's role (in cases where there is no jury) to decide, based on

evidence, if the accused is innocent or guilty. If he or she is guilty, the judge decides what the punishment should be.

Explain to the children that the Bible clearly tells us that God will punish those who are disobedient to him. God is a just God and will deal accordingly with everyone who has sinned against him.

Teaching Outline

Begin the teaching time by asking for God's help. Ask that the lesson would be taught faithfully and that the children might listen well.

Highlight to the children that throughout history, all over the world and right up to the present day, the practice of punishment has been observed. Those who have been caught committing crimes have always been punished.

Explain to the children that we generally like the idea of justice, except sometimes when it's applied to ourselves. Help the children to understand that because we are made in the image of a just God, it makes sense that we are people who like to see justice prevail.

Remind the children that God is indeed just and that the Bible clearly states that he will punish those who disobey him and those who worship idols. Of course, God looks at the heart, and so he

is the only person who can fully know the disobedience and idolatry that a person is guilty of.

Explain to the children that although many people think they're getting away with living godless and idolatrous lives, that isn't actually the case. God is watching and will punish every sin against his sovereignty, holiness, and goodness.

Read Ephesians 5:5–14. Provide Bibles for the children to read along with you.

Introduce the children to Paul's letter to the Ephesians, and explain that Paul is encouraging the Ephesian Christians to live in a way that is consistent with being members of God's family. He is encouraging them to put off the old lifestyle and put on the new. He is exhorting them to live holy lives that are glorifying to God, and one of the ways he does that is by explaining to them the certainty of judgment and punishment.



When Paul says in verse 5, “For you may be sure of this,” basically he’s saying, “Make no mistake, guys, this is definitely going to happen. No one who is living a life that is ignoring God and loving idols will escape God’s anger and judgment.”

Explain to the children that Paul says to his readers, “Don’t let anyone tell you otherwise,” because he knows that some people will say that there is no God. Others will say, “Oh, don’t worry. God is a God of love, and therefore he will not judge or punish anyone. Surely everyone will go to spend eternity with God in heaven.” Paul warns that this is simply not true! At the end of verse 6, Paul says God’s wrath will come on those who are disobedient.

These verses in Ephesians 5 contain a clear warning. Those who have put their trust in Christ, however, can be grateful for the great exchange that occurred when we received salvation through Jesus. We received Jesus’s righteousness and became right with God. Jesus took all our sin into his own body and bore the wrath of God on our behalf.

In response, we should sing of gratitude in our lives, and we should be battling against idolatry and disobedience.

Paul reminds us in the next few verses that, as Christians, we must live as members of God’s family, as children of light. That means our lives should shine with goodness and righteousness and truth.

God’s ultimate judgment will occur at the end of history. At that time he will punish all those who have sinned against him and have denied the truth of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. The final punishment will be eternal separation from God and eternal punishment.

Finish the teaching time by helping the children commit Question 18 and the answer to memory.

(These notes are just for guidance. Please expand or amend to suit your own children and context. Write out your talk in your own words and include illustrations and applications that you know will connect with your children.)

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Activity

Give each child a piece of paper and a marker.

Have the children write down three or four crimes that would get someone arrested and taken to court. Then have them write down what they believe would be a suitable punishment if the accused were found guilty.



Next, have them write down three or four things that they or their peers might get into trouble for. Ask them to write down an appropriate punishment for each. Ask them if there’s a connection between the sort of punishments they might receive for disobeying their parents and those that people receive for major crimes.

Help them see that it is only when we understand the certainty and necessity of punishment for sin that we can understand

how wonderful it is to escape the punishment we were owed.

5 Discussion and Question Time

Some of the questions that might arise include:

? When will the judgment happen?

Explain to the children that the final judgment will be at the end of history when Jesus returns.

? What will the punishment be?

Tell the children that punishment will be separation from God. They will learn more about this when you cover the lesson on Question 28.

? What will happen to those who aren't Christians?

Remind the children that only God really knows and understands where

people stand in relation to him, but that those who have lived as if he isn't there will experience eternity without him.

Also use this opportunity to help the children to think about their own lives and how this question and answer affects them personally.

- Is their understanding of God big enough? Are they filled with awe when they consider the greatness of God?
- How might they use the world's love of justice as a way to speak about the justice of God?

10 Virtue Vision

Awe

Give the children a piece of paper and a marker.

Encourage the children to reflect on the character of God as revealed through this lesson. Ask them to think about the enormity of the punishment that is owed for even one sin against a perfectly holy God.

Ask the children if they were taken before a judge as a guilty party, what sort of emotion

would they feel? What sort of emotion do they feel when they picture themselves before God himself?

Ask them to write a brief letter to God explaining what they've learned about today. Help them to focus on God's power and justice. Remind them that the more we learn about God's character, the more we will be filled with awe of him. Encourage the children to take their letters home.





Memory Activity

Write out the memory verse or catechism answer on a large piece of paper without any spaces between the words.

Read the memory verse or catechism answer out to the children, and then invite the

children to draw lines between the letters where they think there should be spaces. Have the children read the verse or answer together a few times, and then hide the words. Ask the children if anyone would like to say it individually.

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Closing Prayer Time

Encourage the children to silently read their letters to God again and thank him that he is awesome.

