

Lesson 76

TEXT Acts 9:10-19

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES Acts 26:9-20; Romans 12:1; 2 Timothy 2:21

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to describe that Ananias was available to serve God and that he let nothing interfere with that service.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land. — Isaiah 1:19

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. — 1 Corinthians 15:58

ANSWER TITLE: **A Message in the Night**
SEARCH TITLE: **Ananias**

Reference Information

Ananias greeted Saul with “Brother Saul.” It is scriptural, as seen here, for Christians to refer to each other as “Brother” and “Sister,” inasmuch as we believers are adopted into the family where God is our Father. Ananias also referred to Christians as saints (verse 13). According to Adam Clarke, the original meaning for the word *saints* signified not only “holy persons,” but also “consecrated persons who are separated from all earthly uses and consecrated to the service of God alone.”

Saul was a Pharisee, a rabbi, the representative of the

Sanhedrin. He was held in the highest respect by the Jewish religious orders. His authority to have the Christians killed was upheld by the highest Jewish authorities.

Ananias was a Jewish disciple at Damascus, of high repute, who sought out Saul during the period of blindness which followed his conversion, and announced to him his future commission as a preacher of the Gospel. Tradition tells us that he later became bishop of Damascus, and died by martyrdom.

YOUR OPENER

Ananias

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KEY VERSE: Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. — 1 Corinthians 15:58

RESPONSES

1. Your students should note from the text that Ananias was a disciple or follower of Christ. He was apparently in close communication with God, for he readily responded when the Lord appeared to him in a vision. He was obedient. Acts 22:12 confirms that he was a “devout” man, and “of good report.” Apparently, his Christian witness was well known, and he was respected among the Jews who knew him.

2. Allow time for your students to discuss their answers. The point of this question should be to establish what type of person God can use. Discuss what a *devout* person is. Also what it means to be of *good report*.

3. Some examples that could be mentioned would be through a still, small voice (to Elijah); through a dream (to Joseph); through angelic messengers (to Lot); through the word of a prophet (to Ahab). Discuss the various responses to God’s messages. Your students should recognize that the spiritual condition and receptivity of the one receiving the message obviously played a great part in how they responded. Refer back to Ananias’ response and subsequent obedience.

The dictionary definition of *available* tells us that one who is available is one who “can be used.” God has chosen the instrumentality of man to spread the truth of His Gospel. But it is up to the individual to make himself “available” to God—ready to be used by the Lord in whatever capacity or location he deems best.

1. To be used of God, our spiritual condition must be in order. What was the spiritual condition of Ananias? Search through the text for clues as to his character. Then read Acts 22:12 and add that to your description.

2. Look carefully at each of the attributes or characteristics you have discovered about Ananias. Give a reason why each would be necessary for a Christian in our day.

3. God spoke to Ananias through a vision. Tell of some of the other ways God communicated His words to those in Biblical times.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

4. Saul had quite a notorious reputation in Israel among the followers of Christ. Ananias must have felt some anxiety when God asked him to go and see Saul, yet he did go. Many people worry about what they may be asked to do in the Lord's service. Tell of an experience in your own life where you were asked to do something for the Lord which you thought was beyond you. How did you feel at that time? How do you feel now when you look back on the incident?

5. With what words did Isaiah answer God's call (Isaiah 6:8)? Write down a word which describes the attitude of both Isaiah and Ananias.

6. According to Scripture, what does it take to be great in God's Kingdom? See Matthew 20:26,27.

7. The key verse lists three specific instructions for the believer. Write down the three, and give a short description of what you think the word or phrase means relative to the life of a believer in our day.

4. Allow time for your students to share their experiences. In looking back on past experiences, the student should become aware that God does not let us down or forsake us when we do something He has called us to do. Fear and anxiety are not necessary if we are obedient to His call. 2 Timothy 1:7 says, "For God hath not given us a spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

5. Compare the words offered by your students. Some words offered may be: willing, submissive, consecrated. Could God have used these men if they had not exhibited this spirit? Ask your students to contrast their responses to that of Jonah's.

6. Ask a volunteer to read these verses aloud. The students will realize that to minister or to be a servant to others is opposite of the general feeling prevalent in the world. But Christians are not of the world even though in the world. Ask your class to enumerate some of the ways they might be called to minister to others. Encourage them to list some specifics that might not be positions greatly desired. The Christian who is truly willing to be used by God in any capacity will do whatever the Lord calls him to do, even though the task may seem difficult (Nehemiah); be dangerous (Ananias, Paul and Silas); be unspectacular (Philip in the desert), etc.

7. As your students discuss their meanings for *steadfast*, *unmoveable*, and *abounding in the work of the Lord*, conclude your lesson by reinforcing once again the necessary qualifications for one who wishes to be used of God.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

Witnessing seems easy to only a few. Was it easy for Ananias to witness to Saul? How can we witness effectively? How can fears be overcome? When the Lord called Ananias, how did Ananias answer to show that he was ready to do what God told him to do?

How would you answer the Lord if He called you today to work for Him? Name some jobs that the Lord might call you to do.

What could have happened if Ananias was not ready to answer the Lord's call? Will you be an effective worker? Will God's work be accomplished?

In the ANSWER story we learned that Ananias finally felt a great love for Saul because he realized the Lord had chosen him. How did Ananias address Saul after this realization, to show his love? What spiritual lesson can we learn from Ananias' example?

THINGS TO DO

Bring a board and nail to class. Explain to the class that you wish to put the nail into the board. Attempt to push it in with your fingers, or to jab it in. Finally ask your students what you need. When they say that you need a hammer, point out the need for a tool to do the job. We must be "tools"—usable instruments—for the Lord so that His work can be done.

Arrange a circle of different-sized chairs, stools, and step stools. Have students take turns trying them out. Make a point that all are usable. No person is too old, too young, too sick, etc., for God to use if they are willing.

Bring a pen without ink, scissors that are dull, pencil that is broken, etc., to show these objects must be usable as well as available to be used.

Get the students to imagine that they are firemen or doctors in an emergency ward at a hospital. Ask them what might happen if they are not ready to perform their duties when an unexpected call comes in. It is the same way with the Lord's service.

Answers for ANSWER

Can You Help?

Fill in the missing letters in the circles on the file cards. Next, write the circled letters on the matching numbered lines on the MEMO. Read the memo and put a check on the file cards that show your response.

MEMO

I am
A V A I L A B L E
7 1 4 8 5 6 3 2 9

to:

1. VISIT the sick.
2. HELP my Sunday school teacher.
3. BRING someone to church.
4. PLAY an instrument.
5. TELL a friend about the Lord.
6. HAND out invitations to church activities.
7. CLEAN up the church.
8. SING a special song for Sunday school.
9. GIVE whatever time I have to help the church grow.