

DOES SUNDAY SCHOOL DO ANY GOOD?

Deut. 6:4-9 & Matthew 28:19-20.

August 20, 2006 Sunday a.m.

INTRODUCTION.

- A. A young boy asked his Dad if he went to Sunday School when he was a little boy. The Dad said, "Yes, son, I went all the time." The little boy replied, "Well, then, I guess it won't do me any good either."
- B. Does Sunday School do any good? Judging by the Sunday School attendance in the average Baptist church the answer must be no. Why is that? Why don't more people come to Sunday School?
 - 1. Some don't come because they think its too early on Sunday mornings. Those same people, however, get up much earlier than that on Monday in order to go to work.
 - 2. Some think its just for kids. Although it certainly is for children, people of all ages are benefited by being a part of a small Bible study group.
 - 3. Some think its boring. If it is its usually because the teacher has not spent enough time in preparation and the class members aren't doing their part in making Sunday School interesting and beneficial.
 - 4. Some people don't want to be put on the spot by being asked to read or pray in front of a group. The number one phobia today is speaking in front of a group. Add to that being a slow reader and Sunday School can be a disaster for some people.
- C. So what good is Sunday School? Let's begin looking for an answer by remembering where Sunday School came from.

I. WHERE DID SUNDAY SCHOOL COME FROM?

- A. It may surprise you to know that Sunday School is relatively new. There is no record of an organized Sunday School program in the Bible. Its much newer than that.
- B. In addition, it might also surprise you to know that Southern Baptists didn't invent Sunday School.
- C. Where did it come from then?
 - 1. A man by the name of Robert Raikes started the Sunday School program in England in 1780. He organized a Sunday School for the poor children of Gloucester, England. Before the passing of child labor laws in England, many children were working six days a week. The average work day was from 12 to 16 hours. Robert Raikes and his friends wanted to do something to help the children. Their answer was to start a school which would meet on Sundays. They studied more than just the Bible, but the Bible was included.
 - 2. American churches were slow adopting this new way of studying the Bible for two reasons.
 - First, it was new and anything new always faces resistance whether its music style or even studying the Bible.
 - Second, because preachers didn't like the idea of untrained lay people teaching the Bible.
 - However, by the early 1800's America adopted this new controversial program. During the 1950's and 60's Southern Baptists experienced unprecedented growth mostly do to Sunday School. But since the 1970's Sunday School attendance and growth has been in decline in most Southern Baptist churches.
 - 3. Even though the Bible does not mention Sunday School, it does emphasize the importance of teaching the Bible to others-Deuteronomy 6:4-9 & Matthew 28:19-20.

II. NOW THAT WE KNOW WHERE SUNDAY SCHOOL CAME FROM LET'S ASK WHAT IS IT FOR?

- A. If I were to ask most of you this morning what is the purpose of Sunday School, you probably would say, "To teach the Bible". That would be 25% correct. The purpose of

Sunday School is indeed to teach the Bible. However, that's only one of four purposes of the Sunday School.

B. Let's look at the four purposes of Sunday School.

1. First, Sunday School is the "teaching" arm of the church.. No argument there.
 - a. Illustration: Who tore down the walls of Jericho?-attached.
 - b. The Bible is the written word of God and has the power to transform lives like nothing else can- 2 Timothy 3:16.
 - c. The Bible lessons themselves are open ended, making it possible for new people join any time and fit right into the group study.
 - d. As important as Bible study is, though, this is only one of the four purposes of Sunday School. What are the other three?
2. Second, Sunday School is the "reaching" arm of the church.
 - a. Sunday School is designed for "inreach" to the class or group itself (i.e. check on drop outs and the sick).
 - b. Sunday School is also designed for "outreach". How so?
 - i. The classes are age graded so people can associate with their peers, the ones they have the most in common with. Age grading is one of the most difficult things in the church to do.
 - ii. A joke goes that whenever you see a U-HAUL pulling out of town it's a preacher or minister of education who tried to grade the Sunday School, or God forbid, divide a class for more growth.
 - iii. To join FBC a person must profess Jesus Christ as their Savior and be baptized, but to join our Sunday School the only requirement is they must be breathing!
3. Third, Sunday School is the "caring" arm of the church.
 - a. Sunday School cares about its own members through assimilation, encouragement, friendship and fellowship. If you don't attend Sunday School let me ask you how many people you know in the church? Chances are only a few.
 - b. Sunday School also cares about people outside of their group through ministry.
4. Fourth, Sunday School is the "evangelizing" arm of the church.
 - a. Thom Rainer, reported in his book, "[The Unchurched Next Door](#)" (Grand Rapids, MI. Zondervan, 2003, pp. 23-30).

Most of the unchurched prefer to attend on Sunday morning if they attend.
Most of the unchurched feel guilty about not attending church.
Eighty-two percent of the unchurched are at least "somewhat likely" to attend church if they are invited.
Very few of the unchurched have had someone share with them how to become a Christian.
The unchurched would like to develop a real and sincere relationship with a Christian.
Many of the unchurched are far more concerned about the spiritual well-being of their children than of themselves.
 - b. Churches need an intentional method of sharing the gospel with the lost such as FAITH or something else like it. However, when you invite someone to come to Sunday School you are potentially changing their eternal destiny because chances are if you can get someone in a small group Bible study they will accept Christ as their Savior.

CONCLUSION.

- A. Sunday School does do a person good.
- B. It won't though....
 1. If you don't attend.
 2. Or if you think its just about studying the Bible.

3. Its also about reaching, caring and evangelizing others.
- C. The origin of Sunday School may not have been the Bible, but there is no doubt that it is a God honored and blessed program for teaching, reaching, caring and evangelizing people. And that's what every church must be about.