

Lesson Three

The Source Of Freedom

LESSON IDEA

The partnership between freedom and responsibility can be traced back to the Garden of Eden, where we first learn that freedom is a gift from God that includes corresponding responsibilities.

VISUAL AID

The *Holy Bible*, and enough magazines (those with illustrations or advertisements showing people in action) to give one to each participant in the Heritage Hour discussion.

AMERICANS have inherited many wonderful blessings from past generations. Consider some of the items in our home that make life more pleasant and enjoyable. What do we have today that our pioneer forefathers did not have? [Ask each family member to name one or two items, such as telephones, electric lights, plumbing, washing machines, television, video recorders, computers, and so on. Then ask each one what life would be like without them.]

It is difficult to imagine going without such miraculous conveniences. Yet each is the result of the greatest blessing of all, which is neither an object nor a machine, but freedom: the ability think and act — and invent — for ourselves.

Freedom means that we can make our own choices. But as discussed last week, our decisions must be responsible or we may lose some or all of our freedom. As we grow and mature, what are some of the major decisions we must make about our lives? [Give each child an opportunity to mention two or three examples, such as which college to attend, what career to follow, and whom to marry.] Would we like it if someone else were to make such choices for us? Why?

What if you wanted to be a writer, but were told that you had to paint houses? Or preferred to be a policeman, but were ordered to be a fireman? Or looked forward to being a mother and homemaker, but were forced instead to work in a factory? Would you be as creative, successful, hardworking, or happy if you could not choose your own career? Why? [Give each member of the family an

opportunity to answer.]

ONE REASON why freedom is so valuable is it enables men and women to be their most creative. They work longer, harder, and more productively when they are free to exercise their talents and abilities. Because we are all different, we enjoy different things and express ourselves in different ways. For example, how many sports can we play? Can you each name a few? What if there were only one or two to choose from? [Let everyone answer.] What are some of the hobbies we can select? What are some of our career options? Who should determine which of these activities you will select?

The freedom to “be all that you can be,” as the old Army slogan said, is taken for granted by many Americans. Let’s take a moment and thumb through a few magazines to see how many different pictures we can find showing people at work or at play, following a career or hobby of their own choosing. See if you can find two examples of per-

FOR YOUNGER AMERICANS

The following lesson is appropriate for children at any grade level. To stimulate additional discussion, you may wish to explore its theme further.

The story of creation and the Garden of Eden fascinates most young minds. You may wish to read Chapter Three of Genesis, which describes the temptation, the fall, and being driven from the Garden. Here are some of the additional questions that are raised:

Why did Adam and Eve hide when they heard God in the Garden? Do we sometimes want to hide when we’ve done something wrong and are fearful of being found out?

When God asked why they had eaten of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, Adam blamed Eve, and Eve blamed the serpent. Is it a natural tendency to shift blame to others when we have done something wrong? How did God punish the serpent? How did he punish Adam and Eve?

Do you think that Adam and Eve learned a lesson from what happened? Would they have a greater appreciation for freedom? Would they want to teach their children the importance of making responsible choices?

sons using their freedom to create something or to relax. Now let's take another moment to discuss each. Can you explain how a picture you found portrays freedom at work? If the person (or persons) involved were not free, might there be guards watching, as in prisons? Would your picture even be possible without freedom?

We see that freedom to use our talents responsibly is very important. The ability to reason, create, examine, and invent all help to identify us as individuals who have the freedom to follow paths of our own choosing.

WHAT IS the source of such freedom? When was it given to us, and by whom or what? [Encourage each family member to participate in the discussion, but be prepared for some surprising answers. Three of the most common answers are incorrect.] They are:

The Constitution. No, the Constitution does not give us freedom. It merely protects our pre-existing individual rights and freedoms by defining and limiting the role of government through a series of checks and balances and a system based on the rule of law rather than the whim of dictators, oligarchies, or majorities.

The Government. No, because anything government gives us now can be taken back later. Government does not give us freedom; its purpose is to protect our lives and property so that we may enjoy the freedom we already have.

The Founding Fathers. While it is true that our country's Founders helped to secure our freedom when they declared independence from England, won the War for Independence, and wrote the Constitution, they themselves did not believe that they were giving us freedom. Remember what they said in the Declaration of Independence? Have someone read the following passage:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.

The Founders proclaimed that men possessed unalienable rights. What does "unalienable" mean? [Cannot be surrendered or taken away.] What were the unalienable rights with which we are endowed at birth? [Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.] Who gave us these unalienable rights, according to the Declaration of Independence? [Wait until someone answers "God" or "our Creator."] The Founders recognized that freedom comes from God, and that no government has the right to take it away. The purpose of government, they believed, is to protect us in the enjoyment of our God-given freedom.

IN THE FIRST chapter of the first book of the Bible (Genesis, which means beginning), we are told that when God created man and woman, he also gave them certain responsibilities and the freedom to make their own choices. Who was the first man? The first woman? Where did they live?

Let's read a few passages from Genesis to confirm that God wanted Adam and Eve, and their posterity, to enjoy freedom and to accept responsibility. Select two family members to read the following passages from the first two chapters:

Genesis, Chapter One

26. And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

27. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them.

28. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

Genesis, Chapter Two

15. And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

16. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou

