

OUR OBJECTIVE IN LIFE

By Jerry L. Henderson

Everyone has or should have an aim or purpose in life. Ours, as Christians, should be to teach others as Paul directed Timothy to do in 2Tim 2:1-5. There he told Timothy to teach to faithful men what he had learned so that they could teach others. Our objective in life then should be to teach others.

In thinking about our objective in life, I want to look at an account from the Old Testament in Judges 6:33-40. Here is the story of Gideon and the Midianites. The Midianites had impoverished Israel and wasted their substance Jud 6:6. Gideon was selected to deliver Israel from the oppression of the Midianites Jud 6:33-40. In order for Gideon to perform the task God gave him, he would use the method God designed Jud 7:16-21. Each man was given a job to do and their success depended on each man doing his job in the manner prescribed by God.

Their objective was to defeat their enemy and God instructed them in the method they were to use. This involved the use of trumpets, pitchers and lamps with accompanying instructions in how to use them. They were to blow on the trumpets, break the pitchers in which were the lamps. All of this was to be done at a certain time. As you read this account you learn that they were very small in number. However, by doing things God's way they were able to meet their objective. It seems to me that we can draw some lessons from this account.

Our objective should be to "both save ourselves and them that hear thee" as Paul told Timothy in 1Tim 4:13-16. This lets us know that Timothy was expected to teach others. Also in 2Tim 2:2, 24 Paul makes it very clear that we as Christians (servants of the Lord) should be engaged in teaching others the word of God. Now, as with Gideon and the objective that God gave him, we are not left without instructions in regard to what we must use and the methods of using them in meeting our objective. Our example (our life – the way we conduct our business, our attitudes, our regularity of assembling with the saints etc.) is one method of teaching. Jesus said in Jhn 13:15 that his disciples were to follow His example and Paul said to Timothy that he was to be an "example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" 1Tim 4:12. Jesus said He had given them His word, which was the word of the Father Jhn 17:14; Jhn 14:24. The "Word" is the tool God has given us, which Paul refers to as the Sword of the Spirit Eph 6:17. We, as individuals must be engaged in teaching the Word of God and we must learn how to do this effectively. The only organization God authorized to be engaged in this work is the church, the body of Christ 1Tim 3:15; Phil 1:1. The Lord's church is authorized to use its resources to make known the Word of God. This, however, does not preclude or exclude the work of the individual.

Jesus, during His life on the Earth demonstrated the use of these methods of teaching. Everyone knew the kind of life that He lived, that is, the example that He set Acts 10:38; 1Pet 2:22. Even during His trial they could find no evidence against Him, they had to hire false witnesses against Him Matt 26:60. Pilate, his judge, could find no fault in Him Matt 27:23, 24. Even the thief knew Jesus was not guilty Lk 23:41. Then we are also aware of His teaching, He gave to His disciples the words of His Father in such a way that they could know that He came from God Jhn 17:8. Jesus taught at every opportunity. In His encounter with the woman at the well in Jhn 4:5-26, Jesus taught

several different lessons as the visit progressed. Jesus used every situation as a teaching one, so much so that they said of Him: "Never man spake like this man" Jhn 7:46.

No one can deny that Jesus was successful in His efforts to teach others. He used God's methods in a masterful way. Obviously, He was not successful in teaching everyone, but nevertheless He was successful as was His disciples. We can be successful also if we will learn and use God's word in our lives. By using the methods of God, the Israelites were successful against their enemy, the Midianites. Involved in their success was the fact that everyone fulfilled their purpose Jud 7:21. The early disciples were successful, they set the proper example in their life and everyone did their part. Paul makes it clear in Eph 4:16 that EVERY part of the body has a role in fulfilling the objective God has given to His body, the church.

Our example (our life), however must be right before our teaching can be effective. It is not enough to just "say" and not put the teaching of Scripture to work in our lives Matt 23:3. This is the reason the early disciples were disciplined when their lives were not right 1Cor 5:5; 2Thess 3:6, 14. It should go without saying that, if the organization, (the church) allows those whose lives are not right to remain in good fellowship; then the organization doing the work is not right. Also, if the organization (the church) is not organized according to Truth and working in harmony with Truth, then the organization is not right either.

We are indeed saved (added to the church) and charged with the objective of doing what we can to save others. This is our primary objective or mission in life. Are we as individuals doing everything we can to carry out this purpose? Am I and are you setting the example for those whom you wish to teach and along with that are you actually trying to make opportunities to teach them? If you are not a part of the saved (the church) or you are not faithful in your service, you cannot fulfill the objective God has given to those that belong to Him, that is, you cannot help save others until you are saved yourself!