

Be Disciplined Like Daniel

Supplement to BAD TO THE BONE by Miles McPherson

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Introduction: BAD TO THE BONE

by Miles McPherson

BAD TO THE BONE, is about “fifteen young Bible heroes who lived radical lives for God.” Miles McPherson helps teenagers to relate to the struggles and victories of these young people in the Bible, and to connect with them as peers and even “role models”. He encourages teens to know that their problems and temptations are the same ones that teenagers have faced for thousands of years...and the Bible gives timeless hope and advice for conquering them!

“The Fine Print” Quote from McPherson

Okay, before the truth police come knocking, I need to tell you that even though th(e) book shines a spotlight on teenagers in the Bible, not everyone featured here is necessarily between the ages of thirteen and nineteen. Some are younger . . . For others we don’t know their exact ages, partly because Hebrew and Greek words for children are sometimes imprecise...All in all, though, the stories in th(e) book feature young people or the lessons they learned when they were young.

The **Bad to the Bone** devotional is set up primarily to be used Monday through Friday. But, as McPherson states,

“. . . rebels for God don’t take weekends off. That’s why I’ve included an important section each week called **Weekend Warriors**. Here, too, you’ll learn about young people in the Bible. But there’s a twist. Not all of them are positive role models; just like the kids around you today, some are living for God, others are not. Either way, you can learn from their victories and their mistakes.”

Here’s Life Inner City is please to present the following material which contains games, read-aloud biographical stories, illustrations, experiential activities and questions that supplement the daily devotionals in Bad to the Bone.

Be Disciplined Like Daniel

INTRODUCTION

DANIEL, SHADRACH, MESHACH, and ABEDNEGO

Behind the Scenes:

After moving to a new town, the young men quickly became popular. People respected them. Then they started getting pressure to compromise – to do things they knew were wrong. Saying “no” would have been easier if the people pressuring them weren’t so important. They had to please them, didn’t they?

Sounds like something that could happen today, right? But this is a story that happened 2,500 years ago!

Go to page 802 in The Youth Bible, New Century Version (Group Publishing) to the timeline entitled, “WHEN THE ACTION WAS.”

Daniel and his three friends had been dragged off from their home town of Jerusalem, and exiled to the foreign land of Babylon, which today is known as Iraq. (You probably know something about Iraq from recent events. Who live there today?) Their parents had been killed when the Babylonians conquered Jerusalem, leaving them orphans.

Go to page 802 in The Youth Bible, New Century Version (Group Publishing) to the map to show “WHERE THE ACTION WAS”.

Daniel 1:6 lists their Hebrew names: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. In Old Testament times, names had important meanings. All four of these names included syllables meaning “God” (El) or “the Lord God” (Yah or iah). So these faithful young men probably weren’t excited when they were given Babylonian names, some of which included the names of false gods. Verse 7 lists the new Babylonian names they were given: Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Read Daniel, chapters 1, 2, and 3 and then do the Bible studies for Week One: *Be Disciplined Like Daniel* and Week Eleven: *Be Bold Like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego* back-to-back as a continuous unit. You will reread certain parts of this Bible story each day.

For extra credit, how about reading Chapter 6 – the most famous Daniel story of all, Daniel in the lions’ den.

"The Right Stuff" - A Game Bomb Shelter

G A M E

BOMB SHELTER

**Interject this game
before the second
paragraph on page 16 of
BAD TO THE BONE**

Consider this scenario:

Worldwide terrorism has made it inevitable that the United States go to war, and there is a high possibility that we will be attacked with nuclear bombs. The government has built a number of bomb shelters in [your city] but there are only enough spaces to hold about half of the citizens.

After the war has ended, the surviving citizens will be responsible for reconstructing "life as we know it". These survivors will also be America's "ambassadors" to the rest of the world.

As a group, you must decide who gets to go in the bomb shelter. As individuals, you will have to promote reasons why you should be included – what valuable qualities will you be able to offer to the future world? Spend the next 10 minutes choosing who will go into the bomb shelter.

DISCUSS

1. Who will go into the bomb shelter? Why?
2. What was it like trying to convince the group that you should go into the shelter?
3. What was it like trying to choose which of your peers were "valuable enough" to be included?
4. How does this compare to the situation faced by Daniel, and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego when Nebuchadnezzar invaded their town?

Bomb Shelter is adapted from [JumpStarters](#), p.18, edited by Amy Simpson ©2001 Group Publishing Inc.

"Satan's Delicacies" – A Game Trusting God

G A M E

TRUSTING GOD

Interject this game
before the beginning of
the lesson on page 19
of **BAD TO THE BONE**

What's Gonna Happen:

You will put two cans of soda in water.
One will float; and one won't.

What You Need:

- (1) 12 oz. can of Coke®
- (1) 12 oz. can of seltzer
- 2 large clear pitchers filled with water
- Ziploc sandwich bag containing ½ cup of sugar

What You Do:

Fill each pitcher about 2/3 full of water.

Set the can of Coke in one of the pitchers. It will sink to the bottom. (if it doesn't sink right away, tilt it to release any air bubbles that might be caught beneath it.

Set the can of seltzer in the other pitcher. It will float to the top. Not big time, but floating nonetheless.

Put the Ziploc containing the ½ cup of sugar in your pocket or off to the side.

Of course, it goes without saying that the two soft drink cans are both unopened and at room temperature.

What You Say:

Here we have a can of Coke® and a can of seltzer. Who would prefer to drink the Coke®? Who would rather have the seltzer?

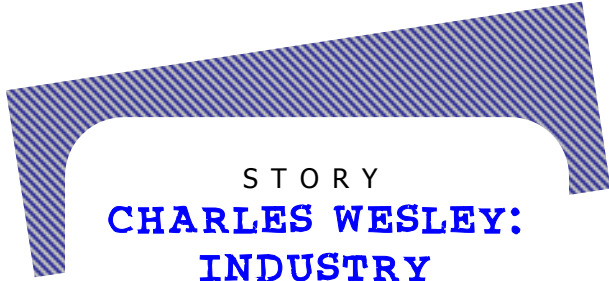
Pass the two cans around for a minute and let the group comment on which is "better".

Here we have two pitchers of water, and I predict that one of the cans – only one – will float. *Allow students to comment on this.*

Watch as I put the Coke® into one pitcher – just as I expected, it sinks to the bottom. Now watch the can of seltzer – believe it or not, it floats!

What makes the difference? The answer is right here – this bag of sugar. That's a lot of sugar, isn't it? That's how much sugar is in the Coke®; the seltzer doesn't have any sugar. Perhaps you already know, sugar is not very healthy for you – it weighs you down, and can cause you to gain weight. It gives a short burst of energy, but then leaves you feeling tired.

We have been talking about Daniel and the other young Hebrews who were captured by the Babylonians who wanted to them to eat all of the rich foods and delicacies of the King's table. But Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah requested to eat only vegetables and water instead of the fine food and wine. And they turned out to be the healthiest young men of the whole group. Let's talk about the "delicacies" that Satan wants to offer us.



STORY
**CHARLES WESLEY:
INDUSTRY**

Interject this story
before the “Interaction”
on page 21 of
BAD TO THE BONE

“Hard Work” – A Story
**Charles Wesley:
Industry**

**Read the following true story aloud
(or ask a student to read it aloud)**

Charles Wesley wrote 8,989 songs! Some of Wesley’s hymns include “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing,” “O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing,” and “Christ the Lord Is Risen Today.” Wesley was not only an incredible composer; he was also an incredible preacher. He chose to preach outside church buildings, an idea that was unthinkable during his day. More than once, Wesley preached to crowds of ten thousand listeners, and one of his sermons actually drew a crowd of twenty thousand people!

But Wesley wasn’t born great. In fact, he was born prematurely. Greatness for Wesley came through God’s direction and Wesley’s hard work. As a child, Wesley’s mother taught him Greek, Latin, and French for six hours every day! Wesley then spent thirteen years at the Westminster School and the next nine years at Oxford University. That’s 22 years of school!

Wesley could recite memorized poems written in Latin by the poet Virgil that took 30 minutes to recite. It’s very likely that Wesley also had memorized whole chapters of the Bible in Greek.

There’s no doubt that God gave Wesley guidance and gifts. But Wesley put those gifts to work. His diligent study strengthened and refined the talents he was given. If Wesley hadn’t worked and studied, those 9,000 songs would never have been written.

DISCUSS

Give each student an index card and a pen or pencil. Say: “Think of one thing you’re good at. For example, you may be a good basketball player, a good student, a talented musician, dancer or singer. You may be a good chess player, or have mastered skateboard or roller blade stunts. Perhaps you have mastered some computer technology.

Now think of how many hours on average you devote to that talent each week. Write that number on your card and multiply it by 52. Now multiply that number by the number of years you’ve been participating in that activity. The number you have, demonstrates how many hours you’ve spent on that talent or activity to reach your current skill level. Divide that number by twenty-four to see how many solid days and nights you’ve spent working on that skill.

God has given you natural talents and abilities just as God gave to Wesley. But to reach your full potential, you need to work hard at developing those talents, and you need to ask God’s blessing on your efforts so that they will produce more results than you could accomplish alone.

Charles Wesley-Industry is adapted from [Character Counts](#), pp. 52-53, by Karl Leuthauser ©1999 Group Publishing Inc.

"Secret Weapon" – An Illustration Conducting the Light



ILLUSTRATION CONDUCTING THE LIGHT

Interject this
illustration before the
"Interaction" on page 24
of BAD TO THE BONE

What's Gonna Happen:

You will shine a flashlight.

What You Need:

Clear plastic wrap, aluminum foil,
typing paper, flashlight and scissors

What You Do:

Cut 1" square sections of each of the
three papers.

Take the top off of the flashlight.

Put the square of aluminum foil
between the top battery and the light
bulb. Then screw the top back on.

Hit the switch. The flashlight will light.

Remove the foil, then try the paper;
bulb won't light.

Last, do the clear wrap; again, bulb
won't light.

Be sure the batteries are STRONG.

What You Say:

Jesus says in John 8:12, "I am the light of the world." These days, Jesus is not on earth in the flesh – He's in Heaven, but He is still the light. That is where you and I come in. Jesus is depending on you and me to let His light shine through us so that other people will see Jesus as the light of the world.

Here is a flashlight. (Show the flashlight; turn it on and off). This is Jesus, our light. God is the power, the batteries. As for us, we're like these things: the paper, clear plastic wrap, and foil. Let's take the top off of this flashlight and put one of these papers between the battery and the light bulb. We'll see if the light still shines.

Let's start with the foil (do the foil). Hey, it works! The foil is like the person who allows the light to shine through his or her life. Next, we'll try the paper. (Remove the foil; insert the paper). Oops, the paper didn't work...it's like a person who looks all clean on the outside, but is carrying things on the inside that block the light from shining. Now let's try the clear wrap. Hey, we can see right through it – surely it will carry the light. What do you think? Oh no, it doesn't work either. This is like the person who says, "I'll let God's light shine through me", but they have attitudes or habits that God cannot use.

(Remove the clear wrap and try the foil again). The foil is made of a material that conducts (acts as a channel or medium for) the electrical current from the battery. How was Daniel like this piece of foil? Which kind of material are you most like? If sin and other things in your life are hiding your God-given talents, be disciplined like Daniel, allowing God to develop in you His special talents so that you might shine for Him.

Conducting the Light is adapted from *Our Love for God*, p.12, by Heno Head, Jr. ©2000 Standard Publishing Cincinnati, Ohio

INTRODUCTION
ISHMAEL

Behind the Scenes:

Genesis 16 records the birth of a young man names Ishmael, and the circumstances surrounding it. About 4,000 years ago, God had promised a man named Abraham that he would become the father of a nation – God’s chosen people, the Israelites. But Abraham and his wife Sarah were both growing very old, and still had no children. So Sarah tried to create her own solution: she told Abraham to have sex with her maid, Hagar, so that when Hagar got pregnant, the child would legally belong to Sarah. Abraham did as Sarah requested, and Ishmael was born to Hagar. However, when Ishmael was about 13 years old, God did indeed give Sarah her own son, Isaac, which created jealousy between the women. Read Genesis 21:1-21 for the rest of the story.

Ishmael’s story shows that life is not always fair. But in every hardship, God is still present and able to help His children.

STORY
**MARTIN LUTHER:
HOPE IN THE MIDST
OF DESPAIR**

Interject this story
before the “Interaction”
on page 26 of
BAD TO THE BONE

“Weekend Warrior: Ishmael” – A Story
**Martin Luther:
Hope in the Midst of
Despair**

**Read the following true story aloud
(or ask a student to read it aloud)**

It was the worst time in Martin Luther’s life! Ten years before this dark period, he had made some very bold accusations against the established church. Since then, Luther’s life had been in danger, and he was constantly attacked and challenged and criticized by those around him. He was emotionally and physically bankrupt, and he began suffering from periodic dizzy spells.

One night when friends arrived for dinner, Luther felt an intense buzzing in his ear. He went to lie down and called out, “Water...or I’ll die!” He was convinced that he was going to die that very night. Fortunately he didn’t.

Luther had bouts with depression and illness for the next five months. He was in pain from head to toe, and he truly felt as if Christ had abandoned him. On top of his own troubles, the plague (a highly contagious lethal, illness) had been spreading in Wittenberg, Germany, the city where he lived. Luther opened his home to the sick, and many of his friends died. Even Luther’s own son became ill.

But it was during this time of darkness and despair in his life that Luther wrote his most famous hymn, a crying out to God for help. It is a song that affirms God’s strength and protection, and it demonstrates that God responded to Luther’s cries. This hymn has bought hope to countless Christians through the centuries. Psalm 46 was Luther’s basis for the hymn:

*God is our protection and our strength. He always helps in times of trouble.
So we will not be afraid even if the earth shakes, or the mountains fall into the sea,
even if the oceans roar and foam, or the mountains shake at the raging sea.
The Lord all-powerful is with us; the God of Jacob is our defender.*

What You say: “Think of a time when you lost hope. It could be your darkest hour or a time when you were simply frustrated. How did you get through the situation?” Then share your own story of lost hope. After you have shared, ask for volunteers to share their stories.

As you proceed to the “Interaction” on page 26, help your students to express God’s faithfulness to them by what He has already done: giving them life, waking them up this morning, providing food and shelter, allowing them to live in America where people can have freedom and opportunity, etc.

ILLUSTRATION

ABSORBING GOD'S LOVE

Interject this
illustration before the
"Interaction" on page 28
of **BAD TO THE BONE**

"Weekend Warrior: Ishmael" – An Illustration Absorbing God's Love

What's Gonna Happen:

You will use a candle to absorb water into a glass.

What You Need:

2 pie pans
2 clear glasses
Water (adding a few drops of food color will enhance the illustration)
2 short candles
Matches

What You Do:

First, use a bit of melted wax dripped from a lit candle to stick one candle in the center of each pie pan.

Pour $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of water in each pan.

Set a glass over the unlit candle in pan #1. Nothing happens.

Light the candle in pan #2. Set the other glass of this candle. As the candle burns up the oxygen in the glass and then goes out, water will rise part of the way up the glass.

You may want to practice once or twice to be sure it works for you.

What You Say:

Here we have 2 pie pans, which represent the world around us and (as you pour water into each of the pans) the water in the pans represents God's presence in the world.

(Set a glass over the unlit candle). This glass represents a person, and the unlit candle is his or her cold heart. What happens? That's right - nothing. God stays outside of a person's life if they are cold to Him and are not seeking Him.

Now, here's the other pan. Same thing, only this time we're going to light the candle to represent a heart that is warm to God, that is seeking and desiring His presence. This person could be Ishmael, crying out to God in his distress in the desert, desperately calling out for God to help him. Watch what happens when we put the glass on now. Wow, how about that? The water just pulled right up into the glass.

Just as God was present and responded to Ishmael's cries for help, so will He draw near to you if you keep your heart warm toward Him and always seek His presence in your life.