

I CAN DO EVERYTHING THROUGH HIM
WHO GIVES ME STRENGTH.

—Phil. 4:13

FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE!

HOPE

“I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

—Jer. 29:11

The world is a hopeless place, but not without hope. Read the headlines or watch the evening news. You’ll see a depressing picture, a world out of control: soldiers dying in the desert, children abandoned by their parents, a world-wide AIDS epidemic. The news is never good.

Except in Sunday School.

Here is where we set the record straight. God is on his throne. Jesus Christ is alive. There is a reason to be optimistic about the future. God knows something that we don’t. He not only knows the end of the story—He wrote it. And nothing between now and then will happen without His knowledge or approval.

Always teach the good news. Prove to your students that with Christ the future is always brighter than the past. Be positive. Teach positively. The Bible has more promises than problems. “God has a plan.” And that plan is for your good—and the good of your students.

Your students arrive for Sunday School carrying the weight of the world on their shoulders. They don’t have to leave that way. You can lighten their loads. You can give them hope. You can assure them that their Creator has everything under control. But you can’t do that without believing it yourself. Your lesson of hope doesn’t come from your head—it comes from

your heart and is planted there by your knowledge of the Bible and its last pages.

Prayer: *Father, let the hope of your Word be evidenced on my face and in my words. But first let me know your hope in my heart. Teach me to cast my care on you and discover from my study how much you care for me. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

HOW GREAT IS THE LOVE THE FATHER HAS
LAVISHED ON US, THAT WE SHOULD BE CALLED
CHILDREN OF GOD! AND THAT IS WHAT WE ARE!
THE REASON THE WORLD DOES NOT KNOW US
IS THAT IT DID NOT KNOW HIM.

—1 John 3:1

LOVE WITH THE LOVE OF GOD.

LOVE

*If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love,
I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.*

—1 Cor. 13:1

You have only one job—to love your students. As a Sunday School teacher, you have many responsibilities. You must be knowledgeable of Scripture. You must possess classroom skill. You must be part prayer warrior, part coach, part social secretary.

But none of these roles is your real job. Your ultimate responsibility is to give students the one thing they need more than programs, knowledge, or skill. Your real job is to love your students unconditionally. You must make the Cross personal; you must make sure your students understand that the arms stretched wide reach all the way around them.

Drugs, peer pressure, school, family problems, physical adversity—students bring a world of hurt into the classroom with them. They're hurting; some are broken. And you have what they need. Love is the best medicine, and there's plenty to go around. Open your heart. Open your arms. Love your students.

George W. Bush said, "Grief, tragedy, and hatred are only for a time. Goodness, remembrance, and love have no end." Love your students. You're planting seeds that will bloom in eternity.

Prayer: *Lord, you loved me unconditionally. The Cross proves it, and I've found it in you. Help me to personally rest in your love. And let your love flow through me to my students—in word, in deed, in my attitude, and in my understanding. In Christ's name I pray. Amen.*

IT WAS HE WHO GAVE SOME TO BE APOSTLES,
SOME TO BE PROPHETS, SOME TO BE EVANGELISTS,
AND SOME TO BE PASTORS AND TEACHERS,
TO PREPARE GOD'S PEOPLE FOR WORKS OF SERVICE,
SO THAT THE BODY OF CHRIST MAY BE BUILT UP.

—Eph. 4:11-12

TEACHING IS A DIVINE CALLING.

AMBITION

*I will give you every place where you set your foot,
as I promised Moses.*

—Josh. 1:3

Don't be a teacher unless you want to change the world. It's in there, deep within your heart. It's that nagging feeling that there's a "big thing" you should be doing with your life. It's your ambition to do something great in the world—something great for God.

And it's a good thing. God gave it to you when He called you, saved you, and set you apart to work for His kingdom. Your appointment wasn't an accident. You may have doubts about your ability. But remember—God put that holy ambition within you. The fire that engulfs your soul when you think about your lesson or your class comes from above.

And He will see that your ambition is fulfilled. Your job is to be faithful. You're to do the work that He has assigned to you. Every week plant the seed. Water it. Tend the field. And God will give the increase. You may not see it now. It may show up at your door or in a letter. Your work will not be in vain. It's a promise:

As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my

mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it (Isa. 55:10-11).

Some people get up in the morning and have nothing to do but make money, win applause, or rule nations. You have better things to do—you teach Sunday School class.

Prayer: *Lord, thank you for your great grace that's available to accomplish my big job. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

DEAR FRIENDS, NOW WE ARE CHILDREN OF GOD,
AND WHAT WE WILL BE HAS NOT YET BEEN MADE
KNOWN. BUT WE KNOW THAT WHEN HE APPEARS,
WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM, FOR WE SHALL SEE HIM
AS HE IS. EVERYONE WHO HAS THIS HOPE
IN HIM PURIFIES HIMSELF, JUST AS HE IS PURE.

—1 John 3:2-3

PREPARE STUDENTS FOR GOD’S TOMORROWS.

ETERNITY

*He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also
set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom
what God has done from beginning to end.*

—Eccles. 3:11

Q Sunday School teacher’s work is never done—it goes on
forever.

Some weekends it seems it will never end. It starts early,
before you ever arrive at church. Your own kids are unruly.
The car won’t start. You forget your Bible at the house.

At church it gets no better. Everyone seems to arrive late
and in a poor mood. You read the scripture, and people yawn.
You tell a funny story, and there isn’t as much as a chuckle.
You ask for volunteers; there are none.

Will it ever end?

Yes, the day will end. And yes, your time of service as a
Sunday School teacher will end. There will come a day when
there are no lessons to prepare, no skits to rehearse, no classes
to teach, and no students to mentor.

It will all be over.

But in another sense, your work as a Sunday School
teacher will never truly end. The seeds that you have planted
will continue to grow. The lives that you have touched will in

turn touch others. The work that you have done will go on—well, forever.

It's not just about one weekend, one class session, one lesson. It's about placing the concept of eternity in the hearts and minds of your students. They must know that life never ends, that they will spend eternity either in the presence of God or away from His presence. That message begins with you. With your heart fixed on eternity—watch for eternal results.

Prayer: *Father, thank you for reminding me that what I do now will last forever. Give me the wisdom to remind my students that the decisions they make now will make an eternal difference. In Christ's name I pray. Amen.*