

YOU CAN BE A SPIRITUAL HERO

LIKE NOAH

*And ONLY Noah was left,
and those with him in the ark.
(Genesis 7:21c)*

It seemed that Noah was a failure. By human standards he was. But by God's standards he was a hero.

Noah was the only one among his family members who believed in and followed Jehovah God. He was especially disappointed in his father, Lamech, and grandfather, Methuselah (Genesis 5:25-26).

It was a very lonely life for him in many ways. His relatives and even his friends and neighbors were always thinking of ways to give themselves power over other people, or make them feel good, or make them look richer than anyone else. Noah wasn't like that.

The Bible in Genesis chapter six, verse eight (6:8) says, *The Lord saw that people thought only about evil things all the time.* Remember, these were Noah's friends and relatives.

Not only were Noah's friends and relatives sinning all the time, but they liked doing it. Satan leads us to believe that, if we're having a good time when we do something, it cannot possibly be evil. Satan has always deceived people; he is like a dangerous wolf disguised as a gentle sheep (Matthew 7:15).

NOAH IS DIFFERENT

In Noah's time, people did know who God was, and good people were supposed to pray to him, worship him, and try to be like him. But Noah was the only one who even tried to be good.

While Noah's friends and relatives were bragging to each other how important they were, Noah was at home humbly praying to God, asking forgiveness for his sins, and promising to try to do better. While Noah's friends and relatives were pursuing sexual conquests, eating all the time, or making their bodies wonderful to look upon, Noah was quietly teaching his children to love and honor God, take care of the sick, and work for an honest living. While Noah's friends and relatives were building bigger and better houses, riding on faster animals than anyone else, and making fine clothing and jewelry, Noah was offering sacrifices of whatever he had in loving adoration for his Maker.

Genesis 6:11 explains, *God looked at the earth, and he saw that people had ruined it. Violence was everywhere—{people had become evil and cruel} and had ruined their life on earth.*

Noah's lifestyle and moral standards were definitely different than those around him. It wasn't any fun being different than other people. Those other people must have taunted Noah with sarcasm, calling him names and saying things to him like, "You think you're better than the rest of us!".

GOD CAN ONLY DWELL WITH GOOD

All the bad things going on among people made God very sad and very angry. God is all goodness. Therefore, God cannot dwell with bad and still be God.

The Bible says God is Love. He created the world because Love must have someone to love. It is the same when people marry and have children. Parents do not have children so the children will admire them, but

so the parents can have someone special to love. Parents have children knowing those children may turn against them some day. But parents long so much to love, that they have the children anyway. God is the same way. Love requires free will. God did not create people to be robots. If robots did good all the time and said they loved someone all the time, it wouldn't be true goodness and true love.

It broke God's heart to see everyone turn to evil all the time. But there was a hero in this true story.

The Bible says in Genesis 6:8-9, *But there was one man on earth that pleased the Lord—Noah. Noah was a good man all his life. Noah always followed God.*

God decided to protect Noah and get him away from the evil people. How was that possible? By destroying everyone who purposely did evil all the time and enjoyed doing it. God decided to give the world a "bath", to flood the world and wash away its sins.

GOD TAKES CARE OF NOAH'S HEART LONELINESS

Noah must have been very lonely with very few friends. Imagine what it is like to be the only one standing up for right while everyone else is mad at you for not being sinful like them.

Whenever Noah was around his relatives and friends talking about things they shouldn't, or doing things they shouldn't, or planning things that never should have entered their mind, Noah had two choices: (1) He could remain silent and feel left out. (2) He could speak out against what they were doing and be mocked.

As long as Noah remained silent, he remained lonely. So God took care of his loneliness by the only alternative: Talking. Heroes don't become heroes by doing nothing. They do not become heroes running from challenges.

Noah, a plain farmer and carpenter (Genesis 6:14-16 and Genesis 9:20) became a preacher, an imam, a rabbi, a priest, a monk, a prophet. II Peter 2:5 in the Bible explains, *Noah was a man who told people about living right.* Apparently, every spare moment Noah had, he preached. Did his friends and relatives like it? No. They didn't want to change their way of living. But Noah kept on preaching.

GOD TAKES CARE OF NOAH'S PHYSICAL LONELINESS

God gave Noah a second thing to do to take care of his loneliness. He told Noah to build a very large boat, sometimes called an ark. It is all explained in Genesis 6:12-13, 14-17, 18:

So God said to Noah, "All people have filled the earth with anger and violence. So I will destroy all living things. I will remove them from the earth. Use cypress wood and build a boat for yourself. Make rooms in the boat, and cover the boat with tar.

"This is the size I want you to make the boat: 300 cubits long, 50 cubits* wide, and 30 cubits* high. Make a window for the boat about 18 inches* below the roof.* Put a door in the side of the boat. Make three floors in the boat; a top deck, a middle deck, and a lower deck.*

"Understand what I am telling you. I will bring a great flood of water on the earth. I will destroy all living things that live under heaven. Everything on the earth will die. I will make a special agreement with you. And you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives will all go into the boat.

Can you imagine how much Noah's neighbors must have made fun of Noah building a huge boat far away from any large body of water? His sons must have been made fun of at school. His wife must have been

made fun of at the market. But they stayed physically busy and it helped get their minds off the bad way people treated them.

HOW WAS NOAH ABLE ENDURE THIS ALONE?

God did not give Noah time to brood and feel sorry for himself. He put him to work preaching and building, preaching and building, preaching and building. It took Noah 100 years to build his big boat, and during that time he preached to his neighbors, his friends, his relatives.

Did they like someone preaching to them all the time? Of course not. Did Noah like it when they insulted him in order to get him to stop? No. He must have gone to bed many a night week after week, month after month, year after year feeling like a failure.

But he couldn't stop. Why? Because God loved everyone in the world and did not want to see any of them perish. Noah loved whoever God loved ~ Noah's neighbors, friends and relatives. His love was so strong, nothing could stop him from going to them over and over begging them to change their ways. Their insults hurt, of course, but he kept going back to them. Oh, how God loved these evil people and wanted them to change; God did not want to destroy them. Oh, how Noah loved these people and wanted them to change; Noah did not want God to destroy them.

Eventually, after giving everyone chance after chance after chance to escape death, the cleansing had to come. For righteous Noah's good, the cleansing had to come. After all, Noah was just human. God needed to protect him and help him. So, he sent the flood to destroy everyone who was not on the boat. Only Noah and his family went into the boat.

Noah endured because of love: Love for God and love for others. His heart never centered on himself and the rejection he felt. Because of this, after the flood, Noah's family went out and repopulated the earth. Because of Noah's faith, mankind got another chance. Rejected Noah was a hero.

Multiple-Choice Questions:

1. Noah's relatives, friends and neighbors were always thinking of ways to
 - a. make themselves happier
 - b. make others happier
 - c. make God happier
2. Noah's relatives, friends and neighbors sinned all the time because
 - a. they were forced to
 - b. they didn't know the difference in right and wrong
 - c. they enjoyed sinning
3. Why did God create man?
 - a. So he would have people to love.
 - b. So he would to be his slaves.
 - c. So he would have someone to worship him.
4. God told Noah to

- a. Go to war against all those sinners.
 - b. Call God's curse down upon all those sinners.
 - c. Preach to all those sinners to try to get them to return to God and being good.
5. Noah was able to preach to them because
- a. He had a better education than them
 - b. He loved the sinners.
 - c. He was taller and stronger and forced people to listen
6. Noah preached to them
- a. 1 year
 - b. 10 years
 - c. 100 years
7. During that time, Noah was building a large boat on his land, and the people probably
- a. Helped him
 - b. Made fun of him
 - c. Asked if they could ride the boat with him when it was done
8. After standing for God alone for such a long time, Noah
- a. Finally gave up and quit building the boat so he could be friends with everyone again.
 - b. Decided to continue standing for God alone.
 - c. Quit his religion.
9. Finally, God caused everything on earth to be covered with flood waters so that he could
- a. Make Noah's new crops grow.
 - b. Create some new rivers and lakes.
 - c. Protect Noah from the bad people.
10. How many other people decided to believe in God and join Noah's family on his boat?
- a. 20 others, including Noah's father's family
 - b. 80 others, including Noah's neighbors and his father's family.
 - c. No others.
11. Because Noah continued to trust in God, after the flood
- a. He became the honored father and ancestor of every person in the world after that.
 - b. He formed a navy that took over the world.
 - c. He kept the boat in good repair and people began to bow down to it.

Thought Questions

1. Have you ever had a time in your life when you tried to do what was right, but others around you wanted you to do bad with them? Tell about it.

2. It is important for Christians to meet with other Christians on a regular basis in order to encourage each other. But sometimes, there are no other Christians around. What are things a Christian family can do to worship alone daily or weekly?
3. What, of a physical nature, can you do to help some of your relatives, friends or neighbors? (This could involve food, clothing, transportation, etc.)
4. You have many you can and should pray for. Write below about how many relatives you will begin praying for. Write below about how many neighbors you will begin praying for. Write below about how many co-workers and other friends you will begin praying for.