

DON'T JUST STAND THERE, DO SOMETHING

Obadiah: Evil Prevails When God's People Cease Doing Good

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE

Obadiah vs. 1-14

SECONDARY SCRIPTURE

1 John 3:16-18, Matthew 5:43-47

OBJECTIVES

1. THINK: Understand that we are not just held accountable for what we do, but also what we don't do.
2. TODAY: Since evil prevails when good people don't do anything to stop it, students will commit to do something about a problem.
3. APPLY: Identify needs and consciously and humbly help those in need.

OVERVIEW

This lesson looks at the words of the prophet Obadiah given to the people of Edom. Edom was another name for Esau, Jacob's brother, and the land of his descendants also bears this name. (Remember that Esau was his fraternal twin who was "older" but "lost" his birthright to Jacob, through whom the Abrahamic covenant has now been passed). This book consists of just one chapter and it proclaims a judgment from God against the inhabitants of the land of Edom. At first, it's a list of what they've done to deserve judgment. Then, God judges them for what they have NOT done—specifically, coming to the aid of Jacob or Jerusalem when that city was under attack. This is the section of the text from which we will make most of our observations, challenging students to not ignore needs around them or assume they are not their responsibility—even with "enemies."

GETTING THINGS STARTED

Consider the following situations and share how you would normally respond during these times. Give your "real" response, not how you wish you would respond.

- Your family is driving and you see a car with a flat tire on the side of the road with a mom and her young kids staring at it. Is this your problem or someone else's? What do you do?

DON'T JUST STAND THERE, DO SOMETHING

Obadiah: Evil Prevails When God's People Cease Doing Good

- You see a student at your school using a cell phone to cheat on her test. Is this her problem or your problem? What do you do?
- It's late at night when you return from being out when you notice your neighbor's kids left their bikes out and the garage door is open. You know several items have been stolen from your neighborhood in the past. Is it your problem or theirs?
- After youth group, you see trash everywhere—under chairs, tables, a spilled soda in the corner, etc. Your problem or someone else's?
- You're on the roadside with a flat tire. It's 7pm, raining, and getting dark. Is this your problem or do you hope someone else will see it as theirs?

There are problems all over the world, every day. Most of them we're never aware of. But, these are not the real problems. The problems we really need to question are the ones we are aware of and yet do nothing about. Sometimes they are big problems like world hunger or poverty or broken families. Sometimes they are small ones, like trash that needs to be picked up or a car with a flat tire. But either way, big or small, we have to ask ourselves if God has called us to do something about them or to just walk on by? There are consequences to both decisions.

TEACHING GUIDE

God brings his judgment on Edom for two primary reasons:

1. they were proud
2. they didn't care about the needs of others

These two things often go hand in hand. When we become so self-confident that we end up proud, we also end up apathetic to the problems of others around us. If we are to be the people that God has called us to be, then we will need to embrace humility and not ignore the needs of others.

Read Obadiah vs. 1-14

DON'T JUST STAND THERE, DO SOMETHING

Obadiah: Evil Prevails When God's People Cease Doing Good

LESSONS FROM THE BOOK OF OBADIAH

- **Avoid pride at all costs for it is a source of sin.**

A Bible verse that many people recognize is “pride comes before a fall” (a paraphrase of Proverbs 16:18). Obadiah tells Edom that they are illustrating this verse (vs. 3). Their pride has caused them to think they are above even the access of God. Pride is a dangerous character trait that leads to other sins. When we are proud, we are not humble, thankful, teachable, or likely to listen to God. This puts us on a road headed straight to regret.

- **Help others because their problems are your responsibility.**

Edom is judged for their refusal to come to the aid of the city of Jerusalem when it was under attack. They did nothing to help it. Like a man who sits in a restaurant enjoying lunch and watches a man break in and steal a car in the parking lot, Edom ignores the plight of others. And much like an accomplice in a murder, Edom is guilty even though they didn't actually commit the crime. When we ignore the problems of those around us, we are also guilty and follow Edom to a godless place.

- **Be wise about what you choose to do and not to do. Both are important.**

We often think about what we do as either sinful or not. Like is going to “such and such” a movie a sin? Or is it a sin to do such and such on a date? But we don't often ask if it is sinful to NOT take action. In this case, Edom is guilty of both. Pride is what they did do. Care about the problems of their brothers in Jerusalem is what they did not do. Both were poor choices.

- **Do not find joy in the trials of others.**

The final words of rebuke from Obadiah to Edom come as a command to never rejoice in the plight of others. Don't dance on your enemy's grave, so-to-speak. We are not called by God to hate our enemies. We are called to love them.

DON'T JUST STAND THERE, DO SOMETHING

Obadiah: Evil Prevails When God's People Cease Doing Good

DISCUSSING THE TEXT

- Read 1 John 3:16-18. How do the words of Obadiah to Edom compare with John's words? What does this mean for us today as we live our lives?
- What does it feel like to have a need that no one will help you with? What would it have felt like to live in Jerusalem while it was under attack and have no one come to your aid?
- There are 3 main things in this text that come out as sins of Edom:
 1. PRIDE: Total consumption of yourself.
 2. APATHY: Refusing to care for the problems of others.
 3. VENGEANCE: Rejoicing in the trials of those viewed as enemies.

Of those 3 areas, which do you think was the biggest problem for Edom? Which do you sometimes struggle with most and how so?

APPLYING THE TEXT

- Read Matthew 5:43-47. Who is the hardest person or group of people in your life to love? What is one way you can begin to change that?
- In what ways are you actively helping others? Perhaps a friend or someone at school or a family member or co-worker? Can you think of something you could do this week?
- What do you think is the biggest problem in the world today? Hunger, poverty, illiteracy, war, disease, etc? Do you think God is calling you to do anything to help solve it? If yes, how so? If no, why not?

DON'T JUST STAND THERE, DO SOMETHING

Obadiah: Evil Prevails When God's People Cease Doing Good

- If you start to care too much about every problem in the world, you'll end up overwhelmed and stressed out. If you care about no problems other than your own, you'll end up selfish and proud like Edom. So, somewhere in the middle is a balance. It's well illustrated by the command in airplanes for an adult sitting with a child to put their own oxygen mask on before helping a child with theirs. So, how do you find the balance? How do you know when to ignore a problem instead of taking action?

FOR KEEPS (MEMORY VERSE)

*Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth
(1 John 3:18 TNIV).*