



Life Group Study Life Group Study Joshua 9-12

As we seek to know God, we find out that God has a plan for our lives. We were not put here on earth by accident but rather we are part of a divine purpose and plan, told beforehand by our Creator. We have been called to love God, love others as ourselves, tell others about the amazing things that God has done for us, pray, make disciples, engage in fellowship with other Christians, and teach truth through the power of the Holy Spirit. While it is reassuring that we have purpose, and following that purpose often is joyful, it can also be difficult, painful, and even discouraging at times.

Take 5-10 minutes to discuss how God has been revealing himself to you lately. Do you feel a sense of purpose? Is your current walk with the Lord full of joy, or is it difficult or discouraging? What one word would you use to describe your current spiritual journey?

Weekly Reading: Joshua 9-12 in its entirety

Background:

Israel has been led into the Promised Land and has been commanded by God to conquer it. God has promised Israel that they will possess the land and Joshua leads the nation of Israel across the Jordan River. The waters supernaturally part when the priests enter the Jordan and they cross on dry ground. Israel sets up 12 memorial stones as a remembrance for future generations, circumcises the next generation, and Joshua meets the commander of the Lord's army. Jericho falls, along with Ai (after an initial faltering by Israel), and Israel renews their covenant with God. Joshua reads the Book of the Law to Israel to remind them of what is commanded of them.

Group Study:

Read Joshua 9:1-15 - The Great Deception

There is a contrast between the nations described in Joshua 9:1-2 and Joshua 9:3-5. How did the Gibeonites act differently than the other nations? Why did Israel fall for their deception (hint - See Joshua 9:14-15)?

In v. 6, the Gibeonites asked Israel to make a covenant of peace with them. Why would this be dangerous to Israel as a nation? How could this prove to be fatal to this newly forming nation?

What does this passage tell us about how we should make decisions? What is at stake if we do not seek God's council in the decisions of our lives, no matter how small they may seem to us?

Take 5-10 minutes to discuss the importance of seeking council from God in our decisions. Can you share any personal positive or negative examples with regards to seeking the Lord for decisions and the results?

Read Joshua 9:16-10:9 - The Compromise That Costs

How was Israel compromised as a result of their decisions? What does this tell us about the importance of seeking the council of God?

What was the result of the compromise that Israel made? How did this negatively affect Israel? Despite their disobedience, how did God use this to further His plans (see v. 8)?

What does this teach us in regards to following God's commands? Is compromising a minor or major threat to our spiritual walk? Take five minutes to discuss this within the group. What can we do to insure that our spiritual walk is not compromised by this world?

Read Joshua 10:9-15 - Planetary Pause and Divine Interruptions

Two different schools of thought have explained this section of scripture;

1. God supernaturally slowed or stopped the rotation of the earth (for approximately a full day) to allow a longer day for Israel to complete their conquest.
2. The section is poetic in nature, as noted by reference to the Book of Jasher, and instead uses imagery to explain how God was fighting alongside of Israel because they sought his counsel and favor.

Both interpretations are possible in this portion of scripture. As one reads this passage, it becomes clear that if this is to be taken literally, then God did some amazing acts that day by changing the movement of the earth! If this is taken to be figurative, God continues to show how he is at work, working alongside of Israel to fight for His cause. Do you believe that this passage is literal or poetic in nature? What are the implications of either scenario?

Regardless of how you interpret this passage, what does this show about God working to fulfill his promises? How does this provide hope to us as Christians? If God goes to these lengths to fulfill his promise, how should this affect how we live our lives? Take 5-10 minutes to discuss God's promises to us and how this can give us hope during times of uncertainty.

Joshua 10:16-12:24 - Conquest as Commanded

Joshua concludes chapter 10 by destroying the five nations and their kings that rose against Israelites and the Gibeonites. The Southern and Northern nations are conquered throughout chapter 10 and 11 and the final defeat of the nations by Israel (Moses and Joshua) is summarized in Chapter 12.

Read Joshua 10:25

Why is this passage of scripture so important? Hint: See Deuteronomy 31:6-7, 23 and Joshua 1:6-7, 9, 18, What is common among these passages? What are the implications?

Again we see the command to Joshua to be strong and courageous. He is reminded to not be afraid of the future enemies of the Lord because the Lord fought alongside of him in the past. Just as God had promised, Joshua led the nation of Israel to conquer the Promised Land.

Looking back at what God had done in the previous passages, why do you think Joshua was able to respond so positively to such a daunting task? Why do you think the command in 10:25 was repeated so often to Joshua?

How can this be helpful to us today in regards to us trusting God's promises? How can we apply this to our lives today? How can we apply this to situations that call us to be witnesses to Jesus and who he is? Take 5-10 minutes to discuss the implications of how courage and strength should permeate the life of the believer, even in the face of daunting tasks.

Conclusion:

These sections of scripture truly show the importance of seeking God's counsel, never compromising in obeying his commands, the lengths God will go to keep his promises, and the command to remain courageous and strong in spite of difficult situations.

How will you apply these principles to your life right now? How will your life change as a result of these revelations? How will this affect how you interact with others who do not know Jesus? With other Christians?

Prayer

Conclude in prayer about what you have learned.