

Week 2: The Good Book Small Group Notes

Opening Discussion: Plan out some ideas for fellowships. You may want to put a person in charge of planning the fellowships. Try to do a fellowship every six weeks.

Share 1-2 ground rules

Optional opener #1: Ask if someone wants to share how God spoke to them this week through His word and/or the devotionals. Celebrate what they shared.

Optional opener#2: Ask the group what they thought the point of each chapter they read was this week? (this will give you some insight into the thoughts of your group members) Celebrate what they shared.

Warnings

1. Keep track of time. If not careful, this could eat all your time,
2. What they share may give away some of what you prepared to teach

Key Theme: God can use even your failures

Passage/story: Judges 16:1-31 (Tell the story/rebuild the story)

Small Group Questions:

1. Can someone describe the book of Judges? (*people did what was right in their own eyes. The people disobeyed God. God brought a nation to judge Israel. The people cried out for deliverance. God raised up a "judge" to lead/fight for Israel's freedom. This cycle of insanity happened many times.*)
2. Do you see this pattern of temptation in your life?
3. In this story, Samson went looking for love in Gaza (1) and then in the Valley of Sorek (4). Both of these places were in Philistine territory. Who were the Philistines in relation to Israel? (*enemies*)
4. What are you sure to find in enemy territory? (*enemies*)
5. What can we learn from just these first four verses in relation to temptation and sin? What errors did Samson commit in these first 4 verses? Was he where he was supposed to be? (*looking for love in all the wrong places, or temptation comes when we hang out at the wrong places*)
6. Describe Samson's girlfriend Delilah?
7. Knowing what you know about Delilah, is she someone you would confide in? Why or why not?
8. Why did Samson confide in her? (*see verses 4; 15-17*)
9. What can we learn Samson's relation to Delilah about temptation and sin? What errors did Samson commit in these verses? Why should he have not confided in her? (*temptation comes when we hang out with the wrong people. See 1 Corinthians 15:33*)
10. What was the source of Samson's strength? (*"An oversimplification of Samson's story suggests that his strength was in the length of his hair. A better understanding suggests that Samson's strength originated from his vows to God."*)

11. When Samson allowed Delilah access to cut his hair, what did that say about his relationship with God?
12. Is Samson's story one of utter failure? (*no, see Hebrews 11:32-34. Samson is remembered as a man of faith.*)
13. What changed in Samson's life? What was the key to Samson's return to being used by God? According to verse 28, what did Samson do to be an effective judge one last time? (*He prayed. Spend some time digging in on his passionate, heartfelt, dependent prayer. This would be a great time to encourage your small group to sign up for the 24 hour prayer vigil on October 2-3, and to share that Wednesday, October 7 begins our prayer service.*)
14. What is the truth that this Bible story conveys? (*answers could be: although sin has consequences, God gives second chances; or even though we fail, God can still use us; or forgiveness and restoration is an honest, humble, repentant prayer away.*)
15. Looking at your life with the end in mind, how do you want to be remembered? What are the three or four words you want people to associate with you once your life is complete? Are you living by these qualities today?
16. What changes do you need to make in your life because of this Bible Truth?

Ask: How can we pray for you this week?

Closing Prayer:

- Thank God for the ways he has been your deliverer, provider, redeemer, and rescuer.
- Lift up prayers of praise for God's saving acts throughout history, as recorded in the Bible.
- Pray for God to grow your love for him and for the people in your life.
- Ask for power to follow his commands with increasing joy and diligence.
- Invite the Holy Spirit to show you where you've developed a subtle and hidden (or bold and brazen) attitude of "How far can I go?"
- Pray for power to live with an ever-growing "How faithful can I be?" attitude in all you do.