

ALTARS

Title: **ALTAR OF JOSHUA**

Date: MARCH 3, 2024

Leader's Notes:

1. Start and end the life group on time.
2. Facilitate discussions with your group and **give all attendees opportunities to share their thoughts**. Encourage participation.

Life Group Discussion Proper

WORSHIP: (15 mins)

Option 1: In person - Home gatherings

Suggestions: Assign someone to lead worship or play two praise & worship songs from You Tube.

Option 2: In person gatherings at a public place (park, school, café) or Online home gathering (via Zoom).

Suggestions: Ask people to share testimonies of answered prayers or ask the question: Ask the group, "What are you thankful to God about this past week?"

Main Text: Joshua 8:30-32

Intro: Joshua emerged as a remarkably successful leader in Israel's history. He started as Moses' assistant, then led Israel in conquering the promised land. Obedience best describes the theme of his life, exemplified by the scriptural passage found in Joshua 1:8-9.

"Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do (to obey) everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. 9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:8-9 NIV

WELCOME:(15 mins): IWC - Introduce yourself. Welcome guests/first-time visitors. Cheerfully call someone to do the same.

Ice-breaker Questions: Ask for participations

Q: Growing up, would you consider yourself an obedient child to your parents?

WORD (30–45 mins)

The theme of Joshua's life is total obedience. Let us study this important characteristic of Joshua.

1. Joshua's act of obedience WAS FOR THE RENEWAL OF THE COVENANT WITH GOD - Read Joshua 8:30-35

This covenant-making ceremony (gathering of **all the Israelites** at Mt. Gerizim & Mt. Ebal) re-establishes Israel's relationship with God. Joshua placed the spiritual well-being of the nation above external circumstances. Joshua obeyed the command of Moses' to assure the success of the campaign by committing to God as His covenant people, fully devoted to God in the land promised to Abraham and his offspring.

34 Afterward, Joshua read all the words of the law—the blessings and the curses—just as it is written in the Book of the Law. 35 There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded that Joshua did not read to the whole assembly of Israel, including the women and children, and the foreigners who lived among them. Vv.34-35

The 40 years of the Israelites wandering in the wilderness as we all know was because of Israel's lack of faith, disobedience, rebellion and stubbornness. They must renew their covenant-relationship with God. After the offerings Joshua made on the altar, He continued by reading from the Book of the Law, declaring the blessings of obedience and the consequences of disobedience.

Discussion Questions:

Q: Was there ever a time you wandered away from walking with God? Would you share your experience?

Q: What was your "turning point" which led you to go back to following Christ?

Application:

As people who desire to follow the Lord, there are many times we disobey God and distance ourselves from Him. This is why we need to **"go back to our altars"** and recommit our lives to God and dedicate ourselves anew to living a life of obedience to Him. The priority of our lives is to live in obedience to God. The priority is the restoration of our commitment with Christ.

Continuation:

2. Joshua's act of obedience WAS TO ENSURE THAT THE PRESENCE OF GOD WOULD BE AMONG THEM –

*Read: Deuteronomy 27:6-7 "Build the altar of the Lord your God with fieldstones and offer burnt offerings on it to the Lord your God. 7 Sacrifice **fellowship offerings** there, eating them and rejoicing in the presence of the Lord your God."*

This text contains Moses' instructions for the Israelites who are about to inherit the promised land.

Q: What do you think is the significance of these offerings?

Answer: These offerings is to establish God's presence among the Israelites. It is a guarantee they would encounter the blessings associated with His divine presence.

*"Make an altar of earth for me and sacrifice on it your **burnt offerings and fellowship offerings**, your sheep and goats and your cattle. Wherever I cause my name to be honored, I will come to you and bless you." Exodus 24:5 NIV*

Q: What is a Burnt Offering? This is an offering for the forgiveness of Israel's sins symbolized by offering an animal on the altar as a sacrifice.

Q: What is a Fellowship Offering? This is an expression of gratitude. It symbolized the healing of the relationship between the worshiper and God, for the restoration and renewal of fellowship.

Application:

As followers of Christ, we are assured of eternal life through God's forgiveness and salvation through our Lord Jesus. However, it's essential to recognize that salvation isn't just about escaping punishment from sin, it is about the restoration of our relationship with God. The ultimate blessing of redemption is experiencing God's presence, which enables us to fulfill His purpose for our lives.

Discussion Questions:

Q: What was the biggest change that took place in your life upon becoming a follower of Jesus?

Q: Was there a particular struggle you encountered before you totally surrendered your life to Christ?

Conclusion/ Challenge:

Joshua led the people of Israel into the promised land by relying on God's presence and power. In comparison, Jesus is our Savior who restores our relationship with God, OUR Heavenly Father and offers us the hope of eternal life. Similar to how the Israelites depended on God's presence in order to inherit the promised land, we all can rely on Jesus to help us overcome sin and our enemy, Satan and therefore inherit eternal life. As Christians, prioritizing God's presence is of utmost importance in our lives. By consistently seeking Him through prayer, meditation of His Word, and obedience to His commands, we unlock the fulfillment of God's promises in our lives.

Let us come daily and often to His presence in prayer and mediation of His words and obey Him every step of the way and we will find ourselves receiving the fulfillment of promises of God.

"Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. James 4:8 NKJV

"Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need." Hebrews 4:16 NIV

WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST TAKE-AWAY FROM THE LESSON?

Tell your group to partner with someone and ask this question to their partner.

Q: What impacted you the most from this lesson?

WORK: The Challenge & Closing prayer (15 mins.)

1. Memorize a verse from your devotions this week and be prepared to share it on our next gathering.
2. Please take time in your smaller groups to pray for one another. If there are specific needs, take time to lift them up to God in prayer as well. Ask each other, "**what can I pray for you?**"

Leader's Notes:

1. Please remind your group of your next gathering and ask them to invite a friend.
2. Please encourage the group to remember to pray for one another during the week.