

Main Passage: Joshua 1:16-18

Purpose: To live a Gospel-centered life, we must find support from other believers who will stand next to us as we answer the call of Jesus.

Session Snapshot: Living a Gospel-centered life is a difficult calling that requires the support of other believers. Spiritual growth and maturity will get stagnant at some point if only done through a solo effort. When we know other believers have our backs, we find strength and courage to keep moving forward in our faith.

GETTING STARTED

Kick off your time together by reviewing what you did in the last session and/or checking in with your group.

FIRST, remind your group that this is week four of their video series focusing on the truth that disciples must surrender to a Gospel-centered life. Of course, this unit is part of a larger look at what it means to be a disciple.

THEN, if you want, start with asking men for prayer requests, checking in on how their weeks have gone, or any other housekeeping tasks. You may also consider asking men what application or important points they have taken away from the last few sessions so far.

FINALLY, if there are no questions or other input, transition into the *Digging In* section of your leader's guide.

DIGGING IN

Jump into the session by watching this week's video.

FIRST, play the video. You can access the video by logging into your Iron Hill Press account.

THEN, when the video is over, lead men in a short discussion based on what Rick covered. Feel free to come up with your own questions, or consider asking some similar to those below:

- **What leadership positions has God placed you in? What role does your faith play in those positions?**
- **If you're married, how does your wife help you become the man God created you to be?**
- **Who in your life stands next to you when you take stands for the Lord?**
- **How does the support from other believers make you stronger in your faith?**
- **Do you ever feel alone in your faith and the calling God has given you? Explain your answer.**
- **What do you and your wife intentionally do to make an impact on the Kingdom of God?**
- **What friends do you faithfully support when they are in spiritual need?**

FINALLY, transition into the *Opening the Word* portion of your time together by saying something like the following:

- **God has called all of us to serve in His Kingdom in some capacity. Let's take another look at this passage of Scripture to see how we can serve with strength and courage.**

OPENING THE WORD

Spend time going deeper into a specific concept Rick introduced in the video.

FIRST, explain that you're going to take a more in-depth look at Joshua 1:16-18. But before you do, make sure your people have a good understanding of the context of the passage you'll be studying. Provide the context for the passage using the following bullet points:

- **Author:** Joshua does not state the author either, but it is likely Joshua since he is the main character of most of the book.
- **Time frame:** Joshua was likely written in the late second millennium BC.
- **Purpose:** The book of Joshua is named for the main character. This book tells the story of God's faithfulness to His people as they enter into the Promised Land. Under Joshua's leadership, the people experience the blessings that God had promised His people for generations.

THEN, read or have a volunteer read Joshua 1:16-18. When the volunteer has finished, direct their attention to verses 16 and 17. Lead the group in a brief discussion. Ask something like:

- **Before Joshua ever made a move as the new leader of Israel, he had the support and loyalty of the people. How do you (specifically, you) gain loyalty from others?**
 - Answers will vary but may include something like being a loyal friend to others, putting the needs of others above my own, trying to consistently do the honest and right thing.
- **Why do you think good leadership doesn't have to *command* obedience?**
 - *Answer:* People *want* to follow good leaders. When people know you care about them and have their interests in mind, they want to follow your leadership. The disciples gave up everything to follow Jesus because He loved like no other. The reason wives ever want to submit to their husbands is because husbands are called to love their wives sacrificially (Ephesians 5:22, 25).
- **If you weren't you, would you want to follow your leadership? Why or why not?**
 - Answers will vary.

Before transitioning to the next question, say something like:

- **Regardless of the leadership role we are in, we will never lead the right way without the Lord's guidance. A Gospel-centered life is impossible without the Gospel being our center. Christ needs to be the source of every decision and action.**

NEXT, direct your group's attention back to Joshua 1:17. Then, ask:

- **The only stipulation for support the people gave Joshua was that he would follow the Lord. Where does "following the Lord" fit into your leadership at home?**
 - Answers will vary.
- **Why is it important for God to not just be a part of our lives but at the center of our lives?**
 - *Answer:* If God is not at the very center of all we are, it becomes easy to compartmentalize Him. Unless we surrender all areas of our lives to God, we will try to lead those areas ourselves, often outside of His will.
- **What steps do you take to ensure God stays at the core of who you are?**
 - *Answer:* It will differ for each guy, but some common steps are: consistent time alone with God in His Word and prayer, meeting with other believers, accountability from mentors or trusted friends, consistent worship, etc.

THEN, re-read Joshua 1:18. We have to remember that Joshua was not only leading an entire nation of people; he was taking over where Moses left off. Moses! This was an intimidating role for anyone to step into. Chapter 1 is filled with the phrase "be strong and courageous" because Joshua needed to hear it repeatedly. Ask:

- **What areas of your spiritual life require the most strength and courage?**
 - Answers will vary.
- **What can you do to find the strength and courage you need for those areas?**
 - Answers will vary but will probably include fully trusting in the Lord, leaning on the support of other believers, drawing on past experiences where God provided and came through.

FINALLY, have a volunteer read Joshua 1:16-18. Then, say something like:

- **Notice that Joshua was never told that his calling would be easy. He was told that he could find support by following the Lord and doing so with strength and courage. Living a Gospel-centered life won't be easy for us either, but we can find what we need by following the Lord with strength and courage.**

Ask if there are any questions and if there are none, transition into *Accepting the Challenge*.

ACCEPTING THE CHALLENGE

Focus your group's attention on one key takeaway from your time together.

FIRST, explain that you want to challenge the group to focus on the takeaways from this session. Consider starting this portion of your session by asking your group what they think are the main application points from your session. Allow discussion to go until there are no more suggestions.

Then, if necessary, supplement your discussion with the following application points. Say something like:

- **One essential application is that we need support from others in our callings from the Lord.**
 - Tell a trusted friend about a calling you believe God has placed in your life. Ask him to pray for you and encourage you as you move forward with God's leading.
- **Second, we must keep God in the center of our lives.**
 - Commit to spending time alone with God every day this week. Pray on your way to work, read the Bible during lunch, sing some praises to the Lord as you walk your dog. Invite God into everything you do.
- **Third, God didn't call us to be passive with our faith. He wants strength and courage.**
 - Ask God to open your eyes to areas of your faith that need strengthening. Pray for Him to give you the courage to do those things He wants you to do, but you are afraid to do. Know that God can be with you as He was with Joshua and Moses.

If it feels appropriate, allow some discussion about the kind of processing they find themselves doing.

FINALLY, encourage men to continue to marinate on these points in the week to come. Challenge them to listen to what God is trying to tell them and respond accordingly. If there are no more questions or input, close your time together in prayer.