

## Small Group Guide: The Legacy of King Josiah and Jeremiah



### **Summary:**

In this exploration of King Josiah's reign, we're reminded that even the most influential leaders can't change hearts - only God can. Josiah, described as the greatest king in Judah's history, cleaned up the nation's idolatry and restored proper worship. Yet, despite his efforts, the people's hearts remained unchanged. This serves as a sobering reminder that external reforms, while important, can't replace genuine faith. The parallel drawn between Josiah and Jeremiah is particularly striking. Both were passionate for God's truth, yet faced rejection. Jeremiah's struggle - feeling the burning desire to share God's word despite constant mockery - resonates with our own challenges in living out our faith. We're called to reflect on our own spiritual lives: Are we allowing God to transform our hearts, or are we merely conforming outwardly? This message challenges us to pursue authentic faith that perseveres even when the world rejects it.

### **Opening Prayer**

**Key Takeaways:**

1. Even as a righteous king, Josiah couldn't change people's hearts - only their outward behavior.
2. God's judgment was delayed but not prevented due to the people's persistent idolatry.
3. Jeremiah faced constant rejection but couldn't contain God's message despite persecution.
4. Jesus taught that many will reject the gospel, but we should still share it faithfully.
5. Every individual soul matters to God and causes rejoicing in heaven.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What similarities do you see between Josiah's time and our current culture? How can we respond as believers?
2. Jeremiah felt like quitting but couldn't hold back God's word. Have you ever felt similarly about sharing your faith? Discuss your experiences.
3. The sermon mentions that Josiah changed external behaviors but not hearts. How can we focus on heart change in our own lives and in sharing the gospel?
4. How does knowing that "few will find" the narrow path impact your view of evangelism? Does it discourage or motivate you?
5. Reflect on Jesus' willingness to die for humanity knowing many would reject Him. How does this shape your understanding of God's love?
6. The sermon emphasizes focusing on individuals rather than large numbers in evangelism. Who are specific people in your life you want to reach with the gospel?

**Practical Applications:**

1. Identify one person in your life you want to intentionally share the gospel with this week. Commit to praying for them daily.
2. Practice articulating the gospel message clearly and concisely with a partner in the group.
3. Reflect on areas of "idolatry" in your own life that may be hindering your relationship with God. Make a plan to address one this week.
4. Write an encouraging note to someone you know who is faithfully sharing the gospel despite facing rejection or difficulties.
5. Memorize a Bible verse about God's love for individuals (e.g., Luke 15:7 or Matthew 18:12-14) to remind yourself of the value of each soul.

**Closing Prayer:**

Thank God for His patience and desire for all to be saved. Ask for courage to share the gospel faithfully, even when facing rejection. Pray for the specific individuals group members want to reach.

## 5-day Bible reading plan and devotional guide:



Day 1: God's Unfailing Love

Reading: Jeremiah 31:1-14

Devotional: Just as God loved and chose Josiah despite his wicked ancestors, He continues to love us unconditionally. Reflect on God's words in Jeremiah 31:3, "I have loved you with an everlasting love." Even when we feel unworthy or surrounded by darkness, God's love remains constant. How has God demonstrated His unfailing love in your life? Take time to thank Him for His faithfulness and consider how you can share that love with others today.

Day 2: Seeking God in Youth

Reading: Ecclesiastes 12:1-7

Devotional: Josiah began seeking God at 16, demonstrating that age is no barrier to spiritual growth. God told Jeremiah, "Do not say, 'I am too young.'" Whether you're young or old, God can use you powerfully. Reflect on areas where you might be hesitating to serve God due to perceived limitations. How can you step out in faith today, trusting that God will equip you for His purposes?



### Day 3: The Power of God's Word

Reading: Psalm 119:97-105

Devotional: When the book of the Law was rediscovered, it transformed Josiah's reign. Similarly, Jeremiah couldn't contain God's burning word in his heart. How central is God's Word in your life? Consider establishing a consistent Bible reading habit if you haven't already. Reflect on a verse that has particularly impacted you recently. How can you apply its truth to your life today?

### Day 4: Faithful Witness in a Hostile World

Reading: Matthew 5:10-16

Devotional: Jeremiah faced constant opposition for speaking God's truth, yet he persevered. Jesus warned us that the world would hate us for following Him. Reflect on times when you've faced resistance for your faith. How can you cultivate courage to stand firm? Remember, even if many reject the message, your faithfulness can impact the "remnant" God is calling. Who is one person you can pray for and share God's love with today?

### Day 5: Hope in God's Promises

Reading: Romans 8:18-39

Devotional: Despite the coming judgment, God preserved a faithful remnant through the Babylonian exile. Even in our darkest moments, we can cling to the hope of God's promises. Reflect on Paul's powerful words that nothing can separate us from God's love. What current struggle are you facing? How can you anchor your hope in God's faithfulness today? Remember that present sufferings pale in comparison to the glory that awaits us in Christ.