

Family Worship Guide

Joshua 7-9; Psalm 26; Matthew 3

Day One: Joshua 7:6-12

- After the stunning victory at Jericho, the Israelites suffered just as stunning a defeat at Ai. Joshua and the elders fell on their faces before the Lord asking how something so terrible could happen. The short answer? There was sin in the camp. The Lord instructed Joshua to find the guilty party and get rid of him and all he had. I imagine it was painful for all the Israelites to have to do this to one of their own but until it was done, God said He would not be with them.
- **Bottom Line:** God always has and always will take sin very seriously.
- **Questions:** When we face problems do we fall before the Lord asking 'why' before we look at the possibility of sin in our own lives? Do we stop and think about how our sin affects the body of Christ and God's name?

Day Two: Joshua 8:1-9; 30-32; 35

- God gave Joshua a very specific battle plan to defeat Ai. The first thing He told him was, 'Do not be afraid.' Even though the first battle against them ended in disaster and embarrassment, because Joshua and God's people followed His instruction to get the sin out of 'the camp', they could go forward in confidence of His blessing in the next battle. It is difficult for us to think of the entire population of Ai being destroyed but the judgment was of God's, the righteous judge and the Israelites were the ministers of His justice. At the end of the chapter, Joshua built an altar and led all the people in worship through reading the Law of Moses, burnt offerings and sacrificing peace offerings to God.
- **Bottom Line:** No matter how big the task, if we are following God's direction, 'Do not be afraid' is His word to us.
- **Questions:** If we fail at something we attempt for God, do we give up - even if we realize the fault was our own sin? Don't miss the great example of Joshua and all the people in worshipping God and being thankful and humble for the victory. (They had seen what happened in the first battle when they tried to do it on their own!)

Day Three: Joshua 9:3-13; 22-23

- The people of Gibeon were understandably afraid of Joshua and the Israelites after hearing what happened at Jericho and Ai. They did not desire the same fate so they came up with a plan to keep themselves safe. The lies in word and deed were numerous! It is striking that Joshua did not consult the Lord before entering into a covenant with them. When the lies were discovered, many of the people were angry and wanted to destroy the Gibeonites. Joshua, however, said the people of God must be true to their word. Instead of killing them, Joshua made them servants and they gladly agreed. (It was a much better fate than death.) The tasks given them were 'the meanest and most toilsome' according to commentary. But even in that, they were working for the house of God - no greater place to be.
- **Bottom Line:** Praying and consulting God should be automatic when faced with decisions.

- **Questions:** How difficult is it to keep your word when no one else around you seems to keep theirs? Even though they told many lies, considering their situation, can you understand the actions of the Gibeonites? What could they have done instead?

Day Four: Psalm 26:1-12

- This psalm is said to have been written during the time that David was persecuted by Saul and his followers. David knew his own heart and his love for God. But he also knew it was God's redemption and mercy that kept his heart there. Even when others lied about him, He was thankful that God knew the truth. Sometimes it was necessary for David to be in the presence of evil men but he vowed not to 'sit' with them - to be influenced by them. David loved the house of the Lord and worshipping Him there with His congregation.
- **Bottom Line:** We must walk in Christlikeness no matter what others say about us or do to us.
- **Questions:** Do we depend on God to vindicate us or do we try to handle it ourselves? When we are with nonbelievers, who influences who more? Verse 8 is my favorite in this psalm! A great memory verse.

Day Five: Matthew 3:1-17

- Kind of a long passage to read but worth it! We often think of John the Baptist as a very unusual character and maybe he was. But, his life was summed up in 'He must increase, but I must decrease'. What a great example.
- **Bottom Line:** We should have the singular focus that John did.
- **Questions:** Which prophet foretold the life of John the Baptist? Given that the description of John is so unusual, why do you think so many people still flocked to hear him preach? Talk about how great it must have been to be there the day Jesus was baptized and God's voice was heard from heaven!

PRAYER

- Pray for our church as we prepare for 40 days of pray at the end of April. I encourage your family to pray through this together. Pray for our church planting partners in New Orleans, Huntsville, Haiti, and Montana. Pray that our people would experience revival and have passion for reaching the lost of George County.

Memorize

- **Matthew 3:2** "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand."