

This guide is to help you facilitate discussion with your Small Group. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering and owning the truths of God's Word. There may be questions you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on their relationship with God. Your role is to facilitate this experience not to complete the discussion guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid teaching task list.

The Book of Deuteronomy...

After forty years of wandering in the wilderness, the Israelites were on the eve of entering the promised land. Before they did, it was necessary (lest they forget what God had done and who they were) that they be reminded about all that God had done for them and about God's holy law which was so vital to their ability to remain in the land and function as God's holy nation and as a kingdom of priests to the nations (Deut. 4:18). Therefore, shortly before his death Moses preaches three sermons urging the people of Israel to live in faithful obedience to the covenant laws given at Mt. Sinai 40 years earlier.

Moses' three speeches can be divided as follows:

Deuteronomy 1:6-4:43

Through a rehearsal of covenant history, Moses traces Israel's experience with the Lord from Horeb, to Kedeshbarnea, through their wilderness wandering and up to their taking of the land from Bethpeor so that they will remember the character of the Lord and obey Him as they prepare to enter the Land.

Deuteronomy 4:44-26:19

Through a rehearsal of Israel's covenant responsibilities with glimpses of national prophetic history, Moses proclaims obedience as the means by which the Lord will bless the nation in the Land.

Deuteronomy 27:130:27

Through a covenant renewal with the nation on the plains of Moab, Moses proclaims the blessing and/or cursing which will come upon the nation depending upon whether they obey or disobey the word of the Lord.

Study the Text...

In his final words, Moses challenges Israel as he foretells a turbulent future. Moses wants the people to know that their failure to keep the covenant will mean troubled times. However, he does not warn them so that they will live in the knowledge of future doom but so that they will heed the warning and amend their ways. Read Deuteronomy 30.

- What challenge is Moses setting before the nation?
- What is going to happen to Israel in the future?
- What are some of the consequences (positive and negative) of worshipping a God who cares whether you love him or ignore him (vv. 12, 89, 1718)?
- How might an Israelite who has yet to enter the land respond to the warnings written here (vv. 1114)?
- What issues of the heart are woven throughout the passage (vv. 2, 6, 10, 20)?

- How might this chapter be considered a summary of the entire book (vv. 19-20)?

Group Discussion . . .

- What did Moses mean when he said “he (referring to the Lord your God) is your life? (v. 20)”
- How is the Lord your God “your life?”
- Count how often the word “Lord” is used in the chapter? In light of the primary context of the chapter why do you think this is important? What does it communicate to the people of Israel? What are the practical implications of this for your life?
- What challenges would the people of Israel face in the future that would make it difficult to keep the covenant and obey the Lord? What about you? What daily challenges are you presented with that make it difficult to serve the Lord and easy to forsake Him?
- Throughout this chapter and the final chapter in Deuteronomy, Moses speaks often about blessings and cursings based upon the people’s disobedience or obedience? How is this teaching the same for believers under the New Covenant? How is this teaching different for believers under the New Covenant?

The Book of Joshua...

For centuries, the people of Israel had anticipated possessing the land God had promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Genesis 12:13). At the close of the book of Deuteronomy, Moses and the people of Israel were camped in the hills of Moab, just across the Jordan River from the promised land of Canaan. So Deuteronomy ends with the expectation that soon, these people would cross the river and begin their lives in Canaan. But Moses would not be the one to lead them into this land, instead Joshua would be the new leader of the people.

Therefore, the book of Joshua is the compelling history of the fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham and his descendants. After 400 years of slavery in Egypt and 40 years in the desert, the Israelites finally are able to enter the Promised Land. The long awaited promise to Abraham becomes a reality! However, unlike most military histories, in the book of Joshua the focus is on the commander’s Commander, the Captain of the Lord’s host (5:15). Repeatedly, as Joshua’s name illustrates (Yahweh saves), the book demonstrates that Israel’s victories were due to God’s power and intervention. The story is told in four parts:

- Chapters 1:15-12 Israel’s entrance into the land
- Chapters 5:13-12:24 Israel’s conquest of the land
- Chapters 13-21 The distribution of the land
- Chapters 22-24 Israel’s continued loyalty to Yahweh

Study the Text...

Entrance into the Land

The generation that refused to trust God's promises is now dead, and the new generation is at Canaan's doorstep. God is about to fulfill His promises to give Israel the land and make it a great nation. The mantle of leadership has passed from Moses to Joshua. Now, Joshua is responsible to lead the people into the Promised Land. Read Joshua 1:1-18.

- What does God tell Joshua to do in 1:19? List all the commands you can find.
- What does God promise Joshua in these verses?
- What role will God have in the conquest of the land He has promised? (notice a repeated idea in Joshua 1:23,5,9,11,13-15.)
- What will be Israel's responsibilities in obtaining the land (1:2,7-18)?
- How did the people respond to Joshua's instructions before entering the land (1:16-18)?
- How is the people's response different from that of the previous generation (Numbers 14:1-10)?

Group Discussion . . .

The New Testament uses the story of Israel's journey and entrance into the Promised Land to instruct believers in Christ. The following questions help us think through how the book of Joshua is applicable to us today. Read Hebrews 3:12-4:11

- What rest (or inheritance) has God promised those who have trusted in Christ?
- What caused the people of Israel to come short of God's rest? What does this mean for us today? How can we avoid this?
- According to the passage in Joshua and Hebrews what role does God play in seeing that we inherit His rest and not fall short? Why is this so important to remember?
- According to Hebrews what role does the body of Christ play in seeing that we inherit God's rest and not fall short? How is this lived out in your small group?
- The author of Hebrews instructs his recipients in chapter 4 verse 11 to "be diligent to enter that rest." What does this practically look like in your life?