

God instructs Joshua: "Be strong and courageous"

Committing to be a people of the Word

Growing as a people of prayer

Proud to be a people identified with God

Discussion questions:

1. What did God call his people to do as they got ready to enter the Promised Land (Joshua 1:1-11, The Story, pp.89-90)?
2. The first time spies were sent into the land, twelve of them went. Only two gave a good report; the other ten were so negative that they convinced the people of Israel the rewards weren't worth the risk. Four decades later, Joshua sent a team of only two into the land. Randy said, "Committees seldom make courageous decisions". Discuss the value of following a couple of bold leaders rather than a committee when it comes to those moments when we need to move forward quickly and with courage.
3. Just like the people of Israel, we sometimes are fearful of challenges and don't want to deal with them. What challenge in your life have you put on the back burner, but you know it is time to face it and deal with it?
4. How does consistent and faith-filled reading of the Bible (God's Story) help; us remain strong and courageous as we swim upstream against the currents of this world? What are your personal habits and commitments when it comes to Bible study? How do we grow in our love for God's Word?
5. Joshua read the words of God's story to all the people: children, teens, and the adults. What are ways we can help the children and young people in our lives grow in their knowledge of and love for the Bible? How can this be done in both our homes and churches?
6. Chapter 7 of The Story teaches us that we should always talk with God to make sure he is going before us and that we are not heading off on our own. Why is it so important to pray, listen to God, and follow his leading when we make life decisions? What are some of the possible consequences if we forget to do this? What area of your life do you need to commit to more prayer and listening?
7. Baptism is an outward sign of our identification with God. What is the meaning of baptism and why is this public celebration so important and powerful?
8. When Christians live in a world that flows so strongly against the desires and heart of God, we often are identified as believers simply by the way we live. Name some actions and attitudes that show the world we are followers of Jesus.

Homework: As we read Chapter 7 of The Story and during our discussion time, God may have brought to your attention an area of your life where you have given in and stopped swimming against the current of our world. It's not that you don't care, but you are being swept downstream in the wrong direction. If you felt such a conviction, make a commitment to take specific steps to follow God's will, resist temptation, and begin your battle against this particular area of sin or apathy. Ask a friend to pray for you and keep you accountable to keep up the good fight.

For next week, please read Chapter 8 of The Story (Judges 2-4, 6-8, 13-16).