

WELCOME (15 minutes)

- **Ice Breaker:** How convincing of a liar are you?

WORSHIP (10 minutes)

- Sing #2, “**God Most High**” from the **2015 SG Worship CD**.

WIN (15 minutes)

- **PRAY** for your list of people who don't yet know Jesus as their Savior.
- **PLAN** something to do to reach out to these people (*and maybe have fun together!*)

WORD (25 minutes)

Read: In this session, we read the story of Israel's choice to worship Yahweh as their God. As Joshua reads the book of the law and gave Israel a choice (worship God or worship idols), he called the people to remember God's faithfulness and live in the light of His salvation. We too are called to live in light of God's salvation!

Have everyone open their Bibles to Joshua 24.

Read: “May God help [us] to submit without delay [our] proud will in loving, child-like obedience to Himself.” – D.L. Moody (1837-1899)

Point #1 – Worship the Lord in **sincerity** and **truth** – Read Joshua 24:14

Discuss: After a life of faithfulness in leading Israel (as Moses' successor), Joshua called on the people to live in light of God's salvation – fear the Lord; worship and serve Him in sincerity and truth; and to get rid of the gods of your fathers. God wants worship that is genuine, authentic, and without hypocrisy. What would you say are characteristics of worship done “in sincerity and truth”? What characteristics would be found in insincere, untruthful worship? When have you ever been guilty of these?

Point #2 – Put away idols – Read Joshua 24:15-23

Discuss: The Israelites understood the implications of Joshua's words as they listened to him that day. Joshua didn't offer them the luxury of neutrality – they could not serve the one true God of Israel AND anything else! Then, in one of the greatest acknowledgments of an individual's undivided loyalty to God, Joshua affirmed that he and his house would serve the Lord. “Even if I and my family are the only ones in Israel who will serve the Lord, we will serve the Lord.” Joshua committed himself and his family to serving the Lord. What are some ways that a family (no matter it's make up or what stage it is in) can cultivate the same kind of devotion to the Lord's service?

Read: “When we ask people what they want in church instead of giving them what they were created for, we play into the very idolatry that church was created to dismantle.” – James MacDonald

Discuss: The people responded to Joshua with a congregational “Amen!” This was their verbal understanding that it would be ludicrous to forsake the Lord in order to serve false gods. But then Joshua realistically looked beyond their passionate declaration. He knew that Israel had often forsaken the God who had rescued them. He knew their sinful tendencies and their past unfaithfulness. But in spite of Joshua’s objection, the Israelites remained steady and once again made an affirmative confession – “No!... We will worship the Lord.” (Joshua 24:21) How does Joshua’s frank and honest assessment of Israel’s inability to be faithful strike you? In what way is our commitment to worship God in light of Christ’s salvation different than the Israelites’ commitment?

Point #3 – Commit to obedience as a sign of our salvation – Read Joshua 24:24-28

Discuss: Joshua made a covenant with the people. He wrote these words in the book of the Law of God. He took a large stone and personified it – as if it had ears to hear the resolutions voiced by the Israelites. The story of Joshua and his leadership reminds us of the responsibility we have to disciple the next generation – children, new believers, each other, etc. What is the significance of Joshua erecting a physical stone to remind the people of their commitment? How do we as gospel community help disciple each other to be people who are continually taking next steps of obedience to God?

Discuss: Justification is not the result of human effort or good works but through faith in the righteousness of Christ. Although good works do not lead to justification, justification leads to good works in the life of a believer (see Ephesians 2:10). Faith without works is dead (see James 2:17). While good works do not establish justification, they do verify a genuine faith and make our justification evident to others. Why is it important that we see obedience in light of God’s salvation and not as a way of earning God’s salvation?

Read: “It costs something to be a true Christian. Let that never be forgotten. To be a mere normal Christian, and go to church, is cheap and easy work. But to hear Christ’s voice, follow Christ, believe in Christ, and confess Christ requires much self-denial. It will cost us our sins, and our self-righteousness, and our ease, and our worldliness. All – all must be given up. We must fight an enemy who comes against us with twenty thousand followers. We must build a tower in troublous times. Our Lord Jesus Christ would have us thoroughly understand this. He bids us ‘count the cost.’” – J.C. Ryle (1816-1900)

For next time encourage anyone who wants to read Judges 1-3.

WORKS (25 minutes)

- Break into smaller groups of **2 or 3’s of the same gender** to pray for each other.