

lifegroup

resource guide

for the week of 21 October

*Joshua 23.1-16: Now it came about after many days, when the Lord had given rest to Israel from all their enemies on every side, and Joshua was old, advanced in years, 2 that Joshua called for all Israel, for their elders and their heads and their judges and their officers, and said to them, “I am old, advanced in years. 3 “And you have seen all that the Lord your God has done to all these nations because of you, for the Lord your God is He who has been fighting for you…”*

This is the final message from a beloved leader who knows his death is eminent (Joshua 23.1). It is the passionate charge of a godly man and a commanding leader whose eye remains on the future. Therefore his strategic intent is to inspire his people to remain faithful to the Lord so that they may bequeath their victory, blessings, ground, and gain to each succeeding generation. As such his farewell message forms a foundation for all believers who desire to faithfully possess their tomorrows, freely embrace their todays, and impart a lasting legacy of faithfulness.

Joshua’s speech is not about Joshua it is about the Lord. Remarkably absent is any recitation of personal accomplishment or self-serving praise. Joshua truly believed that Israel’s victories came solely from God’s leadership and not from his own. His lifestyle of praise equipped those around him to understand that their present well being and future security was found in God and not in his own loving leadership. True and transforming victory comes only from the hand of God. Wise is the one who understands this. Thankful is the one who experiences this. Faithful is the one who declares it.

Joshua testified to God’s faithfulness to honor every promise He has made (23.14).While Joshua’s integrity cultivated respect for the authority God had anointed him with, it is important to recognize he did absolutely nothing to establish a personality cult that would be dependent upon his every whim, wish, or word. Joshua went out of his way to develop a worldview that perceived well-being, peace, and triumph as signs of God’s covenant faithfulness rather than his own wisdom and ingenuity. Joshua was committed to making this a nation that was independently dependent on God and not on any single individual. Joshua’s example imparted the understanding that the security and hope of Israel were rooted in God’s faithfulness to uphold His promises and not in her mortal leadership.

Joshua declared that God’s promises would ensure their future victories (23.10).Whenever the people of God forget or neglect the promises of God they are treading on precarious soil because they will usually turn to the spiritual counterfeits of God’s promises— Power, Prestige, and/or Personal Gain. These are counterfeits because they provide inspiration, focus, and vision for living— just like God’s promises— but they are birthed in selfishness, fear, and a godless will to power. They inspire idolatry rather than faithfulness and therefore they are costly to the souls of the ones in whom they reside. They become self-serving rather than God-serving; takers and users rather than servers and givers. Such people may pride themselves for their spirituality but in fact their faith has meaning only to the extent that it satisfies their wants and feeds their desires.

There is never a time when we do not need our faith buttressed by God’s promises for our future. Life is dynamic not static—despite the attempts by some to control everything! Each day we face sin’s troika—the world, the flesh, and the devil. Their assaults are as endless as the ongoing campaigns against Israel by her enemies. Tomorrow’s insecurities and disappointments may quickly unseat today’s triumphs. Therefore, God promises that He will fight for us and deliver us safely as we cling to Him and order our lives under His authority. The ones whose minds are fastened on God’s promises for their future will not act precipitously in the present because they understand that God’s promises have already secured their future today.

Enjoy your LifeGroup!

What was the best gift your parents ever gave you?

Getting to know one another…

Getting to know one another…

Reading Scripture together…

Deuteronomy 5.16: A commandment with a promise…

*‘Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, that your days may be prolonged and that it may go well with you on the land which the LORD your God gives you.’*

What? (does the Bible say?)

How would you interpret the promise given to those who honor their parents (Exodus 20:12)?

Now what? (how will I think?)

Define “honor”.

What does “honor” include?

What do you think God’s promise means?

Do you think there is a difference between “honor” and “obedience”? Explain

Now what? (how will I think?)

The final six commandments govern human relationships. Why do you think this particular one would be found at the top of them?

Did your parents set you a good example of what it means to honor your father and mother? Explain.

What do you think might be the rewards that come through honoring our parents — both for us and our parent(s)?

How do we encourage the honor of parents who are dysfunctional and/or abusive?

Do you think we can honor our parents — even if we do not know who they are? Explain.

So what? (what difference does it make?)

How might we honor our parents even if they are dead?

If you have “spiritual parents”, how can you express your honor to them?

If your parents are living, what are three ways you can express your love and commitment to them?

How can your LifeGroup encourage you to honor your parents?

My prayer needs (write down in advance)

Praying for my group…