

## Message Discussion Guide

### LAW OF THE LAND

*The Church at Brook Hills*

*Dr. David Platt*

*March 7, 2010*

*Numbers 13-14*

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.

### **Connect . . .**

*Use one or both of the following options to introduce the discussion time to follow.*

#### **Option 1**

Ask members of your group to share about a time when, because of fear, they missed out on a great opportunity. Identify the focus of the fear: fear of failure, fear of uncertainty, fear of loss, fear of hardship, etc. Why was the fear so strong? Have they subsequently dealt with these fears? What would they do differently today?

Today we learn how fear led to terrible disobedience on the part of the Israelites in Numbers 13-14. Fear replaced faith in Almighty God.

#### **Option 2**

Ask members of your group to describe a time when, in obedience to Christ, they took what was seemingly a risk, and then God abundantly showed his goodness and greatness to them. What blessings did they experience? How did this change their faith? How does this encourage them today?

Today we learn the difference between the fearful and the faithful. Joshua and Caleb placed their trust, not in themselves, but in God and He blessed them richly.

### **Review the Message . . .**

#### **FEAR OR FAITH?**

Numbers 13-14

#### **The Radical Experiment...**

- To pray for the entire world.
- To read through the entire Word.
- To spend our time in another context.
- To commit our lives to a multiplying community.
- To sacrifice our money for a specific purpose.
  - As individuals/families, to free our resources to give to the church.
  - As a faith family, to spend our resources on urgent spiritual and physical need in the world.
    - Locally in inner-city Birmingham.
    - Globally in India.
  - Radical Experiment Budget 2010: \$1,491,645.
    - Locally: \$384,364.
    - Globally: \$1,107,281.

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- The Local Radical Experiment...
  - The Place...
    - East Lake
    - Gate City
  - The Plan...
    - Followers of Christ living out the Gospel in the context of a community of faith.
    - Church members serving selflessly and continually
    - Partnerships with organizations, schools, and churches
    - Ministry to orphans and widows (James 1:27)
    - Outreach initiatives focused on needs in the community

### Discussion

- Some statistics to think about from David's message:
  - 62 percent of the children in these communities are living with a grandparent.
  - Over 90 percent of the children qualify for the federal subsidized lunch program.
  - Gate City Elementary is ranked 677 out of about 720 Alabama schools.
- Discuss the three videos that were presented at the worship service (overview of the areas; Sheryl and family in Mark's Village; David and family investing in youth through sports and presence living there).
- What needs did you see or hear about in the videos? How can some of those needs be met in East Lake/Gate City; other areas of Birmingham; around the world?
- Why is long-term commitment to an area and the people there important?
- Why is physical presence/nearness important? How did Christ model that for us?
- Why are partnerships important in ministry?

### Application

- What are godly motivations for serving in East Lake/Gate City or in any area of need? What are ungodly motives? (guilt, savior-complex, glory for oneself)
- As related to the plan above, what does it mean to count the cost as an individual, family, or small group? How is God's call on each of our lives different? How is God call on each of our lives the same?
- Spend time in prayer as a group and encourage continued prayer as individuals/families.

### Portrait of the Fearful...

- They disregarded the \_\_\_\_\_ goodness \_\_\_\_\_ of God.
- They doubted the \_\_\_\_\_ greatness \_\_\_\_\_ of God.
  - They magnified potential \_\_\_\_\_ problems \_\_\_\_\_.
  - They minimized powerful \_\_\_\_\_ promises \_\_\_\_\_.
- They disobeyed the \_\_\_\_\_ Word \_\_\_\_\_ of God.

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- They disqualified themselves from the \_\_\_\_\_ blessing \_\_\_\_\_ of God.

#### Discussion

- Read Numbers 13:1-3, 17-24. Then read Numbers 13:25-33.
- Was there any disagreement over the goodness of the land?
- What seems to be the primary fear of 10 of the spies? (v. 32-33).
- How do you think the 10 spies and Joshua/Caleb came to different conclusions? Was the reality different? Were their experiences different? What was different?
- Read Numbers 14:1-12. Pastor David said, "Fear is grounded in lack of faith." How does this passage show that?
- How was the people's reaction rooted in disbelief and rebellion? How were they rejecting God's promises and His Word? (See Genesis 15:13-21 and Genesis 13:14-18.)
- Read Numbers 14:35. What was the consequence of their disobedience?

#### Application

- What kinds of fears do we have that are grounded in unbelief? (Try to get at the root of the fears.) How do we doubt the greatness of God and disregard His goodness when we allow fear to grip us? Can you think of some personal applications?
- How is it possible for us to lead others into unbelief, like the 10 spies did? What happened to the 10 spies soon after they gave their bad report?
- How is repeated sin also evidence of unbelief?
- What are the consequences of unbelief today? What kinds of blessings could we miss out on?

#### Portrait of the Faithful...

- They \_\_\_\_\_ believed \_\_\_\_\_ the goodness of God.
- They \_\_\_\_\_ trusted \_\_\_\_\_ the greatness of God.
  - Where others saw an obstacle, they saw an \_\_\_\_\_ opportunity \_\_\_\_\_.
  - While others worried about man's power, they were confident in God's \_\_\_\_\_ presence \_\_\_\_\_.
- They \_\_\_\_\_ obeyed \_\_\_\_\_ the Word of God.
- They would \_\_\_\_\_ experience \_\_\_\_\_ the blessing of God.

#### Discussion

- Read Numbers 13: 30 and 14:6-9 again.
- Who was the focus of Joshua and Caleb's trust?
- Did they deny the obstacles or difficulties? How did they see the obstacles? According to Joshua and Caleb, who was going to deal with the obstacles?
- Who did Joshua and Caleb fear? Who did they not fear?
- Contrast Numbers 14:9 and 14:42. What is the critical difference?

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- See Numbers 14:24, 38. Also Joshua 15:13-14. What blessings did Joshua and Caleb experience?

#### Application

- How should God's goodness and greatness affect how we view our circumstances?
- How should we see obstacles in light of God's character and our relationship to Him? How would this change our attitudes and reactions in times of difficulty?
- How is God's presence now always with us as believers? Can His power be taken away from us/our ministries? How?
- Today, what promises from God's Word can we put our trust in as we live out our daily lives?
- What are the blessings of obedience?

#### What About Us?

- Will we turn from God and trust in \_\_\_\_\_ ourselves \_\_\_\_\_...
  - Or will we turn to God and trust in \_\_\_\_\_ Christ \_\_\_\_\_?
- Will we \_\_\_\_\_ sit back \_\_\_\_\_ in fear of the world...
  - Or will we \_\_\_\_\_ step forward \_\_\_\_\_ with faith in the Word?
- Will we waste our lives in routine \_\_\_\_\_ religion \_\_\_\_\_...
  - Or will we spend our lives in radical \_\_\_\_\_ devotion \_\_\_\_\_?

#### Discussion

- On a day-to-day basis, how might we trust in ourselves and not in Christ?
- How might we live in fear of the world? What are some common fears American Christians have?
- How can routine religion trap us?

#### Application

- Consider a time of repentance to confess, silently or openly, any areas of your lives that may not be surrendered to trust in Christ.
- Ask what circumstances the group faces that are threatening their belief in God's goodness and greatness. Bring these situations before God and ask for His will to be done.
- Consider God's call to radical devotion. What might that look like for you and the members of your small group? How is God at work in your group?
- Is obedience always easy? What kinds of difficulties are possible? What/Who can sustain a person through difficulties? How?