



Small Group Teaching Guide
SEPTEMBER 24, 2017



PREPARATION

STUDY

Spend the week studying 2 Chronicles 23-24. Consult the commentary provided and any additional study tools to enhance your preparation..

DETERMINE

Many questions have been included in this guide. Read through this lesson to determine which questions will work best to encourage, push, and grow your group.

PRAY

As you prepare, pray for the preaching of God's Word this coming weekend. Pray also for your time in this week's study and your group's openness to God's Word.

LANDING POINT

The gospel gives us a real relationship with God that results in power, influence, and fruit bearing.



GROUP DISCUSSION

CONFIDENTIALITY | What's said in the group stays in the group.

NO CROSS-TALK | Be considerate of others as they share. Refrain from side conversations and texting during group time.

NO FIXING | We are not in the group to fix each other. Jesus does that part.

SHARING | Be sensitive to the amount of time you share. Don't talk too much or too little. Every person brings something valuable to the group.



INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

This week you will discuss what happens when you're dependent on others for your personal faith by looking at King Joash's story. His reign started well, but ended tragically. He lost the Battle for Faith, and his life shows us what can happen when we don't take responsibility for our faith. God desires a real relationship with you. And the gospel gives us the kind of intimate relationship with God that results in power, influence, and fruit bearing.

Q: *What does it mean to take responsibility for something?*

Q: *Describe someone who's dependent on others for his/her faith.*



LEARN

Select 2-3 questions from this section to answer.

JOASH, ACT 1: REFORMS & RESTORATION IN JUDAH

After the death of King Ahaziah, Joash's mother, Athaliah, reigned in Judah for six years. In order to establish her reign, this wicked queen sought to kill off all contenders to her throne. All but one of the Ahaziah's sons was put to death. Joash escaped and lived in the temple with Jehoiada, a priest who became his mentor. When Joash was seven years old, the priest conspired to usurp Athaliah. Leaders in the conspiracy pledged to make Joash king. Under Jehoiada's leadership, Athaliah was dethroned and put to death.

Before Joash became king, Jehoiada issued a series of reforms in Judah. Altars dedicated to idols were torn down. Levitical priests restored order and proper worship in the temple. Jehoiada gathered all Judah in ceremony to renew the covenant and to honor Joash as king. As king, Joash continued Jehoiada's reforms. His biggest project was restoring God's temple, which had been dishonored by Athaliah. The long, dark night of Queen Athaliah's reign had passed, and it looked like Joash would lead Judah back to God.

Q: *How would you describe Jehoiada's leadership?*

Q: *Who are the godly mentors in your life? What have you learned from them?*

JOASH, ACT 2: THE KING'S MIGHTY FALL

Everything was going well in Judah until Jehoiada died. Jehoiada mentored Joash to be the kind of king God desired. However, without him, Joash began to fall. He was influenced by Judah's princes, who led him and Judah back into idol worship. God sent prophets to warn the king, but he refused to listen. He became proud, and his heart became like stone. Not even the rebuke of Zechariah, a priest and Jehoiada's son, could soften the king's heart. Instead of repenting, Joash killed his mentor's son in cold blood.

Eventually, God sent the Syrians to judge Joash. Despite being smaller in number, the Syrians routed Judah's army and wounded Joash. Seeking revenge for Zechariah's death, the king's servants killed him in his bed. Joash died in disgrace and was buried outside the tombs of the kings.

Q: *What makes someone refuse to listen, even when they're given the truth?*

Q: *In what way are God's warnings an act of grace?*



LIVE

Select 2-3 questions from this section to answer.

SECOND-HAND SPIRITUALITY

Joash had a 2nd hand spirituality, which is what happens when you try to live your faith through others. We see this in Joash and how quickly he spiraled after Jehoiada's death. Let's look at some of the warning signs the king should have noticed. The first warning sign is codependency. Joash was more dependent on Jehoiada than he was on God. Without Jehoiada's influence, the wheels came off in Joash's life. You can't expect your pastor, spouse, or small group to be responsible for your spiritual life.

Another warning sign is willful ignorance. Joash refused to listen when God sent His messengers to warn him. Those with 2nd hand spirituality aren't teachable. The final warning sign is being blinded by sin. Joash should have

seen judgment coming and should have repented. Sin made him blind to its consequences. When sin blinds us, we are more prone to walk into danger and not think twice about the consequences.

Q: Galatians 6:2 tells us to “bear one another’s burdens.” What’s the difference between this and being codependent on others?

Q: What’s a good way to see whether these warning signs are present in your life?

REAPING THE RESULTS

If you suffer from 2nd hand spirituality, you will experience:

- 1. No relationship 2. No power 3. No influence 4. No fruit**

You can’t experience a real relationship with God and, at the same time, depend on others to do the work for you in that relationship. Take responsibility, ownership, and control of your faith. You can’t access the Spirit’s power to change you without a repentant heart that seeks God. If someone has no real relationship, power, or influence, it’s only logical to conclude that they will fail to bear lasting fruit in their life.

Q: What would it look like for you to take more responsibility, ownership, and control of your faith?

Q: Why is repentance essential if you want to have genuine faith?



LEAD

Select 2-3 questions from this section to answer.

GOSPEL POWER TO CHANGE

Do you want something more? Do you want a relationship with God that results in power, influence, and fruit in your life?

Thankfully, God hasn't left you alone in the Battle for Personal Faith. He fights for you. That's why He sent His Son—to win the battle for us that we couldn't win ourselves. The gospel reveals to us that we can have genuine faith marked by real repentance, change and lasting growth. "The gospel is the dynamic for all heart-change, life-change, and social-change. Change won't happen through 'trying harder' but only through encountering with the radical grace of God."¹

Q: *What do you want more of in your relationship with God?*

Q: *Who in your life needs to hear the good news that the gospel makes real change possible? How will you tell them?*



PRAY

Ask God to reveal areas where you've been living like you have a 2nd hand spirituality. Confess any ways you have not owned your faith or have drifted from Him. Be honest about what it is you want more of in your relationship with Him. Listen for Him to reveal areas in your life where He wants to bring repentance, healing, & change.



FOLLOW UP

Midway through this week, send a follow-up email to your group with some or all of the following:

- *Read 1 Peter 1:3–9 and reflect on how this passage helps you understand what genuine faith is.*
- *Ask the group to share any stories or lessons learned where they see God at work in their life.*



COMMENTARY

COVENANT RENEWAL The priest Jehoiada led a covenant renewal ceremony in order to reaffirm the nation's commitment to God's Law (i.e., Law of Moses) as the law of the land (see 2 Chron. 23:16–18). This significant event was a national declaration of the people's recommitment to God's covenant² relationship with Israel.

RESTORING THE TEMPLE (2 CHRON. 24:1-14) “Rather than the original plan that had priests and Levites going out to all Judah to collect funds for the temple refurbishing project (v. 5), Joash has a collection chest constructed, and placed just inside the entry area of the temple complex [...] This new approach fosters giving above and beyond the requisite census tax.”³

SPIRITUAL BOUNDARIES Dr. Henry Cloud says the following about boundaries: “Boundaries define us. They define what is me and what is not me. A boundary shows me where I end and someone else begins, leading me to a sense of ownership. Knowing what I am to own and take responsibility for gives me freedom.”⁴ It is important to exercise healthy spiritual boundaries in your life. Otherwise, you’re likely to expect others to own and take responsibility for problems you’ve created or encounter in your life.

ENDNOTES:

1. Timothy Keller, “The Theological DNA of City-Center Churches,” *Catalyst*, October 8, 2008, accessed September 12, 2017, <https://catalystleader.com/read/the-theological-dna-of-city-center-churches1>.
2. “Oath-bound promise whereby one party solemnly pledges to bless or serve another party in some specified way. Sometimes the keeping of the promise depends upon the meeting of certain conditions by the party to whom the promise is made. On other occasions the promise is made unilaterally and unconditionally. The covenant concept is a central, unifying theme of Scripture, establishing and defining God’s relationship to man in all ages.” Steven B. Cowan, “Covenant,” ed. Chad Brand et al., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 355.
3. Frederick J. Mabie, “1 and 2 Chronicles,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: 1 Chronicles–Job* (Revised Edition), ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 262.
4. Henry Cloud, “What Do You Mean ‘Boundaries’?,” *Cloud-Townsend Resources*, March 9, 2016, accessed September 12, 2017, <http://www.cloud-townsend.com/what-do-you-mean-boundaries-by-dr-henry-cloud-and-dr-john-townsend/>.