

PROJECT 4:4

Journey Group Discussion Guide

February

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Hi, we're glad you have a copy of the Journey Group discussion material for Project 4:4. We hope this will help your faith grow as you engage God's Word in exciting ways through out the year.

Allow us to give you a couple tips to make this material most helpful for your Journey Group.

1. The discussion guides are designed to highlight a passage from a particular day from each week's reading. An average 4 week month will have 4 discussion guides that your group can use. If your group meets before the chosen passage for that week is read, simply use the discussion material from the previous week.
2. This material is intended to be used by every group member. Leaders, make sure everyone in your group has access to it so they can be prepared for the discussions.
3. Remember that the goal is life transformation. Help your group's discussions move into the life change arena by keeping the "so what?" in mind. How should this information impact our thoughts, attitudes, or actions? What change is God calling us to make...and how can you see that change happen in your life?

God's Word is living and active and has the power to change the course of our lives. We pray that your life will be forever changed as you explore the Bible together this year!

January 31

Exodus 32:1 - 33:6

Pages 135 - 137

General discussion from this weeks reading:

- What did you learn about God in these passages?
- What did you learn about people in these passages?
- How will you integrate these things in your life?

Specific discussion:

Opening thought

Was there someone you “worshipped” as a kid? Maybe a cool uncle or a favorite super hero or sports figure. What was it about them that made you elevate them so much in your life?

Discuss

In asking for an idol, the Israelites were reflecting the 400+ years they spent immersed in a culture with many gods and idols. How can we see the influence of our own culture on our faith?

The jewelry that Aaron collected from the people so that he can make the idol is likely the same jewelry that the Egyptians gave to the Israelites when they left Egypt (Exodus 12:33-36, p. 112). They made God’s blessing into an idol. How do we face the same temptation to turn God’s blessings into idols in our lives?

Unlike ancient cultures, the idols of 21st Century America can be hard to spot. What do you think qualifies something as an idol in our lives today?

What can we learn about idols in our lives from God’s response in Exodus 32:7-10 and Moses’ response in Exodus 32:25-29?

Reflection: What are the actual or potential idols in your life today? Considering God’s and Moses’ strong response to Israel’s idol, what can you do to put these idols in their proper place of priority in your life (in other words, what are you going to do about it?)

February 8

Numbers 13:1 - 14:38

Pages 171 - 174

General discussion from this weeks reading:

- What did you learn about God in these passages?
- What did you learn about people in these passages?
- How will you integrate these things in your life?

Specific discussion:

Opening thoughts

What is the biggest high-risk decision you have ever made? How much of a role did fear play in the decision?

Discuss

Even though the result was not positive, sending the spies into Canaan was a wise move. How did Moses show wisdom in Numbers 13:17-20? What can this teach us about decision making?

In Numbers 13:25-29, we see that the spies found the land to be as fertile as God promised. What did they find that made them afraid? Were they wrong to take these things into account? Can fear play a healthy role in our lives?

For these leaders, their fear overcame their trust in God. When we let our fear direct us rather than following God, what does that say about our view of His power? His faithfulness?

Since God knew what would result from the spies' report, why do you think He told Moses to send them in? What could have happened if the whole nation had moved forward and run into these fears? Why did Israel *need* those 40 years of wandering in the desert?

Reflection: Just like with the 12 spies, it is often the smaller voice (only Joshua and Caleb spoke to continue on) that we need to hear. How can we quiet the loudness of fear so that we can hear God's direction? What decision(s) are you facing now that you need to hear God's voice?

February 16

Deuteronomy 6:1 - 9

Page 211

General discussion from this weeks reading:

- What did you learn about God in these passages?
- What did you learn about people in these passages?
- How will you integrate these things in your life?

Specific discussion:

Opening Thought

Have you ever reluctantly followed someone's advice or direction only to discover that they really knew what they were talking about (if not, just pretend that you have!)? How did that change the way you viewed that person? How would it effect your response to them in the future?

Discuss

Deuteronomy 6:1-3 says that the commands were given so that the people would fear God which would in turn give them a longer and better life. How do we learn to fear (or revere) God by obeying His commands? How does following God's laws benefit our lives?

According to Deuteronomy 6:4-5, what is the basis of the relationship that God wants to have with us? What do love and obedience have to do with one another? How does a person grow in their love for God?

Notice that God says to put His laws on our *hearts* (Deuteronomy 6:6). Why do you think God wants His laws to take root in our hearts first rather than our minds?

Verses 7-9 detail ways the Israelites were to incorporate these laws into their personal, family, and home life. God wanted to be integrated into their whole life, not just when they were at the temple. What cultural obstacles do we face in integrating God into our lives? What specific obstacles do you face in fully integrating God into your life?

Reflection: How would you currently rate yourself on a 1-10 scale of obedience to God? Is obeying God more a matter of duty or love for you? How can you move towards obeying more out of love? What steps can you take to more fully integrate God into your life?

General discussion from this weeks reading:

- What did you learn about God in these passages?
- What did you learn about people in these passages?
- How will you integrate these things in your life?

Specific discussion:

Opening Thought

First things are often special. Tell about a special "first" in your life (first car, first kiss, etc.).

Discuss

Why do you think God wants us to give Him stuff? What does He get out of it? What can we get out of it? Does it feel any different to you than paying your taxes?

In these verses, God makes a point to require the firsts from the field, flock, and family. Why do you think God values the firsts more than the rest? Since most of us aren't raising crops or animals, how can we give God our "firsts" in our day and culture?

In giving God the first of the field, flock, and family, what were the people acknowledging about God? What were they trusting Him to do by giving Him these firsts? What lessons can we learn from this to rely more heavily on God?

Few would disagree that we live in a consumeristic culture that drives us to accumulate more and more. How could this cultural dynamic impact our willingness or ability to give to God? Do you see any evidence of this in your own giving to God?

Reflection: Are you giving to God? If yes, are you giving Him from the firsts or out of the rest? If no, what will help you to trust that God will take care of you? Which priorities do you need to shift to give yourself freedom to give to God?