

Week 5: Beware of Division

Small Group Lesson

Introduction

“How good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity” (Psalm 133). There is a power in unity. In Proverbs 6:19 we see seven things that the Lord detests. Number seven on the list is a person who sows discord among brethren. Where there is division you will find broken relationships, broken families and broken churches. Our enemy the devil will do anything to sow discord and division within the body of Christ. Jeroboam and Rehoboam are two kings who because of their attitudes and actions brought division to Israel. In this lesson as we look at the lives of these two kings we will see how we can work towards unity and avoid division.

1. Division begins with an Offense

(1 Kings 12:12-14) - Rehoboam’s decision to speak harshly to Jeroboam and the people of Israel over a labor dispute led to an offense that caused the splitting of the nation into two parts (vs. 16). His ego, sharp tongue and refusal to listen to wise counsel opened a door to offense. We must be careful in the way that we confront issues. Our words can either heal or hurt a situation. When the opportunity for an offense is before us because of something that was said or done, we have to remember our responsibility to respond in a way that pleases God (Ephesians 4:32)

Question: The enemy is always trying to divide people into an us versus them situation and the opportunity for an offense is always present. How can we position ourselves spiritually to respond to others in a way that pleases God?

2. Division because of Selfish Ambition

(1 Kings 12:26) - The people of Israel made Jeroboam their king. Because of his selfish ambition, he further divided the people by setting up a new capital at Shechem and instituting pagan worship. God has called us to humility. The world around us operates on self promotion (how many followers do I have on my channel, how many likes). Philippians 2:3 Instructs believers to think of others as being greater than themselves. This attitude will cause us to promote others over ourselves and seek what is good for the community.

Question: In what ways does the world seek to divide and push an “*us versus them*” mentality? As believers, how can we be an effective representative of Christ and build bridges instead of exploiting disagreements?

3. Division exploits fault lines

(1 Kings 12:16) - Jeroboam knew that the situation was an opportunity to use to his advantage. He capitalized on the fault that Rehoboam had caused in the nation to divide it. Our enemy knows where our sensitive areas are. He knows what has hurt us and will use it for his agenda. We must recognise it and refuse to be divided.

Question: We have experienced in our generation areas where Satan has tried to divide us not just as a nation but as the body of Christ. What should be our response as a believer when our enemy tries to divide us?

4. Division recognises sensitive timing

(1 Kings 12:1-3) Jeroboam fled to Egypt from Solomon. After hearing that Solomon had died and knowing that things were fragile he returned to Israel. Satan knows the right time to bring division in a marriage, a family, in a church or in a nation. As believers, Galatians 6:10 instructs us that "as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, especially to those in the family of faith".

Question: How can we as followers of Christ be reconcilers when we see the enemy attempting to bring division around us? How can a proper perspective about ourselves prevent division?

Conclusion

Rehoboam had a huge ego that was impacted negatively by the peoples request to lighten the load. It caused him to refuse to listen to wise counsel and respond with harsh demands that caused division. Jeroboam's selfish ambition led him to divide the Nation and turn to idol worship. If we can identify and eliminate the causes of division we will find the power of unity and see God do great things!