

Week 9: Successfully Breaking Free

Small Group Lesson

Key Scriptures:

- 2 Corinthians 5:17
- 2 Chronicles 34:1-5
- 2 Chronicles 34:3-7
- 2 Chronicles 34:12
- 2 Chronicles 34:18-21

Introduction:

The two generations that ruled before King Josiah led Israel away from God into idol worship. It would have been easy for Josiah to continue on the same path but he made a decision to break free from idol worship and return to God. His life gives us some valuable lessons on how to break free and stay free from your past. We are not doomed to repeat the past mistakes or sins of our fathers. God wants us to be free. Believers look forward to eternity in heaven with Jesus. Until that time we can either live out our lives under the shadow of our past or in the light of the glory of our destination! Let's look at steps to successfully breaking free from our past.

1. Purposefulness

(2 Chronicles 34:1-5) - In the early years of Josiah's life he began to seek the God of his father David. Even though he had been raised in idol worship he made a decision to turn the nation back to God. The scriptures give us very specific times and the age at which Josiah took steps to cleanse the nation. If we are going to see change take place in our lives we need the same type of purposefulness we see in the life of Josiah. (*"Indeed the right time is now. Today is the day of salvation"* 2 Corinthians 6:2). When you make up your mind to do something that is in agreement with the word of God, power is released into the process.

Question: Share with the group an area of your life that changed when you were saved. Was it difficult for you?

2. Purge

(2 Chronicles 34:3-7) - To "purge" means to violently get rid of something. There was nothing vague about what Josiah did when he cleansed the kingdom. It was not enough for him to tear down the pagan altars

that had been built. Josiah ground them into powder so that it was impossible to ever repair them. The temptation when we come to Christ is to disassemble our idols and if things get tough we can reassemble them and return to our old life. If we are going to succeed in breaking free from our past idols we have to smash them to powder. We must make sure we cannot return to them and rebuild our chains.

Question: A great way to be successful in purging your life of those things that would lure you back into your past is to invite someone else into the process. This means making yourself accountable to another believer who is more mature than yourself in the Lord. Who are you accountable to in your walk with God or is that something that you need to seek after? (James 5:16)

3. Praise

(2 Chronicles 34:12) - Praise is always an integral part of breaking free from sins and darkness. The Levites were specifically chosen by God to minister worship in the presence of God. In this verse we see them put in charge of the laborers and all the differing responsibilities of rebuilding (something they normally would not do). As we break free from our past we need to make sure we are covering everything we do with worship and praise to God. Psalm 22:3 tells us that God inhabits the praise of His people. Praise and worship brings the presence of God!

Question: How do you respond to temptation from the enemy to sin? Have you tried putting on worship or the reading of scripture? How can that be effective for us?

4. Penitence

(2 Chronicles 34:18-21) Penitence is repentance. The first step toward freedom and forgiveness is an awareness of our sin and our need for repentance. When Josiah heard the words of the Lord he tore his robes and called the nation to repentance. Even though Josiah had done much and reached a level of success he kept his heart sensitive to the voice of the Spirit of God. Just because we may have walked with the Lord for a number of years we must remember that we never outgrow our need for repentance.

Question: How can success cause us to excuse our sins and make us numb to the convicting power of the Holy Spirit? What should we do if we find ourselves drifting from God?

Conclusion

Josiah removed all of the idols and idol worship in the land. As long as he ruled the land the people worshiped the Lord. What a great summary of his life. Josiah was able to break free from the past sins of Israel and return to the Lord. We too can live a life that is pleasing to the Lord. No matter where we are now we can be free from our past and live the life that God has promised us as His children.