

# Israel's Unbelief

## Session EIGHT

### TEACHING NOTES

#### God communicates

God promised to give the Israelites their own land

#### Consequences of faith and unbelief

12 spies explore the land (Numbers 13:1-3, 25-33, 14:10-12)

The Israelites did not believe God, did not enter the Promised Land, and wandered for 40 years

#### We need to remember what God has done.

Joshua takes over for Moses and leads them into the Promised Land (Joshua 1:1-2, & 10-11)

Rahab testifies to God's power (Joshua 2:8-11)

Where are you placing your trust? (Joshua 24:11-15)

#### People don't trust God

Time of the Judges begins (Judges 2:16-19)

#### KEY VERSE(S)

Numbers 13-14:12

Joshua 3, 6

Judges 2:8-19

1 Samuel 8:1-20, 16:1-13

2 Samuel 7:12-16

#### KEY THEME(S)

Consequences of faith and unbelief

People don't trust God

God invites people into His Plan

**NOTES****The cycle of Israel under the Judges**

- God raises up a judge
- Instead of responding in faith, people rebel and turn from God's rule
- They become enslaved by their enemies
- People turn to God and repent
- God raises up another leader that believes and follows Him

**God invites people into His plan**

God communicates with Samuel (1 Samuel 3:1-4:1)

Israelites cry out for a king so they can be like the other nations (1 Samuel 8:1-9)

Samuel anoints Saul as their king. Pride takes over, partial obedience, and God removes Saul (1 Samuel 10:17-25; 11:14-15)

Through Samuel, God chooses David, the unlikely one (1 Samuel 16:1-13)

David believed and followed God, and Israel enjoyed tremendous growth and victory

**God communicates what He will do**

God promised that through David's family tree the redeemer, Jesus, would come (2 Samuel 7:16)

David - A man after God's own heart.

**PERSONAL STUDY**

**NOTES**

This is your personal study time, a time for you and God. Take this opportunity to intentionally seek God knowing that He is pursuing you right this very minute. God is the one who is going to draw you closer to Him. He desires a willing heart.

**Session 1** (approximately 20 minutes)

**Prepare your heart and mind**

Begin your time with God by asking Him to help you connect with His truth and the presence of His Holy Spirit. Ask Him to help you focus on what He wants you to know.

**Read Numbers 13 & 14**

What did Joshua and Caleb report from the trip?

What happened to the ten (and the people they convinced) that didn't trust God?

Joshua and Caleb were ready to go. They knew what God had promised the Israelites. They believed Him, and were ready to claim that promise. When they went out with the other ten spies they saw the land as theirs – the land God had promised them. They explored from that mindset. Sure, the people may have been big and the land unknown, but they didn't fear because they believed God.

Those that did not believe God did not enter the Promised Land. They had heard for years about God's promises. They lived with the knowledge of that promise, yet not in the reality of it. They knew the promise, but didn't truly embrace, believe, and live it. The same is true for us though too, right?

**NOTES**

Are you believing God? If so, how? If not, why?

What have you missed out on from not believing Him? What could you be missing out on right now?

**Key verse**

Put to memory Joshua 24:15. Write it out on a note card or Post-it and put it where you can see it throughout the day.

*But if you refuse to serve the Lord, then choose today whom you will serve. Would you prefer the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates? Or will it be the gods of the Amorites in whose land you now live? But as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord.*  
(Joshua 24:15)

**Prayer time**

Spend some time thanking God for the example of faith in the life of Joshua and Caleb. Share with Him how you want to be more like the two but find yourself acting like the ten. Ask Him to grow your faith and belief in His goodness.

**Session 2** (approximately 20 minutes)**Prepare your heart and mind**

Begin your time with God by asking the Holy Spirit to quiet your mind and turn your heart towards Him.

**Read Judges 2:16-19**

Judge after judge the people just kept doing the same thing. God would raise up a judge, Israel would rebel and turn away from God's rule, they would become enslaved by their enemies, they would turn

back to God and repent. He would respond and raise up another leader that believed and followed Him... and then they would start back at the beginning and repeat the cycle.

Israel would mess up, but God would take pity on them and save them. He showed His faithfulness to Israel time and time again.

When have you messed up but been given a second (or third or forth) chance by God?

The problem is Israel stopped living in faith after God responded to their repentance. Rather than embrace what He did for them, they returned to their corrupt ways, rejecting the lessons of their ancestors and what God had for them. They continued to go back to the bad things they knew rather than have the faith to go forward to the good unknown that God had laid out for them. Again, it is easy to judge the Israelites in this situation, but when you really look at our lives, we're probably not all that different.

Do you keep going back to 'bad knowns' in your life rather than move forward to 'good, God-led unknowns'? Why?

**Read 1 Samuel 8:1-9**

God had already put a leadership structure in place for Israel – one where He was king. But again, they were not satisfied with what He had done for them and how He'd provided. They saw the way other nations lived and coveted, while ignoring what God had given them. They knew what they wanted while ignoring the fact that God knew what they truly needed and had already provided.

*“Do everything they say to you,” the Lord replied, “for it is me they are rejecting, not you. They don’t want me to be their king any longer. Ever since I brought them from Egypt they have continually abandoned me and followed other gods. And now they are giving you the same treatment.”*  
(1 Samuel 8:7-8)

**NOTES**

**NOTES**

The Israelites rejected God. He said they continually abandoned Him. They probably didn't think of their actions in that way, but that's the truth of the situation. They rejected and abandoned their creator, owner, faithful deliverer, promise keeper, and king.

Have you ever, like the Israelites, rejected and abandoned God?  
How did that work out in the end?

How is God trying to be God as the creator, owner, faithful deliverer, promise keeper, and king of your life right now?

How are you letting Him provide for you in the ways He knows you need rather than the ways you want?

**Key verse**

Continue to work on memorizing Joshua 24:15. Attempt to write it out from memory below.

**Prayer time**

Close your time by first thanking God for the second chances He's given you. Ask Him to help you respond to His leading. Thank Him for the ways He's provided just what you've needed. Ask Him to reveal where you're going back to bad knowns rather than trusting His good unknowns.

**PARENT GUIDE**

**NOTES**

**For Elementary-Age and Teenagers**

*The Lord said to Moses, "Send some men to explore the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites. From each ancestral tribe send one of its leaders." (Numbers 13:1-2)*

Can you imagine? After all those years in bondage, here they were so close to the land God had promised them. Twelve spies went into Canaan and ten of them came back not believing that God could make good on His promise.

*We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is the fruit. But the people who live there are powerful and the cities are fortified and very large... We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are. (Numbers 13:27-28, 31)*

God took them out of Egypt, out of bondage, out of slavery – God set them free to follow Him. But it only took the unbelief of the ten spies to strike fear and doubt in the people of Israel. They did not believe that God either could or would make good on His promise. So what happened? They wandered the desert for 40 years and the only two people out of that whole generation who got to enter the promised land were Joshua and Caleb, the two spies who believed God's promise. Do we miss what God has for us? The ten spies influenced a whole generation; it seems their unbelief had a direct effect on the blessing of others.

As parents, one of our fears is that we might pass unbelief onto our kids. Unbelief that we received from our parents or that we developed on our own. We want our kids to have as many blessings as possible, but we can affect that both positively and negatively. The question we need to ask ourselves is, "Are we the unbelieving spies or are we a Joshua to our kids?" Here is the good news: whether our children are still living at home or they have families of their own now, our lives of faith can still impact their belief system. We will always be parents. So we ask the question again, "Are we, as parents, giving our kids chances to be blessed or to live a lifeless generation?"

This is a tough and scary question, isn't it? That should drive us to pray for our kids that they serve God in spite of our sin and unbelief.

**NOTES**

Take some time to think and ponder on the question of if you are giving your kids chances to be blessed or to live a lifeless generation. Set aside some time to talk about this question together with your spouse if possible.

*Tools to talk about faith at home:* a lot of the previous Parent Guides have been written with this underlying theme: “Am I modeling and passing on a healthy faith to my kids?” Take some time and look through the Parent Guides. If you don’t have them or lost a few, contact your facilitator and they will be able to get them for you. Choose a few past Parent Guides and plan some time with your children over the next month or two to either review them or go over them for the first time.

Remember, it is never too late to be a Joshua or Caleb to your kids.

**OPTIONAL STUDY****NOTES**

As the prophet Samuel neared the end of his life, the Israelites demanded the security of an earthly king. Even though Israel was rejecting God as their king to become like the surrounding pagan nations, the Lord granted their request. God told Samuel that a man from the tribe of Benjamin named Saul was to be Israel's first chosen king. He was a handsome man, head and shoulders above any other in the nation of Israel. At Saul's inauguration, however, we see the first outward sign of a sinister heart condition: unbelief.

**Read I Samuel 10:17-27**

What would cause Saul to hide when the Lord wanted to acknowledge him as His chosen vessel?

What or who may Saul have been afraid of that would have caused him to hide himself in the luggage?

Who was Saul placing his confidence in?

All throughout the scriptures unbelief is identified as the fertile soil which always produces a harvest of disobedience. As we watch King Saul's reign over Israel continue we begin to see the fruit of a doubting heart.

**Read I Samuel 13:1-15 & I Samuel 15**

Who was King Saul supposed to wait for and why?

What emotion compelled Saul to overstep his boundaries and do the work of the prophet?

## NOTES

How did Saul treat the word of the Lord in chapter 15?

The Lord's callings on our lives can stir up emotions like joy, relief, inadequacy and even fear. Fear that God's call is too big for us is a sure sign of misplaced trust and expectation. That fear comes when we are looking at our talents, abilities and strengths in comparison to the calling God has for us. But faith comes when we believe that it is the Lord's power and Spirit that accomplishes His plans and purposes through us. Faith gives us the ability to obey the Lord even when the job seems too big.

Because of Saul's disobedience, God rejected him as king and chose a young man full of faith. Though David was of lowly occupation and small in stature, his heart of faith toward God was all the Lord needed to slay giants and rule over His people: Israel.

### Read I Samuel 16 & 17

What does the Lord look for when choosing a person for His service? (Chapter 16)

Who was David putting his trust in as he made the decision to fight Goliath?

Whose power allowed David to triumph over the enemy?

King David went on to rule over Israel for forty years and led the nation to many victories over God's enemies. David was called "the man after God's own heart" because He believed that God was able to accomplish everything He promised.

*Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see. (Hebrews 11:1)*