

Life Group Discussion Guide

OUR FOCUS

Genesis 47:1-12, 50:19-25

Stuart Jones - October 14, 2018



INTRODUCTION

Passages to Read: Jeremiah 29:11 and 2 Timothy 2, 4

There are few things more gratifying than accomplishment.

Watch victorious competitors at the end of the contest and you see joy, tears, satisfaction, and fulfillment. The long journey of preparation that included pain, sacrifice, and disappointment pale into insignificance in light of the victory. Listen to the stories of those who participated and you'll quickly discover that the road to success was a long one. Often entire lives were devoted to achieving the moment they now celebrate.

Coaches will remind aspiring athletes, "No pain, no gain!" They demand the difficult and impossible in order to build strength, endurance, resilience, and the character required to be successful. The writer of the book of Hebrews puts it in these terms, "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when you are reproved by Him, for those whom the Lord loves He disciplines ... "(Hebrews 12:5, 6).

Jesus told those who gathered on a mountain meadow that they were "the salt of the earth and the light of the world" (Matthew 5: 13, 14). He announced that the kingdom of heaven was at hand and prescribed a pattern for living that would change them and the world in which they lived.

Those who accomplish great feats will often report that their preparation included years of envisioning every phase of the contest, including the ultimate victory. They could "see" the finish line and the glory that would follow. Paul spoke spiritually of finishing the course of life to receive "the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved his appearing" (2 Timothy 4:8). In the light of the ultimate reward, everything life promises and the circumstances that seem to derail us take on a different perspective.

Close your eyes and imagine a community transformed. See people obediently following Christ, truly living as "salt and light" in all aspects of their lifestyles. Imagine how different life might be in a community where the power of God was unleashed through the faithful lives of His people.

DISCUSSION STARTER

1. Share about a time when God revealed Himself to you in the middle of a trial.
2. As we begin another expansion process, what excites you and what scares you? Why?

EVALUATE IT

1. Would you rather serve a God whose plans always line up with your plans or who promises to be with you when you call on Him. Explain your answer?
2. Read Read Jeremiah 29:11. In what context are these encouraging words delivered? Where are God's people, why are they there, is this a time of blessing or correction?
3. How does this verse impact how you see the challenge of an expansion? Does God need a perfect start or perfect conditions? What then is required of us?
4. What would our church look like in ten years if our vision for ministry was successfully accomplished?

MAKE IT PERSONAL

1. What plans do you have for God that you need to swap with His plans for you?
2. How are you praying for our expansion? Why is prayer so essential during this time?