



A Worship Study Guide for Individuals, Groups and Families: For the week of July 15, 2018

Note to Discussion Leaders: Have members read the Bible passage in the group meeting. This is a “worship discussion” guide, and our reflections and applications are grounded in Scripture. Read through this guide before meeting with the group. You do not need to work through the whole guide. Decide which points would be most helpful for the time of meeting together, and use them as a starting point for your time together.

Numbers 32:50:56 “The Land”

This week, Steve Shelby preached on [Numbers 33:50-56](#).

- While this passage seems to be about war (it is) it is more about worship. The inhabitants are to be “driven out”, while the figured stones, metal images and high places are to be “destroyed” and “demolished”.
- This reminds me of Jesus entering the Temple, overturning and destroying the tables of merchandise and driving out the money lenders and merchants.
- When the people receive their inheritance, when they settle in the land, who will they love and who will they worship? The answer to that question will determine whether the people of God remain distinctive or whether they will become just like the idol worshipping inhabitants of the land and be driven out as well.
- There is a certain ruthlessness and desperation in this practice. That is why this is less a war of conquest and more a war about affection. Why this ruthlessness? There must be some sort of attractive and destructive power in the worship and affection given to these other gods.
- We are looking for something to love and give our hearts to, and sometimes we don’t even know we are doing that until we feel the pain of the smashed idol. Because smashing the idol is often stinging and painful.
- The idols that the Israelites were to destroy were idols that primarily provided fertility both for the land, for the people and animals. Worship these idols and they would remove the risk and tenuous nature of life. Don’t forget, these idols had the advantage of image, and exchange. They also exacted quite a price as well. The LORD said that these remaining idols and their adherents would be as barbs in their eyes, thorns in their sides and trouble where they settled.
- “Idolatry is the sin of the entire human race. When we speak of idolatry we need not think of blocks of wood and stone and men bowing down before them, for our native land swarms with idolaters. Neither need you go into the streets to find them. Stay where you are and look into your own hearts and you shall find idols there. This is the one easily besetting sin of our nature—to turn aside from the living God and to make unto ourselves idols in some fashion or another. For the essence of idolatry is this—to love anything better than God, to trust anything more than God, to wish to have a God other than we have or to have some signs and wonders by which we may see Him, some outward symbol or manifestation that can be seen with the eye or heard with the ear rather than to rest in an invisible God and believe the faithful promise of Him whom eye has not seen nor ear heard. In some form or other this great sin is the main mischief in the heart of man and even in saved men this is one of the developments of remaining corruption. We may very easily make an idol of anything and in many different ways. No doubt many mothers and fathers make idols of their children, and so many husbands and wives idolize each other, and we may even make idols of ministers, even as there were idol shepherds of old. Equally is it certain that many a thoughtful man makes an idol of his intellect, and many another makes an idol of his gold, or even of that little home wherein he enjoys so much content. But men who are better instructed often take the Bible and read it and failing to get through the letter into the spirit, they trust in the mere act of Scripture reading and make even the Word itself to become an idol to them through their resting in a mere creed or in bare Bible reading and not pressing through it to spiritual hearty worship of God Himself. Anything, however holy, which comes between us and the personal dealing of our soul with God, as He is revealed in Christ Jesus by faith and love and hope, becomes an idol to us.” (Charles Spurgeon)
- Our confidence today: “Little children, keep yourselves from idols,” was the injunction of the loving apostle John, and he wrote thus in love, because he knew that, if God sees us making idols of anything, he will either break our idols or break us.” (Charles Spurgeon)
- Jesus was driven out for idol worship.

Going Deeper in God's Worship

Reflect on the text together. [Hear the sermon here.](#)

- 1.) What is true about God's character, promises or work?
- 2.) What does the Scripture teach you about yourself or others?
- 3.) Are you encouraged to follow Jesus in His mission? How?

Reflect on the whole of Sunday's liturgy together. Locate this week's [Order of Worship here.](#)

- 1.) Was there an element of the worship service that you would like to share with the group?
 - *A Scripture verse that was read?*
 - *A prayer that was prayed?*
 - *A song that was sung?*
 - *A sacrament that was administered?*
 - *A way that glory was given to God?*
 - *A way that someone encouraged you?*
- 2.) Did the Holy Spirit convict, change, or encourage you in any way you wish to share with the group?
- 3.) Is Jesus leading you or the group to take a specific risk to minister the Good News to Richmond? Your neighbors? Your co-workers? Your family and friends?

Going Further in Christ's Mission

- 1.) Have the Scripture text open in front of you as a guide to your prayers.
 - Spend time thanking God and giving Him glory.
- 2.) Ask the Lord for vision, strength and faith as followers of Jesus Christ.
 - Count on the work of the Holy Spirit for change.
 - Ask for God's forgiveness and grace to repent of sin and trust Jesus.
 - Pray for the world, our country, Richmond, and the Church.
 - Pray for members of your group, family members, or co-workers, neighbors and friends.

Questions about this week's study guide? Contact Kevin Greene, kevin@wepc.org
To hear sermons and access past study guides visit www.wepc.org/archivedsermons