

CORE STUDY #9

THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND OUR MOTIVES

PASSAGE: Mark 14:27-72

LEADER PREPARATION

Read the passage over at least three times, noting what you feel might be the main points of the passage. Using your **Summit Training Guide** (section 2 “Engaging the Word” and section 3 “Responding to the Word”), ask observation and interpretation questions of the passage.

You will also find it very helpful to read the parallel passages in the other 3 gospels. By reading all three gospels you will have a fuller picture of what happened and what was said.

- Mt. 26:31-75

- Luke 22:39-71

INTRODUCTORY QUESTION

Can you remember a time that you struggled to follow Christ? What about this time made it difficult?

The purpose of this study is to examine our motives in serving God and comparing them to Christ's utter obedience to the will of God, as seen in the garden of Gethsemane.

FOUNDATIONS STUDY

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (selection to choose from)

1. In verse 27, Jesus predicts that his disciples will desert him under pressure. How do you empathize (or fail to empathize) with Peter's confidence in verses 29-31.

The disciples seemingly didn't hear the promise of verse 28 and instead focused on refuting Jesus' accusation of disloyalty. They fell away because they didn't believe Jesus and failed to admit their vulnerability and frailty.

2. In the Garden of Gethsemane (vs 33-42), Jesus models for us what we need to do in moments of temptation. What prepared Jesus for what was to follow? Why weren't the disciples prepared for the trials?

Jesus prays and tells his disciples to pray. They are to pray not for him, but for themselves that they might not fall into the temptation. The key is to draw on the strength that comes from God in prayer. Jesus does pray and finds the ability to remain faithful.

3. What do you think was going on in the minds of Jesus and the disciples from vs 43-72?

This question is asked, hoping that the group naturally attempts to compare and contrast the motivations and actions of Jesus vs. the disciples. The larger theme of prayer and trust in God comes out when you can see both examples side by side.

4. Up until this point Jesus has regularly disguised his identity, but in verse 62 he openly confesses his identity as the Christ. Why do you think he does this now?

5. What were Peter's motives for visiting the high priest's courtyard? What keeps him from acknowledging his relationship to Jesus (vs. 66-72)?

RESPONSE QUESTION

Peter felt anguish after betraying Jesus. How can his bitter lesson encourage us?

One can take solace from the account of Peter's denials. Peter was the most prominent disciple of Jesus, yet he was still a sinner in need of God's mercy. He thought he would die for Jesus, but he needed Jesus to die for him. His failure reveals the truth of Jesus' statement in Mark 2:17 "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." Mark is the Gospel of the second chance. If Peter can be restored after denying his Lord and even cursing him, then there is hope for others who might be guilty of the same or worse. Peter's tears of remorse mark the beginning of his restoration.

Take time with your group to encourage each other and support one another in your walk with Christ. Take time and pray that God will strengthen you in times when you struggle to follow him.

GOING DEEPER STUDY

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (selection to choose from)

- 1. How might verses 32-36 deal with the question of whether Jesus is the only way to God?**
- 2. How is the charge against Jesus both justifiable and unjustifiable?**
- 3. Why is it important to honestly acknowledge our own sin and weakness as we seek to grow in spiritual strength and maturity?**

Peter's mistake is that he assumed he was invulnerable. He was overconfident in his abilities. Humility not self assertion is the path to spiritual growth. Here he attempts to remain loyal in his own strength and fails again. Allowing the work of God in us gives us the strength to do what we ought to do.