

Prophets and Kings Discussion Questions 4.17.16

Leader Prep Section

Take time before your small group meeting to prepare by reading through the questions and scripture passage so that you can select 4-5 questions that are best suited to your group.

Try to work through at least one question from each of the sections - Hook, Book, Look, Took in order to move from observation to application.

When possible spend time in prayer for each member of your group.

Questions

Hook - Ice breaker type questions to help make the transition into the study time.

1. Who do you turn to when you need a wise solution to a problem?
2. Share an example of a time when you or someone you know demonstrated wisdom to bring resolution to a problem.

Background

1 and 2 Kings are written in a genre that we are likely fairly familiar with - narrative. Narrative is a fancy term for story; the books of Kings are full of stories. The stories revolve around the Kings of Israel both while there is a single king and also after the country is divided into two related but separate kingdoms. In the early days of the monarchy in Israel the king served as the final authority or judge in disputes, so it was common for people to come before the king to ask him to make a decision when they could not agree.

The story for this week picks up immediately after where we left off last week. Solomon asked for wisdom to rule well when given the opportunity to ask for anything from God. This story is evidence of how Solomon sets out to use his wisdom. He uses it to bring justice rather than harm. The story of Solomon gets more complicated as he spends more time on the throne of Israel, but at the beginning he starts off fairly well.

Read 1 Kings 3:16-28

Book - These questions are designed to get you into the text itself.

1. What were the women arguing about in front of King Solomon?
2. What do we know about the women from the description given in the text?
3. How does Solomon respond to the women?
4. When word got out about how King Solomon handled the situation how did people react?

Look - These questions will take you on a deeper look at what the passage means for us today.

1. What is a modern equivalent to this dilemma and the solution presented by King Solomon?
2. What does this story tell us about how we can use our wisdom to heal or to harm?
 - King Solomon could have followed through with his order to cut the baby in half thus solving the problem, but not providing healing where it was possible. Our opportunities may not be so extreme, but likely we have each found ourselves in situations that call for wisdom that could be used to heal or to harm.
3. Why, do you think, Solomon took such a drastic approach?
4. What are the potential pitfalls someone might encounter when using this passage as guide for what exercising wisdom looks like?

Took - These questions are focused on applying the big idea from the text to our lives.

1. How can we demonstrate both wisdom and justice as King Solomon did in this story?
2. What are some of the critical elements necessary to use wisdom to bring healing?
3. When wisdom is exercised to bring healing what is the response likely to be from those present?
4. How do we avoid using wisdom as a weapon to bring harm to people?

Closing

Finish your time together by praying for one another. Focus your prayers on finding opportunities to increase wisdom and use it to bring hope and healing rather than harm. Also, take time to pray for the leadership of Hillcrest that they would have the wisdom that only the Father can provide.

Reminder: We are called to live in such a way that those around us recognize that we are patterning our lives after someone who is different. When we choose the world over our compassionate God we are on a path that leads us nowhere good. Even then, our God chooses to pursue us with love and call us back to relationship with him.