

“Preparation”

Made For More Sermon Series | Week Three | Newbreak Church

January 23rd, 2022

Newbreak’s Sermon Study Guide is an in-house resource that serves sermon-based Life Groups and/or individuals who want to reflect further on how the message contributes to their spiritual formation.

In this week’s study, we talk about the importance of preparation—this idea of “consecration”—in our spiritual journey.

Icebreakers for Life Groups

- What is one thing that you want to get out of coming to Life Groups this semester?
- Do you have any special items (like shoes or a coat) that only come out on really special occasions? What is it for you and why is that item rare in appearance?

Going Deeper Into the Message

Read Joshua 3:1–4

Point 1 – Recognize that the battle is won or lost in the preparation.

Then you will know *which way to go*, since you have never been *this way before* (Joshua 3:4a, NIV).

Think about the last time you went hiking. You were probably walking on a trail, a trail forged by many others before you. In fact, we walk and drive on trails and roads—pathways that (subconsciously) remind us that there is a clear way to get to where we are going. Many of us haven’t felt what the Israelites felt as they were reminded that they truly had “*never been this way before.*”

But maybe we can relate if we broaden this to speak to our journey, spiritually. We are constantly being formed into who we are becoming—and it is not by default that we are

being formed into the person God foresees us to be! Culture tries to form us, the people around us play a role, and then there is God—who has a grand picture of who we are to become. And frankly, none of us have been this way before, because the journey forward always has new obstacles and new opportunities in terms of our spiritual growth.

So as Joshua and the Israelites made their way to the Jordan River, he discerned that preparation of the heart was in order before any miracle could take place. The Jordan River was not just a geographical hindrance preventing the Israelites from making their way into the promised land, it represented an obstacle to receiving the promise. And while God said that they would cross it, it's not always so easy to believe that it would happen. So Joshua called the people together for a moment of preparation.

Preparation is learning the way and movement of God in your life. It's no different than looking at a map and learning where you're going to go before jumping in the car and traveling across the country. For the Israelites, they were literally following the movement of the Ark of the Covenant which represented the presence of God.

Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Reflection

- When you read the verse: “you have never been this way before,” what comes to mind for your own life?
- Have you ever had a time when you had to prepare your heart before something God was calling you to do? Talk about that experience.
- Are you ready to go where you haven't been before in your relationship with God? How can you become ready? Do you trust God to lead you, even though you haven't been there before? What apprehensions do you have? What does that trust look like for you?

Point 2 – Preparation always involves consecration.

“The more you sweat in peace, the less you bleed in war.” All armies throughout history have known that the more preparation there is before battle, the better the results will be. Because the success of the army of Israel was not dependent on their strength or might, but on their obedience to God, the first thing they had to do to prepare for the

battles before them was to make their hearts right before El Shaddai (God Almighty). They needed to come before Him clean; ready, willing and able to be used by Him. Since God is holy, they needed to be holy to work with Him.

The Israelites were on the brink of the Jordan! They could look across the river and see into the land that they had been waiting their entire lives to inhabit! But...they had to wait. They had to take a full day and set themselves apart as holy to the Lord, so they could see His might worked out in their lives. Can you imagine the havoc that would have been wrought had they not listened, had they not paused and waited?! What would have happened had they just rushed full throttle into the Jordan, when the banks were overflowing? They would have been swept away and not made it into the Promised Land.

We need to take the time to prepare our hearts for what God wants to do in our lives as well. We need to wait. [Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord \(Psalms 27:14, NIV\)](#). This is not a stopping of forward progress. This is a way to focus our hope on God and His work that He is going to do in our lives.

We need to focus more on making our hearts right before God, consecrate ourselves, in order to be able to receive all of the blessings He has for us. When we don't take the time to do this, we will not be in a position to take hold of all He has for us.

How can we wait purposefully, consecrate our hearts? We need to first **release** our will to God's will. We need to tell God that we are giving over our desires to His desires for us, knowing that His are far better than ours. Next, we need to **rely** on God to do what only He can do. This is where we believe that God will do amazing things in our lives that only He could do. Thirdly, we must **revive** our passion for God! The Israelites had an offering called the **olah** that was purely used to show how awesome they thought God was. The whole offering was completely burnt up as a fragrant sacrifice to the holy God, solely for His pleasure. Sometimes we have to remind ourselves of who God is and come to love Him more deeply. Lastly, we must **realign** our lives to have a rhythm of preparation. We need to make habits out of putting ourselves in right standing with God. This includes, but is not limited to, communal worship on Sundays, being in a life group, and serving. [Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do \(Joshua 1:8, NLT\)](#).

Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Reflection

- What is something that you rarely use or touch because it's so valuable to you? Why is it so important to you? Why do you rarely touch it?
- If consecration means to set something apart as holy to God, what is one area of your life that you would like to consecrate for the purposes of God? (i.e. Your job, your gifting, your finances, etc.) Why?
- Why is waiting on God so hard sometimes? What keeps us from waiting on God instead of moving forward without His guidance?

—FINAL CHALLENGE QUESTIONS—

How are you going to think differently in light of what you have read, heard, and discussed this week?

What is one thing you are going to change in your life in light of the sermon?

BONUS: For those of you with kids or around kids: What is one truth from this message that you can share with your kids?