

HARVEST Lesson 6: Until Jesus Returns



Q: Thinking back to Rachel's prison sentence, what do you think? Who is responsible for Rachel's outcome? Are we all responsible for making our own choices? Is this a fair assessment? How could the church do a better job of ministering to people like Rachel? We are all dealt a different hand of cards in the game of life. It's important to understand this so that we don't compare ourselves to others and think that we are somehow superior to those who find themselves in a different place. We are the product of our environment. That's why it's crucial for the church to step into people's lives to provide a healthy environment for them to be transparent, to find healing, to hear truth, and to receive forgiveness and salvation - freedom from the bondage of sin! Consider **John 8:31-32**.

PLANT

Q: Looking back, can you see times in your life where you were tempted or gave in to believing the world's lies? How did you come to recognize the truth? When we hear a message often enough or at a time when it hits us hard, we will start to doubt the truth and be infected with the lie. It's important to be deeply rooted in the Word of God as the ultimate source of truth and the only voice that we can fully trust. Whenever we are confused or struggling, it's the first place we go to get re-grounded in what God wants for our lives. Counseling or the wisdom of mature Christians is another place to look for truth when we aren't thinking clearly. In **Jeremiah 29:13** God says, "*You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.*" God wants to be found and He wants us to rest in the peace that comes from knowing the truth.

WATER

Q: Describe the ideal "community group." How many people are in it? What do you talk about? How often does it meet? Hopefully, this question is really preaching to the choir. Surrounding ourselves with a group of healthy Christians is important for our own spiritual health, and it gives us a place for ministering to others. This is the kind of fellowship that is found throughout the New Testament. The group size isn't important as much as the group dynamics. Around 8-12 people seems to provide a good size for conversation, fellowship, and discussion. Smaller groups, however, will tend to be able to grow deeper in fellowship, trust, and accountability. There is no biblical mandate on how often we should meet together, but the example in scripture is that the Early Church gathered daily! While that may seem impractical, it's not impossible. In today's society, weekly meetings seem to be a good balance for most people's schedules. (*Acts 2:42; Mt. 18:20; Heb. 10:24-25*)

GROW

Q: Are you serving in a ministry somewhere? How does your service contribute to building the kingdom of God? Put it into words. Serving isn't just about what we do for other people; it is just as much for ourselves than for others. When we serve, we take the focus off of ourselves and exercise our faith in a way that reminds us that we are not here just to please ourselves. God has given us gifts, passions, abilities, and experiences to use as a blessing to build up His church. Look at **Acts 20:35**.

Q: Have you seen any Christians fall away from faith? Why do some people lean into God in their difficult times, and others walk away? Hard times definitely reveal what a person is made of. Some people blame God when life is unpleasant, but God never promised us that our lives would be easy; He only promised that He would be with us and that one day He would make everything right. Should we ever hit rock bottom, it will benefit us greatly to have people around us to pick us up and point us in the right direction. Pastors, small group leaders and friends, coaches, mentors, family members, and fellow church goers that we have built a relationship with. When we are weak, God's strength can be poured out through other people, but as **Ecclesiastes 4:10** says, "*pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up.*"

HARVEST

Q: Have you accepted the challenge to share your faith with someone else? How can we make this a lifestyle for ourselves and for our church? Bearing fruit for the glory of God is the purpose of our lives. We are created by Him and for Him (*Col. 1:16*). He is looking for faithful servants to go and proclaim the truth to those who are blinded by sin. Might we be found among the faithful who overcome our fears and excuses to share the gift of Jesus with those around us. Making it a lifestyle comes from being obedient one day at a time. Each time we are faithful, it becomes a bit more comfortable, more rewarding, more enjoyable, and even more effective. When we see other people sharing their faith and it becomes a normal part of our culture, we will be hearing all kinds of testimonies of God's work being done in the lives of people who are hungering for Him! Consider **1 Corinthians 14:31**.

Q: Do you feel like God has given you any direction on your next steps as you grow in your faith? How has this study helped you in living out the truth? It's good to end this study with an exhortation to continue growing and applying your faith. We never stop growing and we never retire from ministry. It is a lifestyle that we continue to improve upon as God works out His plan in us and through us. Perhaps for some a next step will be to start reading the Bible regularly; for others to start serving; for still others, they may wish to take some other people through this curriculum or to start meeting to encourage one another to live fully for the will of God. This study may be coming to an end, but that doesn't mean that you can't continue to push yourself and others to live out the message that there is a God who loves us and wants to have a relationship with us. Read **Philippians 1:3-6**.

Q: After hearing the rest of Rachel's testimony, do you know of other people who have hit rock bottom and saw the hand of God work miracles in their life? What do you think brought about the work of God? Under what conditions does God do His best work and what initiates the movement of God? God is not a genie that responds to our beck and call, but His heart is moved when people cry out to Him. He often allows us to struggle in our sin until we break and our hearts are no longer calloused but are broken and contrite; humbled by the state of our suffering. When we cry out to Him, He hears us. He has a plan and His timing is perfect. It may not be in our timing or in our manner of answered prayer, but God will respond to us with a "Yes", a "No", or a "Not yet". How faith-building it can be for us to share these testimonies of God's faithfulness with one another. Look at **1 John 5:11**.

Q: In what ways do Christians become more valuable to the kingdom of God over time? What does this say about our older generations in regard to ministry? The more you learn about God,

the more you experience, and the more you grow in your faith, the more that you will have to offer. That would indicate that our older generations would be worthy of respect and extremely useful for the building of the Church. You should never “retire” from ministry. As long as you are able; as long as you have breath in your lungs and life in your bones, He has a purpose for you. Always be looking for ways to be used by God no matter where you find yourself planted! Consider the words of Paul in **Philippians 1:21-26.**

Group Assignment: Share your testimony with at least three people.

Memory Verse Final Review:

Luke 10:2 - *“The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”*

Thank you for joining us for this study! May God give you strength to serve with joy and fill your heart with love to minister to this lost and dying world. To Him be the glory for ever and ever! Amen.