

NOTES

A GOOD RETURN

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JOEL

Introduction

Step 1: _____ Circumstances

Step 2: Sincere _____

- Internal _____
- External _____

Step 3: _____ Blessings

- _____ of locust-eaten years
- Outpouring of _____
- Life in God's _____

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR FAMILY, FRIENDS & GROUPS

1. Has there been a time in your walk with Christ when you drifted away from him for a while? Describe. Why do you think we are (as the song lyrics say) "prone to wander, Lord I feel it; prone to leave the God I love"?
2. Watch the Bible Project video or read the NIV Study Bible intro for Joel. Make a list of 3-5 things you learn about this book.
3. Read Joel 1:6, 7, 10, and 2:4-10. What strikes you about Joel's description of the locust plague?
4. Are hardships or crises in our lives always God's attempt to get our attention about something that needs correction? Explain. How would you know if difficult circumstances are God's attempt to get your attention? Describe a time when that happened in your life.
5. Read James 5:14-16. Explain James' connection between prayer for healing and confessing sins (i.e., why the two go together).
6. Read Joel 2:12, 13 and Romans 8:12, 13. What does John Owen mean when he says: "You are either killing sin or sin is killing you"? What might be some signs that sin is killing you?
7. What does Joel mean by: "Rend your heart and not your garments"? Describe the differences (as many as you can think of) between a sincere confession of sin and an insincere confession. What should we be sorry for when we're confessing sin?
8. Of the 45 commands/imperatives in Joel, a number of them describe what people did at ancient funerals (Weep! Wail! Mourn! Grieve! Put on sackcloth! Cry out to the LORD!). What's the significance of this observation? Read Isaiah 55:7 and Proverbs 28:13. What do these verses tell us to do beyond merely confessing our sins? What are some practical ways to do that?
9. Read Joel 2:25, 26. Explain what is meant by God's promise to restore our locust-eaten years when we return to him. How might this promise encourage you to keep on killing sin in your life?
10. Read Joel 2:28, 29. What does God promise to pour out on the people who return to him? Read Acts 2:1-18. How was this promise fulfilled in the New Testament? From your knowledge of Scripture, list all the things the Holy Spirit does in the life of a Christ follower. (Extra credit if you can find a Scripture verse to go with each.)
11. What's the connection between killing sin in our lives and experiencing the fullness of the Holy Spirit? (Hint: See Romans 8:12, 13; Galatians 5:16, 17; and Ephesians 4:30-32.)