

Jeroboam and Selfish Ambition

Small Group Guide

Warm-up Question: (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part all together, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. Generally speaking, were you shy or outgoing as a child? Explain.
2. What is your favorite event in the Olympics?

Read the following passage: 1 Kings 11:28-39

In the wake of Solomon's unfaithfulness and Rehoboam's pride, Jeroboam suddenly became the king of the northern kingdom of Israel. As unlikely as this may have seemed, it was exactly what God told Jeroboam through the prophet Ahijah. Even so, early into his reign, Jeroboam thought to himself, "The kingdom will now likely revert to the house of David." For reasons the text never clarifies, Jeroboam doubted that obeying God would really pay off in the end. So, Jeroboam went his own direction. He established new religious practices in direct violation of the Law of Moses. He used the people and led them down a path of idolatry in an attempt to secure his own position. This is the essence of selfish ambition. The cure for selfish ambition is not a life without ambition. It is a wholehearted commitment to God's will and God's ways.

Questions for Discussion (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. Why was Jeroboam concerned about the people of Israel going back to Judah to worship? What should we do when we are afraid things are not going to turn out how we hope?
2. Should followers of Jesus have any ambition for their lives? Explain. How do we recognize when we are living in selfish ambition and not godly ambition?
3. In what sense is it appropriate to "Wait on God"? How can we know if we are taking an approach to faith that is too passive? What are some of the things God has told all followers of Jesus to do?
4. What is wrong with the attitude, "The ends justify the means"? What did this look like in Jeroboam's life?
5. Are you sacrificing the wrong things to reach your goals? Consider the following questions.
 - Are you compromising your commitment to God?
 - Are you violating your conscience?
 - Are you lying?
 - Are you stealing?
 - Are you painting a false picture of yourself?
 - Are you neglecting your family or your friendships?
 - Are you becoming somebody you don't want to be?

- Are you saying things like, “I’ll just do it this one time?”
6. How can we recognize when we’re using the people around us to serve our own purposes?
 7. Read Mark 10:42-45. How did Jesus characterize “great” leadership? What might this look like in your life?

Pray