

“Going Beyond: Jephthah”

Series: *.beyond*

(Part 4 of 5)

Discussion Starter: How might you feel if a friend or family member blew you off only to call later and ask for help?

Explore: Read Matthew 18:21-35.

Even among the best of families and friends, we sometimes hurt each other. In this Bible story, Peter asks Jesus what to do when we have been wronged by another person.

1. How many times did Jesus tell Peter he must forgive (vs. 21-22)? Do you believe Jesus was using a “literal” or “figurative” number? Explain.
2. What did the king want to do with the man’s possessions and family because he could not repay his debt (vs. 23-27)? Why did the king change his mind?
3. After his debt was canceled, what did the man in the story do next (vs. 28-30)? Why do you suppose the man threw his fellow servant in prison?
4. How did the king respond when he found out what the man had done (vs. 31-35)? Why do you believe God takes our ability to forgive others so seriously?

Reflect: Review the LG and discuss the questions below.

1. What does Jephthah’s family tree tell us about the kind of people God uses?
2. In what ways do people experience rejection from their families today? What emotions do you think Jephthah wrestled with when his family called on him to help during their time of need? Why do you believe he was chosen to help?
3. Jephthah did all he could to avoid a war with the Ammonites. When it comes to conflict, do you think most people are peace makers or peace breakers? When is it most difficult for you to live at peace with others?
4. What do you think was the deciding factor in Israel’s victory over the Ammonites: a) God’s Spirit upon Jephthah, b) Jephthah’s vow to the Lord, or c) Jephthah’s military leadership? Why do we sometimes resort to making verbal “deals” with God?
5. Jephthah’s life can be summed up in three phases – rejection, vindication, and heartache. What lesson will you take from Jephthah’s life today?

Live:

As a group: Sub-group into smaller groups (guys and gals) and answer the following question. Is there anything in your past that may be negatively affecting your present relationships? Is there someone you need to forgive, something you can change, or a conversation you need to have this week?

On your own: Read through the story of Jephthah this week (Judges 10-12).

Reflect on the key points from the lesson and ask yourself, “How does God want to use me through the *.beyond* campaign?”

Listening Guide Notes

Lessons from Jephthah...

1. Don’t let your past hold you back.

^[6] “‘Come,’ they said, ‘be our commander, so we can fight the Ammonites.’
^[7] Jephthah said to them, ‘Didn’t you hate me and drive me from my father’s house? Why do you come to me now, when you’re in trouble?’^[8] The elders of Gilead said to him, ‘Nevertheless, we are turning to you now; come with us to fight the Ammonites, and you will be our head over all who live in Gilead.’”
–**Judges 11:6-8 (NIV)**

^[12] “Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.
^[13] Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead,^[14] I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.” –**Philippians 3:12-14 (NIV)**

2. Live in peace if possible.

“The king of Ammon, however, paid no attention to the message Jephthah sent him.” –**Judges 11:28 (NIV)**

“If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”
–**Romans 12:18 (NIV)**

3. Don’t make deals with God, just obey Him.

^[30] “And Jephthah made a vow to the LORD: ‘If you give the Ammonites into my hands,^[31] whatever comes out of the door of my house to meet me when I return in triumph from the Ammonites will be the LORD’s, and I will sacrifice it as a burnt offering.’” –**Judges 11:30-31 (NIV)**

“While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” –**Romans 5:8b (NIV)**