



EBENEZER: Loving the Past, Living the Future  
Part 1: "Memorial Stones"  
Sermon Small Group Notes  
Speaker: Pastor Dave Patterson

## USING THIS SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

- This Sermon Discussion Guide is only a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. For most groups, there are too many questions to answer in one session together. After considering the needs of your group, you may choose one of the following options:
  1. one section of questions
  2. one or two questions from each section
- Feel free to adapt the format to meet the needs of your group. If your group is mature and wants to dig deeper, add Scripture and ask suitable questions. Remember that this is only a guide.
- Personal application is key to everyone's growth and should be included in every discussion. When asked how he or she intends to apply a certain principle a group member may say, "I need to spend more time in the Bible and in prayer." It is important for you to help group members make applications that are more specific and commit to a specific plan of action by asking, for example, "How are you going to begin?" An example is to get up 30 minutes earlier each morning, spending 15 minutes reading the Bible and 10 minutes in prayer. Encourage each group member to be accountable to the group for personal progress at the next meeting.
- As the leader your goal is to help bring the group into a stimulating discussion that helps the members recognize their need for personal life change. Ultimately you want them to be willing to commit to change with accountability to the group. Accountability helps us to persevere in our commitments and achieve the blessings of success.

## INTRODUCTION

Ebenezers have everything to do with where God has brought us. These monuments ground our lives in God's goodness and reflect His faithfulness to fulfill His Word. Our very stories are living ebenzers, reminders of divine intervention, that can radically influence our future and destiny, propelling us into the promises and purposes of God.

## MESSAGE

[1 Samuel 7.3-12]

<sup>3</sup> Then Samuel said to all the people of Israel, "If you are really serious about wanting to return to the LORD, get rid of your foreign gods and your images of Ashtoreth. Determine to obey only the LORD; then he will rescue you from the Philistines."<sup>4</sup> So the Israelites got rid of their images of Baal and Ashtoreth and worshiped only the LORD.<sup>5</sup> Then Samuel told them, "Gather all of Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray to the LORD for you."<sup>6</sup> So they gathered at Mizpah and, in a great ceremony, drew water from a well and poured it out before the LORD. They also went without food all day and confessed that they had sinned against the LORD.<sup>7</sup> When the Philistine rulers heard that Israel had gathered at Mizpah, they mobilized their army and advanced. The Israelites were badly frightened when they learned that the Philistines were approaching.<sup>8</sup> "Don't stop pleading with the LORD our God to save us from the Philistines!" they begged Samuel.<sup>9</sup> So Samuel took a young lamb and offered it to the LORD as a whole burnt offering. He pleaded with the LORD to help Israel, and the LORD answered him.<sup>10</sup> Just as Samuel was sacrificing the burnt offering, the Philistines arrived to attack Israel. But the LORD spoke with a mighty voice of thunder from heaven that day, and the Philistines were thrown into such confusion that the Israelites defeated them.<sup>11</sup> The men of Israel chased them from Mizpah to a place below Beth-car, slaughtering them all along the way.<sup>12</sup> Samuel then took a large stone and placed it between the towns of Mizpah and Jeshanah. He named it Ebenezer (which means "the stone of help"), for he said, "Up to this point the LORD has helped us!"

**Definition of "Ebenezer" = "The Rock of Help": a monument to God's faithfulness; a remembrance or memorial of a time or an event where God intervened**

[Genesis 28.18-22]

The next morning Jacob got up very early. He took the stone he had rested his head against, and he set it upright as a memorial pillar. Then he poured olive oil over it.<sup>19</sup> He named that place Bethel (which means "house of God"), although it was previously called Luz.<sup>20</sup> Then Jacob made this vow: "If God will indeed be with me and protect me on this journey, and if he will provide me with food and clothing,<sup>21</sup> and if I return safely to my father's home, then the LORD will certainly be my God.<sup>22</sup> And this memorial pillar I have set up will become a place for worshiping God, and I will present to God a tenth of everything he gives me."

**Definition of a "Spiritual Vision" or a "God Vision" = a glimpse from God's perspective; seeing right now what God has prepared for the future**

[Habakkuk 2.2-3]

*Then the LORD answered me and said, "Write the vision, and make it plain upon a tablet so that a runner can read it. There is still a vision for the appointed time; it testifies to the end; it does not deceive. If it delays, wait for it; for it is surely coming; it will not be late."*

***If you are clear in your vision, it will sustain your life.***

[1 Timothy 1.18]

*Timothy, my son, I am giving you this command in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by recalling them you may fight the battle well...*

***You have to fight for vision because it's bigger than you. It's not about us!***

[Joshua 4.6]

*Use these stones to build a memorial. In the future your children will ask you, 'What do these stones mean?' Then you can tell them...*

## CONCLUSION

The ebenezer stone represents a reversal of course for God's people. It also says something important about God: his mercies are everlasting; His covenant is forever!

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is a visionary moment in your life, where God showed up and showed His power?
2. What happens when we glimpse our lives from God's perspective? What changes in us? What changes in the world around us?
3. Why does vision need to be fought for?
4. What are some memorial stones in your life? Are you still building your future based on the events, the lessons, and the values established?
5. How would you describe our generation of Christ followers to the ones that will follow in the next generation? What would you choose as ebenezer moments to highlight?