

Chapter 9 – Exile and the Promise of Restoration

Remember, teach what you learn and share life, not just information.

Coaching Conversations:

As we approach the period in Scripture where God is seemingly silent, it seems appropriate for us to talk about silence during group discussion. It can be unsettling as a leader when you encounter silence during your group time. While it can be uncomfortable, don't be afraid of silence during discussion; rather, embrace it! In a long chapter like this one where there is a lot of information presented, it's not unlikely that your group members will need a little extra time to process your questions in their own minds before sharing their thoughts. We are easily tempted to fill the empty space in conversation by talking or re-stating the question. They will let you know (verbally or via facial expression) if they need the question clarified. Rather than "fill the space," give your group members the freedom to process their thoughts in the silence. It may even be helpful to preface a thought-provoking or vulnerable question with, "*Lets take a few minutes to think about this, and then respond...*" to introduce and validate the silence. In becoming comfortable with periods of silence, you may find that the Holy Spirit will draw out some responses from your group members that will greatly impact your discussion.

How HIS-story becomes My Story:

GOD'S STORY - God promises that a new covenant is coming in the person of Jesus Christ.

OUR STORY - As believers, we are able to experience the unconditional blessings of the New Covenant.

MY STORY - Because I'm a recipient of the new covenant, my obedience is no longer a condition for salvation, but an expression of gratitude.

Starting the Conversation:

At this point we've seen a continuous pattern of Israel's disobeying God and God's repeatedly offering mercy when His grace was undeserved. Rather than calling attention to the Israelite's apparent ignorance, ask your group members if they have observed a similar pattern of ignorance and disobedience in their own lives. In the midst of that pattern, have you seen God offer you grace and mercy?

Additional Recommended Resources:

- "*Why was Israel divided into the Southern Kingdom and Northern Kingdom?*" – GotQuestions.org article
- "*What were the 400 years of silence?*" - GotQuestions.org article