

# DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

*Our Mission: Reaching Out to Leaders Who Can Change the World.*

August 2012

## *Joshua: Hope for God's People*

### **Lesson #4: Covenant Matters**

What “rites of a passage” have marked your entrance into a particular career field or organization?

#### **OBSERVATION/INTERPRETATION**

##### Read Joshua 5:1-12

*Note: When the warriors were circumcised, the whole nation was vulnerable until they healed, forcing them to depend on God for protection. The terms Amorites and Canaanites are used in a general sense to identify heathen nations who lived in the mountains or on the coastal plains near the Mediterranean Sea. The use of these two terms indicates that the news of the parting of the Jordan and the Israelites' faith had spread throughout ancient Palestine. (*Lamplighters* by John Stewart, p. 27)*

1. What was the reaction of these heathen nations to the report of God's miraculous power? Vs 1
2. Why weren't the men circumcised before? Vv 2-3

*Note: Metal knives were available but flint knives (Ex 4:25) were a more efficient surgical tool as modern demonstrations have shown. Every male that was circumcised was “marked” as a son of Abraham, bound for service to the Lord. It was a prerequisite to participate in the Passover (Ex 12:48)*

3. How did God remind the Jews of their covenant relationship to Him? Why did He do this at this time?

*Note: Israel is a covenant nation, a privilege God has given to no other nation on earth (Rom. 9:4-5). God gave circumcision as the sign of the covenant to Abraham and his descendants. Other nations in that day practiced circumcision, but the ritual didn't carry with it the spiritual meaning that it did for the Jews.*

*Through this ritual the Jews became a “marked people” because they belonged to the true and living God. This meant that they were under obligation to obey Him. The mark of the covenant reminded them that their bodies belonged to the Lord and were not to be used for sinful purposes. It reminded them that they were a special people, a separated people, a holy nation, and that they were to maintain purity in their marriages, their society, and their worship of God.<sup>1</sup>*

4. How does circumcision compare to baptism? Dt 10:16; Rom 2:25-29; Matt 3:9; 1 Cor 2:13; Col 2:11-12
5. What was “the reproach of Egypt”? (v. 9) Ex 32:12; Num 14:13; Dt 9:28-29
6. What is the significance of this generation celebrating the Passover meal? v. 11 Ex 16:35
7. What is the significance of the manna stopping immediately after they ate the produce of the land (right after Passover)? v. 11; Dt 6:10-11
8. What can Christians do to remember their deliverance from the slavery of sin? 1 Cor 11:23-26

#### **APPLICATION**

What can you do to solidify your covenant relationship with God?

How can you thank God for blessing you with a place in the Promise Land?

<sup>1</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *Be Strong*. “Be” Commentary Series (56). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.