

**BEFORE THE SESSION:**

- Pray for each of your group members by name
- Look over the questions on the right and choose the ones that are most appropriate for your small group. If you're really feeling motivated, you might even think of a few on your own.
- Think through how you might prompt your group a little if they have difficulty getting started in discussion.
- Take a look at the accountability question below. Lead members to gather one on one or in same sex clusters to discuss it over coffee this week.

**THIS WEEK'S BIG IDEA**

God's desire is for us to draw closer to Him.

**ACCOUNTABILITY QUESTION**

Is God asking you to repent of a sin in your life that is holding you back from the best He has for you and His glory?

**TO PREPARE FOR NEXT WEEK:**

Read Ezekiel 40-48; Joel; Daniel 1-9;

**AS YOU READ...**

...Think about what God's plan is for your life.

**CONNECT****(10 min.)**

Choose one or both of the following questions to begin your time together as a group.

1. **Have you ever tried to influence someone's decision? What was the result?**
2. **Has there been a time in your life when someone tried to warn you about the consequences of a choice you were about to make? Did you follow that advice? What was the outcome?**

**EXPLORE****(40 min.)**

Say something like, "Today we are going to discuss that there are times in life when we have to choose to return and draw closer to God, or pull further away".

3. **If you were in worship this week, what statement or experience stood out to you? What stood out during last week's reading?**

**(Leader:** Take some time to discuss any questions that may have arisen as your members read through this week's assigned reading.)

4. **Read Joel 1:1-6. What does Joel's prophecy of the locusts reveal about the current state of Israel and its immediate future? What do you think the locusts represent in this prophecy?**
5. **Read Joel 2:1-11. How do you respond to the image of the Lord as the head of a destructive army? What is the consequence for those who choose to ignore God's call to repent compared to those "who obey his command" (v11)?**
6. **Read Joel 2:12-14. How does the Lord want His people to return to Him? Have you ever seen or experienced this kind of repentance? How does Joel describe the Lord in verse 13? Is this how you view and represent God to others?**
7. **Read Joel 2:25-27. What promise does God provide for his people if they choose to repent and return to him? What do these promises mean to you?**

**TRANSFORM****(10 min.)**

Wrap up your time by recalling a few things from your meeting that stood out to you. Then, ask the following question and pray together.

9. **Today, we have seen that God is sovereign and He alone brings punishment for sin. He also provides us a way to restore our relationship with him through repentance. Who do you know that you can share God's plan of redemption with this week? List some actions your small group can take to demonstrate grace, compassion, and abounding love (Joel 2:13) to those who may not see God in this way.**

# This Week's Study Notes:

## Scripture Notes

### Joel 1:1

Joel's prophetic message focuses on God's supreme power and might. As if to emphasize his point, Joel's name means, "The Lord is God."

### Joel 1:6

Locusts had invaded the land. Joel uses locusts as a metaphor for God's judgment of their sin. In great numbers locusts can create large-scale devastation (see Ex 10:13-15). God's judgment comes again and again, leaving no sin untouched.

### Joel 2:2

Darkness symbolizes a day of destruction, wrath, and judgment on sin. During the time Jesus hung on the cross, darkness descended on the earth even though it was the middle of the day (see Matt. 27:44-46).

### Joel 2:11

God is personified as an army commander. Angels are often called God's "host" of helpers.

### Joel 2:13

God's wrath and might are tempered by grace, compassion, slowness to anger, and faithful love. Those who love and obey God will experience His compassion, while those who defy God will experience wrath.

### Joel 2:27

The blessings (vv. 25-26) were a sign of God's presence among His people.

## Leader Tips

### AS YOU READ THIS WEEK...

- Think about and pray for each member of your small group.
- Think through the following questions:
  1. Whom does God bring to mind as I read these verses? Why?
  2. What needs to change in my own life as a result of what I'm reading?
  3. Whom do I need to tell about these verses?

### FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY WE RECOMMEND...

- Bible Commentary: [Bible.org](http://Bible.org)
- Bible Commentary: [DesiringGod.org](http://DesiringGod.org)
- Pronouncing Biblical Words: [Netministries.org/Bbasics/bwords.htm](http://Netministries.org/Bbasics/bwords.htm)

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