

I Declare: Responsibility

Week 3

Discussion Guide



Icebreaker

What is the most creative or ridiculous excuse you've ever heard (or used) to get out of trouble or explain away a mistake?

Read

Take turns reading Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

Discuss

God's people were in exile in Babylon and they couldn't help but wonder why. The exiles were claiming to be innocent victims and blaming their exile on the sins of their ancestors (v. 1-4). God uses Ezekiel, the prophet, to tell them that everyone is responsible for their own actions.

- **Is there an area of your life that you are putting blame on someone or something else without even realizing?**
- **How does blaming our past or our upbringing keep us from taking responsibility for our lives today?**
- **How does it prevent us from actually fixing our problems?**

The people then turn from blaming their ancestors to blaming God and saying that their punishment is not fair. There are three directions where we shed blame; God, others or the devil.

- **In the area where you currently feel "stuck" (marriage, work, finances), which of these three directions do you tend to point your finger?**
- **Why is it so tempting to accuse God of being "unfair" when we are facing the consequences of our own choices?**

In verse 30-32, God says He will judge each of them according to their own actions. He charges them to repent, get a new heart and spirit, and turn back so they can live.

- **While "judgment" sounds harsh, how is it actually liberating to know that you are not held responsible for the sins of others?**
- **Why is a "new heart" necessary for lasting change, rather than just trying harder to follow a new set of rules or resolutions?**
- **How does the Holy Spirit make this command possible for us?**
- **How does this view of God, as someone who desperately wants you to turn and live, change how you feel about admitting your faults?**

Application & Prayer

Scripture invites us to examine our hearts. Blame and responsibility start with what we believe, fear, and want to protect and then placing blame is our response to that. Read and pray through Psalm 139:23-24. God searches out hearts not to shame us, but to lead us into freedom.

- **Where am I quick to defend myself?**
- **What fear might be driving my blame?**
- **What am I afraid would happen if I took responsibility for my own life?**
- **Is there a habit, attitude, or pattern I've justified rather than confessed?**
- **What would obedience look like if I trusted God more than my excuses?**
- **What is one step God may be inviting me to take toward honesty and responsibility?**