

Placing the Pieces of the Jigsaw of Life - a Bible Study on Hebrews 13:1-8, 15,16

Opening: Leader opens in prayer.

1. Gathering (each member of the group can choose one of the following):

- What is one of your favourite recreational activities? Why do you enjoy this so much?
- OR: Are you a person who likes doing jigsaw puzzles? Why or why not? What's your 'jigsaw strategy'?
- OR: Have you ever 'suddenly' noticed a common thread or a story running through events in your life that up to that time had seemed disconnected from each other? What made you realise they were connected?

2. Wrestling with God's Word

Read aloud through **Hebrews 13:1-8**.

Brainstorm: Where else in the Bible have you read or heard something similar for each verse?

Trying not to use the cross-reference tools in your bible, have your group find as many cross-references as possible in five minutes. Write them down. Have each group member read aloud one of the cross-references.

As you read again through the verses, which *area of life and relationships* is each verse dealing with?

V1

v2

v3

v4

v5

v6

v7

v8

What are God's gracious promises at the heart of this passage?

Now read **Hebrews 13:15-16**. Compare with **Romans 12:1-2**.

How do these two verses begin to integrate the 'pieces of the puzzle' of the different parts of life? What's at the centre? How does it all fit together?

What is the purpose of 'daily life' according to these verses from Hebrews?

What kind of 'sacrifice' pleases God?

Why is God pleased with our 'sacrifices' in daily life?

The book of Hebrews is a rich commentary and sermon on Old Testament texts, in the light of God's grace through Jesus. Read the source of God's promises that are quoted in the Hebrews passage we've been studying.

Genesis 28:10-22

To whom is God speaking? Why was this encouragement important to the person who received it? What was the person's response?

Psalm 118-1-9 (verse 6 is quoted)

What was the situation of the speaker? What was God's response?

4. Wrestling with the World

In the New Testament quotation, the promise comes not just to one person, but to *all* of God's children, including *you*. The promise comes because of the grace of God given to you through Jesus. The promise echoes Jesus' words to his disciples after his resurrection: 'Surely I will be with you always.'

What difference does it make for your daily life that God promises he will never leave you? In what ways does the presence and protection of God in the 'pieces of the puzzle' of daily life change the way you interact with the world around you?

In which parts of the puzzle of life do you sense God's presence and power?

In which parts do you struggle to trust the truth of God's promise?

If you have time, together in your group, get a blank sheet of A4 paper. Draw a large cross in the middle and write on the cross, 'The Presence of Jesus – the Power of Jesus – the Promise of Jesus.'

Now, brainstorm all of the 'pieces of the puzzle of life' (all of the individual aspects which make up a whole life) and have a go at drawing how those pieces might connect with each other and with the presence, power, and promise of Jesus at the centre. As much as possible, try to have pieces that have a clear connection touching each other. Here are some examples to get you started: someone might suggest one piece is 'money.' That piece might be connected to a piece called 'wise use of resources' which might be connected to 'generosity' which may be right next to the cross.

Don't take this too seriously! Have fun and see what interesting connections God draws for you!

You might even have time to try to find a bible verse which relates to each piece of your puzzle.

LSF – LOVE one another, SERVE the world, FOLLOW Jesus

How does Hebrews 12:1-8,15-16 invite you into the life of

- Loving One Another?
- Serving the World?
- Following Jesus?

What could your group do together (that you couldn't do alone) to practice these aspects of life in the time before you meet again?

What will you do? Plan it now.

CLOSING: end with prayer for one another and the group. You might do this in groups of two or three, or as a whole group. Ask Jesus to fill you with his Holy Spirit so your life will be integrated around him. Begin to pray for the world around you (outside of your own needs), especially remembering those who suffer or are imprisoned for their faith.

5. Appendix:

For Further reading

If you want to find out more about the persecuted church (Hebrews 13:3, compare with Hebrews 11:32-40, 1 Peter 4:12-16, Luke 21:12-19), check out these websites:

www.opendoorsusa.org

www.persecutedchurch.org

If you want to find out more about contentment, generosity, and freedom from anxiety (Hebrews 13:5-6, compare with Luke 12:22-34), try this Bible study:

www.lsf.org.au/vic/images/stories/god-vs-stuff-bible-study-3-generosity.pdf