

Supplemental Questions for The Twelve

JOEL

Common Denominator (Introduction)

- Joel opens his book with strong words for God's people who had let bad things slide for a long time. There was no getting around it; the difficulties they were experiencing were things they had brought on themselves. Realizing we may be the "common denominator" in things going badly is not a fun experience. What is the hardest part about owning up to disobedience before God and confessing honestly to Him about things we have done that wounded our relationship with Him?
- It can be so tempting to fall back on unhealthy attitudes and excuses rather than come to God in honest confession to seek His forgiveness and restore our relationship. What do you think is the draw for us in returning to old habits?

In Slow Motion (Joel 1:1-3, 2:1-2)

- Joel was laser focused on two things: repentance and restoration. In the case of God's people in Joel's day, they were going through an extremely difficult time and were facing even more difficulties ahead if they did not make some meaningful changes. Have you been in a situation or walked with someone through a situation where hard decisions and significant life changes needed to be made to avoid a real personal mess? How did God speak to you then? What responses were required to change course for you or for them?

Remember All Of 'Em (Joel 1:2-3)

- Have you had a season in your life that felt like your own personal "locust plague"? Things seemed to be falling apart all around you and there were no easy outs or convincing arguments anymore to explain away the problem. How did God meet you then and how did He help you through that time to bring healing and restoration?
- What is your testimony of not just *what* happened but *why* it happened? Let God's grace take center stage as you share those tough moments that God turned into stronger faith in Him. Take a minute now and speak your story- even to yourself!

Rend Your Hearts And Not Your Garments (Joel 2:12-13, Matthew 11:28-30)

- Being open and real before God are the deadliest weapons to the sinful self. Those two expose everything. What are the big differences between simply talking “about” a situation versus being truly open and real about it?
- The pathway to freedom is when we take off our masks that hide the truth and lay our pride down to come humbly before Christ, our Eternal Hope and Peace. Have there been attitudes, patterns of thought, or choices that you had to get real about in confessing them before God and before others? Looking back, why do you think those destructive patterns might feel right to people in the beginning?

Then (Joel 2:13-14, 18-19, 25, 26)

- Our honest and sincere response to God’s call comes first, and then God pours out His mercy and grace to restore and redeem. It can be tempting to ask God to fix the problems around us instead of first asking Him to work in us. Why is it important that our response to God’s call be rooted in sincere faithful action instead of just an outward display? What is the difference in treating the symptoms vs. curing the sickness?

No, I’m Not Drunk (Acts 2:1-13, Joel 2:28,32)

- Any believer in Christ, sealed and secured by the power of the Holy Spirit, has reasons to be best friends with Joel! In Acts 2 Peter said that the gift of the Holy Spirit to all believers in Christ was a fulfillment in some way of Joel’s prophecy of the outpouring of the Spirit. Is it sometimes difficult to connect the Old Testament to the New Testament? What are some problems we might have as the church today in understanding how Jesus fulfills God’s promises in the Old Testament?

Something To Look Forward To (Joel 3:1-3, 17)

- Even in the stormy Minor Prophets, God reveals His desire to bless rather than act in wrath. What He wants for us is life, peace, and unbroken relationship with Him through Christ. What does God’s giving us something to look forward to in His desire to bring us close, even when judgment is needed, say about His love for us?

