



Bad Company | Week 5 DISCUSSION GUIDE

OVERVIEW

In this message, we learned how relationships, both good and bad, influence our character and decisions, and how seeking God's guidance, listening to godly counsel, and taking our battles to Him can lead to victory and spiritual growth.

DISCUSSION

Relationships have a significant impact on our lives. The Bible warns us about the dangers of keeping bad company, as illustrated in **1 Corinthians 15:33**: ***“Do not be misled: Bad company corrupts good character.”*** This is evident in the story of King Jehoshaphat, who aligned himself with King Ahab, a wicked ruler described in **1 Kings 16:30** as doing ***“evil in the sight of the Lord, more than all who were before him.”*** Despite Jehoshaphat's godliness (**2 Chronicles 17:3-4**), he made poor decisions by aligning with Ahab in battle and forming a marriage alliance, both of which led to disastrous consequences. His son's marriage to Ahab's daughter, Athaliah, eventually brought chaos to Judah. Similarly, Satan often deceives us by making compromises appear righteous. As **Ephesians 6:12** reminds us, our real battle is not against people but against spiritual forces of evil. Therefore, it's crucial to avoid influences that lead us astray while standing firm in our godly convictions.

- How can we identify whether the people around us are influencing our character positively or negatively?
- Jehoshaphat compromised for unity with Ahab. How can we discern when a decision aligns with God's will instead of our own desires?
- How can we witness to non-believers without letting their influence weaken our faith?

Four ways to break free from bad company:

1. Flee ungodly influences.

2 Chronicles 19:1: *Then Jehoshaphat the king of Judah returned safely to his house in Jerusalem.* After learning from his poor alliance with Ahab, Jehoshaphat made a clean break from ungodly influences instead of lingering. He didn't gradually distance himself but fled from bad company, setting an example for us to do the same when facing unhealthy or sinful influences in our lives. We should break agreement with all ungodly influences.

- Why is it important to fully separate from temptations and not just scale back or distance ourselves slowly?
- What are some practical ways we can avoid environments or relationships that pull us away from godly living?

2. Listen to and follow godly counsel...even when it's not easy.

In **2 Chronicles 19:2**, Jehu rebukes Jehoshaphat, saying, ***“Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the Lord? Because of this, the wrath of the Lord is on you.”***

Despite the harsh correction, Jehoshaphat listened and repented, showing the importance of heeding godly counsel, even when it hurts. As Proverbs 27:6 says, "Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful." God often speaks through difficult truths from those who love us to help us grow.

- How can we better recognize and accept uncomfortable truths from people who genuinely want to help us grow spiritually?

3. Be the godly influence.

After hearing from Jehu, Jehoshaphat determined to be a man of God who would lead those under his influence to follow the ways of the Lord. **2 Chronicles 19:4: *So Jehoshaphat dwelt at Jerusalem; and he went out again among the people from Beersheba to the mountains of Ephraim, and brought them back to the Lord God of their fathers.*** You can't change your past mistakes, but you can be forgiven by God, and you can change your future behavior. Wherever you have influence, be sure you're making a godly impact.

- Share a time when someone influenced you in a godly way.

4. Take your battles to the Lord.

In **2 Chronicles 20:1-2**, Jehoshaphat faced a crisis as a vast army came to wage war against him: ***“A vast army is coming against you from Edom, from the other side of the Dead Sea.”*** Surrounded by enemies, Jehoshaphat sought the Lord for help, leading the people of Judah in prayer and fasting (v. 3-4). Instead of fighting, they marched into battle led by worshippers, and God defeated their enemies. **2 Chronicles 20:22: *“As they began to sing and praise, the Lord set ambushes... and they were defeated.”*** Jehoshaphat's story shows that taking battles to God leads to supernatural victories.

- How does worship shift our focus from our problems to God, and why is this powerful in spiritual battles?
- Give an example of a time when taking your battle to God resulted in a victory.

LIFE CHALLENGE

This week, evaluate your relationships and remove yourself from any ungodly influences that may be hindering your walk with God. Commit to seeking His guidance in all decisions and trust Him to lead you to victory.