



**Focus** Our faith pleases God and brings His favor to our lives.

**Open** Have you recently received an unexpected gift or gesture of kindness from someone? If yes, what was it?

**Read** Rahab the prostitute is an unexpected biblical heroine. Under the leadership of Joshua, Israel was ready to enter the Promised Land. As part of his military strategy, Joshua sent spies ahead to the city of Jericho. Rahab had heard the reports of God delivering His children and giving them the cities of their enemies who were then completely destroyed. She believed the God of Israel was the only true God and that He was giving her city to Israel, and it and everyone in it, would be annihilated. Rahab became a heroine when she hid the spies from the King of Jericho and helped the spies escape safely back to Joshua (Joshua 2). In return, Rahab and all her family were the only ones spared when Jericho was completely destroyed.

Rahab's sin as a prostitute did not disqualify her from becoming a hero—we all come to God as sinners. Rahab's faith delivered her, just as we are saved by faith. Good deeds cannot save us, but they are a natural result of our faith (Hebrews 11:6, 30–31; Joshua 2:2–11; John 6:28–29).

Because Rahab had faith, she sought favor with the spies (and with God) by asking them to spare her family when Israel was going to come back to destroy Jericho (Joshua 2:12–13; Deuteronomy 7:1–3). This is a picture of how we're saved: we deserve judgment, but because of Christ's death on the cross, we can ask for and receive God's favor.

Because of her humility, Rahab received a promise from the spies that she and her family would be spared. She simply had to gather all of her family into her house and hang a scarlet cord from the window to signify to the Israelite army which house was hers.

Not only was Rahab pardoned from destruction, her identity and lineage were changed. Rahab married a tribal captain of Israel, gave birth to Boaz (another biblical hero who rescued Ruth and Naomi), and was an ancestor of King David and Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:1–6, 15–16). Each of us who follows Christ has a similar journey. Step by step, we hear God's word, we respond in faith, we receive His favor and His blessings flow through us to those around us and to our children.

### **Talk**

1. What inspired you about Rahab's story? What surprised you?
2. Is there a person in your life whose faith is evident because of their good deeds? What have you learned from them?
3. God's favor not only grants us salvation, but also many other blessings in our lives. Tell the group specific examples of God's favor at work in your life.
4. Pastor Stephen mentioned four purposes of God's promises in our lives: they are a basis for faith, they lead us in the right direction, they demonstrate God's faithfulness and they encourage us during difficult times. Do you have a promise from God you're waiting to see fulfilled? Do you have a situation in your life where you need a promise from God?

### **Live**

Take some time to write a list of things for which you are thankful, even small things that may not seem important. Next, write a list of things you know about God for which you want to praise Him (for example: His love, faithfulness, mercy, etc.). Over the next few days, pray these lists to God by thanking Him and praising Him for what is on the lists. Add to the lists as new thoughts come to mind.

### **Pray**

Take some time to pray for each other in the group regarding Question 4.