



Session 6: Challenged
Suggested Week of Use: January 8, 2017
Core Passages: Joshua 24:14-28

News Story Summary

As a twenty-six year old divinity school student, Kerry Egan worked as a student chaplain at a cancer hospital. On one occasion, Egan's professor asked him what sick and dying patients talk about with a chaplain. Egan responded that they mostly talked about their families. Egan's professor shamed him because Egan did not talk with dying patients about God.

That was thirteen years ago. Today, Kerry Egan works as a hospice chaplain. He said, if he were asked that same question today--what do sick and dying people talk about with their chaplain?--without hesitation, he would answer the same way. They mostly talk about their families. They talk about the love they gave, the love they received, and the love they did not give or receive. Egan said, "If God is love, and we believe that to be true, then we learn about God when we learn about love. The first, and usually the last, classroom of love is the family."

(For more on this story, search the Internet using the phrase "what people talk about before they die.")

Focus Attention

To replace the Focus Attention idea, guide group members to recall any movie deathbed scenes that may have inspired them. Ask: *What emotions do deathbed scenes evoke in viewers?* Read the news story summary. Ask: *How is the message of dying people a challenge to those to whom they are speaking?*

Today's lesson focuses on the last words Joshua spoke to the Israelites. He challenged them to live faithfully before God in a dynamic relationship with Him.

Challenge

Explain that Joshua had obediently lead the Israelites to overcome many challenges as they entered the Promised Land. His final act of leadership was to challenge them to evaluate their relationship with God so they could live faithfully with God. Remind group members of the news summary. Ask them to identify differences and similarities between the last things Egan's patients talked about and Joshua's final words. Emphasize that both Egan and Joshua focused on relationships; Egan with others, and Joshua with God. Challenge group members to accept Joshua's challenge to evaluate their own relationship with God.