

*This midweek study will explore the biblical doctrine of the priesthood of the believer. Use the following main points, Scriptures, teaching/discussion ideas, and questions to help students gain a better understanding of the essential doctrine for this session.*

### Essential Doctrine: Priesthood of the Believer

God's intention for humanity is that we be a kingdom of priests, not just a kingdom with priests. Although God set up the priestly system in the Old Testament due to the sinfulness of humanity and people's need for a mediator, His ultimate purpose is that we come to God directly, through the mediating work of Jesus Christ, thus eliminating the need of another priest. Because of the work of Christ on the cross (exemplified in His tearing down the curtain that prevented access into the holy of holies, Christians are free to approach God with boldness (Rom. 5:1-5; Heb. 4:14-16).

### 1 The Old Testament priesthood is a foreshadowing of Jesus' high priesthood (Heb. 10:11-18).

- ▶ We did a job description activity for priests earlier. What would the job description be for a priest in the Old Testament?
- ▶ How often were the Israelites supposed to offer sacrifices? Why do you think they were supposed to sacrifice so much so often?

#### Read Hebrews 10:11-18.

- ▶ According to this passage, how does Jesus fulfill the Old Testament priesthood? How is Jesus better than the Old Testament priesthood?
- ▶ Do you remember who qualified to be a priest in the Old Testament?  
Only the descendants of Aaron.
- ▶ If the family of Aaron were priests, what about the family of Jesus?
- ▶ Jesus is our high priest (Heb. 4:15), but we are now also priests, thanks to His consecrating us. How does this knowledge affect you?

### 2 We now are priests, enjoying direct intimacy with God (Numbers 18:8-14,20).

- ▶ Would you have wanted to be a priest in the Old Testament? Why or why not?
- ▶ What special privileges, if any, did Old Testament priests get? What special responsibilities did they have?

#### Read Numbers 18:8-14,20.

- ▶ Now, having read Numbers 18, would you want to be a priest?  
The Old Testament priests received the very best Israel had to offer. Their inheritance was God Himself. The very best we can have today is God Himself.
- ▶ Just as God was the priests' inheritance, He is also ours. The priests had direct access to God, and so do we. What are some of the ways we get to enjoy God directly through Jesus?

Answers might include speaking to God in prayer, His concern for the details of our lives, the Holy Spirit dwelling within us, and God speaking to us directly through His Word.

- ▶ What are some ways we take our direct relationship to God for granted? What are some things we can do to keep our zeal for God's personal fellowship?

### 3 We are now priests, bringing God to the world and the world to God (1 Peter 2:9,12).

- ▶ Think back to the job description we made earlier for a priest. If you had to explain the priest's job in a sentence or two, what would you say?
- ▶ I'd like to suggest to you that the job of a priest is twofold: to bring God to the people, and to bring the people to God. What do you think?

#### Read 1 Peter 2:9,12.

- ▶ Does this passage support the idea that priests bring people to God and vice-versa? Why or why not?
- ▶ What are two ways this passage tells us to bring people to God and God to people?

We can bring people to God and show them who He is by singing His praises, while behaving in a godly manner and maintaining a good attitude.

- ▶ What are some ways we can bring God to people?
- ▶ What are some ways we can bring people to God?
- ▶ How can we remind ourselves to rely on the Holy Spirit and not our own power as we seek to be priests in this present age? What specific promises can we trust for power and grace?

### WRAP IT UP

- ▶ List the names of some specific people to whom you can be a priest this week. What specific actions can you take to be a priest for them?