



DAYLIGHT ON PRAYER

Spending Time with God

1. How can the group support you in prayer as you run with endurance and perseverance the race of the Christian life?
2. What other prayer requests would you like to share with the group?
3. The change in names that accompanied Christianity coming to Aphrodisias couldn't be any more dramatic: from being named after a Greek goddess to being renamed "City of the Cross." Close your prayer time by praying for your city or community to become a "city of the cross."



DAYLIGHT AHEAD

Standing by the famous Milvian Bridge on the outskirts of Rome, Joe Stowell takes us on one more historical journey. This one involves two warring leaders—Constantine and Maxentius—who were related by marriage but separated by differing visions for the future of Rome. Stowell explains the significance of the Battle of the Milvian Bridge—an event that would eventually lead to a huge change in how the great Roman Empire would view Christianity.

1:50:22

The Changing Face of Rome



DAYLIGHT PREVIEW

An Extraordinary Turn of Events

Throughout these sessions, Joe Stowell has shown how marginalized Christianity was in the Roman Empire—how idol worship and immorality ruled the day. Because of their faith, Jesus' followers seemed destined for fourth-class citizenship, always relegated to the fringes of society. But remarkably, in the fourth century, Christianity became the primary faith in the land—an event that would change western civilization for the better. This remarkable story leaves us with a number of questions about how we should live in a day so similar to the pre-Christian days of Rome.

COME TOGETHER

Icebreaker Questions

1. In this session Joe Stowell recounts the Battle of the Milvian Bridge. How much interest have you had in military history? What's the most famous battlefield you've ever visited?
2. Did you play games like Risk or Battleship when you were growing up?

3. Has this series changed how you feel about studying history?



FINDING DAYLIGHT

Experience the Video

Feel free to jot down Video Notes as you watch the presentation by Joe Stowell. Use the space below for those notes.

VIDEO NOTES

The Milvian Bridge

AD 284: Problems in the empire

Battle of the Milvian Bridge: Constantine

Constantine goes to Rome

The Edict of Milan

Christianity becomes the formative force

Questions for us



WALKING IN THE DAYLIGHT

Discussion Time

DISCOVER GOD'S WORD

Discussion/Application Questions

1. What factors does Joe Stowell mention that led to the weakening of the Roman Empire prior to the Battle of the Milvian Bridge in AD 312?
2. The historical accounts of what Constantine experienced just before the Battle of the Milvian Bridge aren't unanimous. According to one account, he had a vision of a blazing cross in the sky and over that cross were written the words "By this sign, conquer." According to another account, Constantine had a dream in which Christ instructed

him to have his soldiers paint the first two letters of the Greek word for *Christ* on their shields.

Though people have debated both Constantine's experience before the battle and the genuineness of his self-proclaimed conversion, how likely does it seem that his motivations were entirely political in light of the fact that historians estimate that Christianity comprised no more than 10 percent of the population of the West at that time?

- 3. What do you make of the fact that history indicates that when Constantine entered Rome after winning the Battle of the Milvian Bridge, he didn't conclude his triumphal procession with the customary offering of pagan sacrifices?
- 4. Not long after that, Constantine—now the undisputed ruler of the western half of the empire—pronounced the Edict of Milan, which made Christianity a legal religion and ended all persecution against Christians. And then about 70 years later, in AD 381, the emperor Theodosius outlawed idolatry and paganism and made Christianity the sole faith of the empire, even going so far as forbidding heretics from meeting and confiscating their churches.
 - a. In what way was the emperor Theodosius's decrees outlawing idolatry and paganism and making Christianity the official religion of the empire a good thing?

- b. Are there ways in which his decrees might not have been such a good thing? What will you do with this Jesus who offers to satisfy?

St. Ambrose, St. Basil, St. Chrysostom, and the Council of Nicaea... (faded text)

- 5. The books of the New Testament were written during a time when Christianity was by all means a minority religion. Do you think our culture today is like that, or is Christianity the majority religion of our time?

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- 6. Joe summarizes this study by saying, "This has been the story of a man and His followers who changed their world against great odds. But it's far more than a story, certainly more than mere history. The intention is that this story be replicated in generation after generation until Jesus Christ comes back, as He promised, which means that it needs to be our story as well."

What would it mean for the story of the dawning of Christianity in the Roman Empire to become our story and for our generation to replicate that story?

- 3. Conclude your prayer time by thanking God for the marvelous gift of His Son, the One who would satisfy our souls...

BRINGING IT HOME

1. Joe concludes this study by asking a series of challenging questions for us as followers of Jesus Christ:

- Will we offer Jesus in a compelling way as did the early Christians?
- Will we offer boundary-less communities where the broken are embraced, where the poor are welcomed and fed, and where those who need healing physically and emotionally will be supported and helped?
- Will we offer communities that have the beautiful color of people from every tribe and nation and the richness of a diversity that is united in Jesus Christ?
- Will we be people who have the courage and confidence of those early Christians, who believed in the power of the resurrection, and the empowerment of the indwelling Holy Spirit, and who would not be deterred regardless of the resistance?
- Will we unashamedly proclaim the forgiving power of the cross of Jesus Christ and the life-giving power of His resurrection to help reconnect people to the God who so earnestly seeks to restore them to himself?
- And will we seek opportunities to bless our world with acts of love and compassion, even at great risk and sacrifice to ourselves? Will we even be willing to bless those who curse us and to pray for those who may spitefully use us? In the end, will they see Jesus in us, and will we be the ones who offer them satisfaction by telling them about the indwelling person of Jesus through His finished work on the cross?

How will you respond to this call?

2. Finally, Joe poses this critical question for those who are still seeking:

What will you do with this Jesus who offers to satisfy?

“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts” (Revelation 21:6).



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1. What have you appreciated the most about this study and about this group?
2. How can the group continue to support you in prayer?
3. Conclude your prayer time by thanking God for the marvelous gift of His Son, the One who truly satisfies us.