BELONG

Starter Questions: What's something you used to believe was true until you found out it wasn't? Ask your students if they would like to share their highs and lows from the week.

Become Challenge Check-In: Last week, you were challenged to think honestly about what you are trusting in to save you and, if you follow Jesus, to look for an opportunity to tell someone what He has done for you. Did you have an opportunity to share with someone? How did it go?

BELIEVE

Scripture: 2 Kings 22:8, 11–13, 18–20; 23:1–3

Main Idea: God's Word changes us.

Focus Question: What do I do when God's Word challenges the way I'm living?

Context: (Share with students before reading Scripture.)

Josiah became king of Judah when he was only eight years old. Unlike many of the kings before him, Josiah sought to follow the Lord. For years, Judah had turned away from God and worshiped false gods. During the reigns of Josiah's father and grandfather, idolatry had become widespread, and God's Law had been neglected. When workers were repairing the temple, the high priest discovered the Book of the Law, which contained God's instructions for His people.

Summary: (For leader reference only. Do not read aloud. Let students discover the meaning of the passage as they read.)

Josiah didn't ignore what he heard or make excuses for Judah's disobedience. He humbled himself before God and sought to know what the Lord wanted him to do. Although God confirmed that judgment was coming because of Judah's sin, He acknowledged Josiah's humble response. Josiah gathered the people, read God's Word aloud, and led them in renewing their commitment to follow the Lord. Josiah took God's Word seriously because he took God seriously. He recognized that these weren't simply rules to follow but the words of the God who deserved his wholehearted trust and obedience.

Read 2 Kings 22:8, 11–13 • Hear God's Word

- What did Josiah realize when he heard God's Word, and how did he respond? *(He realized Judah had disobeyed God's commands. He tore his clothes as an expression of grief and humility because he understood the seriousness of their sin.)*

➜ **Transition:** Josiah sent his officials to seek the Lord. They spoke with a prophet named Huldah (2 Kings 22:14), who confirmed that judgment was coming because Judah had repeatedly turned away from God and worshiped idols. But God also had a message specifically for Josiah.

Read 2 Kings 22:18–20 • Respond with Humility

- What does God say about Josiah's response? What does that show us about the kind of response God wants from us? *(God saw that Josiah humbled himself and responded with grief when he heard His words. God wants us to respond with that same humility. Rather than ignoring our sin or making excuses, repentance means turning away from sin and turning toward God in obedience. We'll see how Josiah put that into action next.)*

➜ **Leader Note:** Josiah's humility didn't cancel God's judgment against Judah. God promised that Josiah would die before the coming disaster, but the nation would still face judgment for its rebellion. Josiah's response mattered because he honored God, not because it guaranteed a particular outcome.

Read 2 Kings 23:1–3 • Steps of Obedience

- What actions did Josiah take after hearing God's Word? What do those actions reveal about his commitment to God? *(Josiah gathered the people, read God's Word aloud, and committed to following the Lord wholeheartedly. He didn't just hear God's Word. He acted on what he heard.)*

➜ **Make it Personal:** It's one thing to know what God says. It's another to follow Him when doing so is difficult. Think about the choices you face every day. Your friends might be making fun of someone, and speaking up would make things awkward. You might know all the right answers at church, but your group chats or private choices tell a different story. Or maybe you've grown up hearing what your parents believe, but you're still deciding whether you're willing to follow God for yourself.

- Our choices often reveal what matters most to us. What do your everyday choices reveal about how much you value God and His Word? *(Encourage students to think about whether their choices are shaped by what God says or by what they want and what others expect. Remind students that none of us obeys perfectly, but a heart that trusts God should increasingly lead to choices that honor Him.)*

Read James 1:22–25 • Respond to God's Word

- James compares hearing God's Word without obeying it to looking in a mirror and then forgetting what you look like. What point is he making? How does that connect to Josiah's response? *(Just as a mirror reveals what we look like, God's Word reveals truth about ourselves and how we're living. Ignoring what Scripture shows us is like looking in a mirror and walking away without responding to what we saw. Josiah didn't ignore what God's Word revealed. He took action.)*

Reflect

Josiah made significant changes in Judah, but those changes couldn't change the people's hearts. They needed more than rules to follow or better behavior. They needed God to change them from the inside out.

- Someone can follow all the right rules without actually loving God. Why isn't doing the right things enough to change someone's heart? What can Jesus do that we can't do for ourselves? *(Following rules can change our outward behavior, but it can't save us from sin or give us new life. Only Jesus can do that. When we trust Him, the Holy Spirit works in us, changing not just what we do but what we love and desire. Our obedience becomes a response to God's grace rather than an attempt to earn His approval.)*

BECOME

Circle of Impact Challenge: Josiah's story reminds us what a gift it is to have access to God's Word. This week, set aside time to read your Bible, even if it's just a few verses each day. Ask yourself what God is teaching you and how you should respond. Then, think of someone in your circle of impact who could benefit from hearing God's Word. Invite them to come to church with you, and offer to sit with them.