

The Day of the Lord #4
The Action of Inaction

Word

Scripture Reference

Zephaniah 3:1–8

Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever broken a rule and got away with it? Share with the group.
2. Ancient Jerusalem during Zephaniah's time was described like any other city today (v. 1). The people knew what God wanted, yet they did not change their ways. They resolved to do nothing—the action of inaction—because they risk-assessed following or not following God, and they concluded that their disobedience is low-risk because of God's grace and goodness. Much like we are today, God's people had an "I can get away with it" mentality. Read Zephaniah 3:1-8. We see in this passage two specific actions of inaction. First is the action of ignoring God's Word (v. 2). Discuss the blatant sins that even Christians today are guilty of. Why do you think people have become so shameless in their sins? What does trusting God and a changed life have to do with each other? When you want to get close with someone, what do you do? In the same way, how are you drawing closer to God? Have you been ignoring His Word? What changes have you made in your life to get closer with Him?
3. The second action of inaction described in the passage is the attitude of blatant shamelessness. In verses 3-4, God condemns four groups of people that should have been leading the people of Jerusalem morally and spiritually, yet have shown blatant disregard for God: the princes who led the people with their own selfish gain in mind; the judges who were so corrupted they were robbing the people until the people had nothing; the prophets who were insolent and treacherous, instead of calling people to a life of righteousness; and the priests who twisted the Word of God for their own benefit. No wonder the people of Jerusalem had no desire to change, because those who were supposed to lead them to change were shameless in their sins. As a believer, you are to lead by example in how you live in obedience to God. Are you? Examine yourself if you exhibit the same attitude as these 4 groups of people.

4. When there is no shame in your actions, no guilt, no fear of God, you will do whatever you want. What are the dangers of no longer being shocked by sin and being blatantly shameless in disregarding God's Word? As a Christian, do you think you are ever in danger of being immune to God? What little "slips" in your character can lead to being insensitive to God? What steps can you take in order to be sensitive to Him again? If you are a parent/grandparent, have you ever let your children/grandchildren get away with doing something wrong? If yes, why? What does the Bible say about how to raise your children? What does it teach your children if you tell them that there are gray areas in the things which God clearly says are black and white, in order to help them survive the "real" world?
5. When you don't change or see a need to change, then you need to be reminded of what God says He will do. Verses 6-7 reminds us of these truths:
 - a. God should be taken seriously. Just because God is not doing it now does not mean He won't do it later. When you are not following God's Word, then you better think about your relationship with Him. How seriously are you taking His Word?
 - b. God's warnings are for your good. Have you ever thought that God's commands are curtailing your enjoyment of life? Do you see them as hurdles to leap over or as protection from harm? What barriers of God's protection have you breached? Did it do you any good? Did you blame or get angry at Him for the trouble you experienced? Share with the group.

Walk

God gives a final warning in verse 8. He is a very patient, loving, gracious, and merciful God, but do not ignore His Word. Do not be shameless in your actions. Do not wait to change. Do it now, because God's warning should be taken seriously and it is for your own good. The day is coming when the Lord will return for an accounting of your life. He will come as an impartial judge, as a punisher of evil. Do you want Him as a friend, or as a foe?

Worship & Prayer

Father, many times I've forgotten just how powerful You are, how seriously I need to take You. You sent Your Son to die in my place because You want what is good for me. You've repeatedly warned me to follow Your Word and draw close to You. Yet I've risk-assessed and found that I could ignore You, just because You have forgiven me more times than You've allowed me to suffer the consequences. Today I choose to trust You not only when You say that you've forgiven me, but also when You say that my sin incurs your wrath. I choose to take You seriously, and desire to lovingly be in fellowship with You as my Friend. Help me draw closer to You, and to live a life that draws others to You. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.