

# Judges



DailyLife  
Five Oaks Church

Week 1: October 31–November 5, 2015

# Day 1

November 2



*Pray* | Thank God for his Word, the Bible, and the truth within.

TRUE SUCCESS AND eternal reward requires faithfulness to God in the big things and the small things.

The people of Israel have reached the land promised to them by God and have been instructed by God to take over control of the land and drive out the people who are living there. The tribe of Judah moves in first and experiences great initial success. As the campaign expands, we see they are not able to remove the people from the land. Israel compromises on the instructions from God, making some of the people slaves instead of removing them from the land.

This compromise may not seem significant on the surface, but the consequences impact the people of Israel to this day. They appear to have succeeded in conquering the land, but serious trouble is lingering just beneath the surface, all because Israel was not faithful in the big and small things.



*Read* | *Judges 1:1-2:5*



*Reflect | Choose one or more of the following questions for reflection.*

The primary consequence of Israel's failure to purge all the original inhabitants of Canaan from the land was that it left room for a mixing of cultures and beliefs that ultimately drew the people of Israel away from worshipping the one true God. We face the same challenge today. Isolation from a world filled with a variety of beliefs is not an option. God tells Christians to be in the world, but not of the world and to be a light to the world. How do you protect the purity of your belief in God while still being part of the world and the associated temptations?

Faithfulness in the small things is often a matter of personal choices that are made in the privacy of your own heart and mind, not visible to anyone but you and God. Is there a private area of your life where you are not being faithful to God? Start by confessing the situation to God and ask for his help going forward. Final resolution often will be helped by exposing the situation to the light of day. Confessing the situation to a friend or family member and having him or her help hold you accountable is critical step as well.

How do you measure true success? Is your definition in alignment with God's?

## Day 2

November 3



*Pray / Today, thank God for his provision in good times and in bad.*

WE CAN LEARN about God from others, but ultimately we must each choose for ourselves to truly know God.

The generation of Israelites that was delivered from Egypt experienced God in a truly remarkable and physical way. They literally lived on God's provision in the wilderness for forty years and directly received God's law through Moses. Even so, they struggled to fully trust God and were not allowed to take possession of the Promised Land.

The subsequent generations of Israelites followed God for a time. Following the death of Joshua and his generation, a generation of Israelites arose "who did not know the Lord or the work that he had done for Israel" (Judges 2:10). Despite knowing about God, they chose not to truly align with God. This led to times of captivity and suffering.



*Read / Judges 2:1–15*



*Reflect* / Choose one or more of the following questions for reflection.

The implication of Judges 2:10 is that an entire generation of Israelites had not been properly prepared and trained to be children of God and live in the confidence and strength that comes from that privileged position. Dale Ralph Davis, in his commentary on Judges 2:10, says that it isn't enough for our children to merely imitate our faith; they also need to be converted.<sup>1</sup>

If you are a parent or grandparent, what steps are you taking to ensure your children truly “know” God? If you are not a parent or grandparent, how can you support and influence the development of the next generation of Christians?

Knowing about God and even believing there is a God is not the same as truly knowing God. The Bible tells us that if we truly know God, it will be evident through our “fruit.” What evidence, or fruit, is being produced by your life so that you have confidence that you truly know God?

What role should the community of Christ-followers, the church, play in the training and development of the next generation of believers?

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1. Dale Ralph Davis, *Joshua: No Falling Words* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2000), 36.

# Day 3

November 4



*Pray / Thank God for the love he showed by sending his son to the world.*

TRUE REPENTANCE ONLY originates from a heart change, which is evidenced by behavior change.

Throughout the book of Judges we see a pattern of behavior from the Israelites that reveals the real state of their hearts with regard to God. The people of Israel

- conquer but don't eliminate a group of Canaanites,
- are drawn into the sins of the remaining Canaanites,
- are allowed to be enslaved by Canaanites,
- remember God and cry out for help, and
- are saved by God through a judge.

The cycle of sin, punishment, and crying out for help repeats again and again. Their cries for help and subsequent salvation do not produce lasting behavioral change, revealing the true state of their hearts. God is simply a tool to get what they want, not the Lord and King of their lives.



*Read / Judges 2:4, 16-19*



*Reflect* | Choose one or more of the following questions for reflection.

In these passages, the Israelites were basically using God as a last-ditch resource when every other option had failed. This clearly reveals their lack of understanding about the nature and power of the God who had adopted them as his people. It's easy to criticize, but in reality we all do the same thing today. As sinful humans, we tend to want to take care of things on our own and only call on God if we find we're in over our heads. In what areas of your life do you tend to behave this way? What steps can you take to change?

How does our first instinct to rely on our own skills and strengths limit our potential impact for God?

In Ephesians, Paul tells us that salvation is a gift of grace that we receive by faith and is not the result of any action or works on our part. If that's the case (and it is), then why is it so important for our behavior to change?

*Day 4*  
*November 5*



*Pray / Ask God to reveal where sin is enslaving you.*

SLAVERY TO SIN—the more you sin, the more you sin.

Despite God’s compassion and delivery through the judges, the people of Israel simply cannot break out of the cycle of sin. The true power of sin and its ability to control the hearts and minds of humans is clearly revealed in the book of Judges. Sin has become the master of the lives of the people of Israel, and they seem powerless to fight it. Each time they give into sin, it becomes more powerful and more difficult to resist next time.

The depravity of the people of Israel, and their lack of sensitivity to God and their covenant with him, drives God to refer to the people of Israel as “this people” (Judges 2:20), no longer even referring to them His own. But God is ever faithful, and ultimately he responds in compassion and love again, sending another judge to save his wayward people.



*Read / Judges 2:16–3:6*





*Reflect / Choose one or more of the following questions for reflection.*

While we live here on earth, until God perfects his true followers in eternity, we all will sin. But sin does not need to be our master (or Lord), even here on earth. Is God the master of your life? How do you know? If you answered no to that question and would like to change that, please reach out to your small group leader or a Christian friend and let them know. They can help.

Oftentimes the “masters” of our lives can be easily identified if we step back and honestly assess where we most commonly spend our time and resources. In addition to where you spend your time and resources, you must also examine your motives. Take a moment to assess the masters of your life and your motives. Are you investing for God’s kingdom or your own?

Can you truly attain freedom from the slavery of sin here on earth?  
Explain your answer.

# Day 5

November 6



*Pray | Open today by thanking God for a love that never fades.*

BECAUSE OF HIS love, God never stops doing whatever it takes to save his people from their messes and make them happy again.

So often we unthinkingly limit the love, strength, and resilience of God to the boundaries of humans. We think that God will give up on us if we keep sinning—like a human would. It's true that God hates sin, and it can even stir him to anger, but it does not mean he gives up on or stops loving the sinner. In one of his many psalms, David assures us that God's anger lasts for just a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime.

The children of Israel certainly tested the boundaries of God's favor. As we see from the stories of Othniel, Ehud, and Shamgar, God holds true to his covenant promises to Israel, and he's certainly not shy about using some fairly unconventional means to deliver on those promises.



*Read | Judges 3:7–31*



*Reflect / Choose one or more of the following questions for reflection.*

In what area of your life could you do even greater things for God if you learned to truly rely on God's resources and not just your own? What steps can you take in that direction today?

Why do you think a story like the one of Ehad killing Eglon is in the Bible? What truths about God do you glean from a story like this?

God uses common people like us and Ehad to deliver on his promises. How have you seen that manifested in your life? Have you been used by God to deliver on one of his promises to someone else?

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