

Judges



DailyLife
Five Oaks Church

Week 2: November 7–13, 2015

Day 1

November 9



Pray / *Ask God to help you see who is in control of your life.*

GOD IS IN control, so you may as well give him the wheel.

Judges 4–8 tells the sad story of the people of Israel as they repeat a cycle of falling away from God, punishment in the form of servitude and rule by nasty kings, the realization they are on the wrong path, and renewing their covenant with God. No matter how many times they figure out they should follow God, they eventually turn away from him again.

The crazy thing is that it is much more dangerous to have two drivers fighting over control of a vehicle than to have one driver take you to the wrong place. If the Israelites had really given God control of their lives, things would have gone much better for them. The same is true of us, and this week we'll have the opportunity to review, and hopefully learn from, the mistakes the Israelites repeated.



Read / *Judges 4*



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

Consider the leadership styles of Barak, Sisera, and Jael: Barak led Israel to battle only after Deborah called him out, Sisera ran away from his troops, and Jael took advantage of the opportunity God gave her. Which style do you want God to help you emulate?

A major theme of Judges 4 is that God is in control (see verses 6–7, 9, 14, 15 and 23). Have you given God control of your life?

In Judges 4:9 Deborah tells Barak that the road he is on will not lead to his glory. Thought his was meant as an admonishment for Barak, we can find wisdom in it. When we try to choose our own path, it is usually for our own glory rather than God's. Do you need to move to the back seat and allow God to lead you on his path for your life?

Day 2

November 10



Pray / Ask for the courage to follow God where he leads.

ACKNOWLEDGING SOMEONE AS your leader is one thing. Actually following them into battle is another.

Judges 5 is a celebration of victory and also a calling out of the tribes of Israel that didn't follow Barak into battle. Saying you are part of the team and getting on the field and participating are two separate acts that are both necessary and require a conscious decision.

Following your chosen leader may be harder than acknowledging him or her as your leader. Both steps are required if you want to be a contributing member of the team or God's family.

Think about your position, on the coach or on the field, as you read Judges 5.



Read / Judges 5



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

Judges 5 is a victory song celebrating God's deliverance of his people, Israel, from Sisera. How long has it been since you celebrated God's deliverance and victory in your life?

The earth trembled and the mountains quaked before God, and the universe and stars fought in Judges 5:4–5. Consider the things that you are currently struggling with. Which of your concerns is too big for the God who can move the earth and command the stars?

The tribes that did not join in the fight against Sisera are listed in detail in Judges 5:16–17. There are many good reasons to stay where you are, where you are comfortable and safe. What are some reasons you should step out, take a risk, and let God lead you into battle or a place that isn't known or comfortable?

Day 3

November 11



Pray / Thank God for his wisdom.

IF YOU HAVE a navigation system in your car or on your phone and never turn it on, what good is it? The same is true if you enter an address but then choose to chart your own course. You have to trust your guide.

Gideon and the people of Israel have some trust issues in Judges 6. The chapter starts out with Israel again doing evil in God's sight and his giving them into the hands of the Midianites.

When the Israelites realized the error of their ways and asked God for help, he gave them Gideon. Gideon had some major concerns regarding the strength of his tribe and his position. He tested the angel of the Lord, earned the name Jerubbaal by tearing down the altar of Baal, and then tested God with his fleece twice. Then he was finally ready to lead the people into battle.



Read / Judges 6



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

It may seem like God abandoned his people in Judges 6:1–10, but verses 1 and 10 prove the opposite. God knew the people of Israel did evil and did not obey, and he gave them into the hand of Midian. Look back at some of the hard times in your life. Can you see God’s hand in those times?

Gideon, as seen in Judges 6:10–27, is a study in contrasts or even an oxymoron. He is afraid to fight Midian (verse 15) and is afraid of his own family and the people of his town (verse 27), but he is brave enough to question the angel of the LORD (verse 13). Reflect on a time that you didn’t have a healthy fear of God and what the result was.

Reflect on the strength of Gideon’s faith as revealed in Judges 6:36–39 when he asks God to prove himself not once, but twice, with the dew and fleece, even after he confirmed he was speaking with the angel of the LORD in verse 22. Does your faith in God show weakness or strength?

Day 4
November 12



Pray / Ask God to help you recognize his hand in your life.

HAVE YOU EVER found yourself taking credit for something that you didn't do or only had a small part in? God tries to make sure this won't happen in Judges 7. He does this so that Gideon and his troops will know, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that God defeated the Midianites for them and so they will trust him more going forward.

God knows your history, just as he knew that of the Israelites. He knows your fears and weaknesses and that you have a tendency to take credit for or not acknowledge when he has done something to save you. That is why he does things in ways that have no other explanation other than "God did that."



Read / Judges 7



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

God wanted to make sure that Gideon and his troops knew that he defeated the Midianites, not them, so he reduced their number from 32,000 to 300. Commentator Dale Ralph Davis said, “Yahweh frequently insists that his people be reduced to utter helplessness, so that they must recognize that their deliverance can only be chalked up to Yahweh’s power and mercy.”¹ Reflect on a time when you have been in a position of helplessness and God saved you.

It is obvious from Judges 7:9–15 that God is with us and knows us. God knew that Gideon was afraid, and he orchestrated events that allowed him to overhear a man’s dream that the enemy would be defeated by Gideon. Has there been a time in your walk with God when his presence with you and love for you were undeniable?

Gideon’s fear and weakness are prevalent throughout Judges 7, but God still used him to defeat the Midianites. How can God use you despite your weakness and fear?

¹ Dale Ralph Davis, *Judges: Such a Great Salvation* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2006), 104.

Day 5

November 13



Pray / Thank God for his forgiveness.

JUDGES 8 IS a great example of what happens when we take back the wheel from God. There is little mention of God in the chapter, and it appears that Gideon may have been acting on his own. It seems that he allowed his emotions to control him and his response to the men of Succoth. Then, he created an ephod that ended up resulting in the Israelites worshipping it as an idol. Granted, the Israelites had free will and could have chosen to follow God, but once again, they made the wrong decision to turn against God.

If we are honest, most of us see a lot of ourselves in the behavior of the Israelites. Thankfully we have the salvation of God's son, Jesus. If we receive him, we can be forgiven of all the bad decisions we make when we refuse to let God lead us through life. Talk to a friend or pastor if you haven't yet invited God to drive the car of your life and would like him to. If you have a relationship with God and haven't given God full control, or if you need to give it back, then take time to do so now.



Read / Judges 8



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

Gideon demonstrated his lack of reliance on God in the way he reacted toward the men of Succoth. Is there any bitterness or resentment in your life that is impeding your walk with and reliance on God?

When the men of Israel asked Gideon to rule over them because he had saved them from Midian, he refused and said the Lord would rule over them. Then the Israelites whored after the ephod he made from the spoils of war. Consider a time when you have not followed the good advice of a godly leader and what the result of that decision was.

The end of Judges 8 tells how Gideon died and the people of Israel again forgot about God, who had delivered them from their enemies. This is essentially the same place the people were in at the beginning of chapter 6 when they did evil in the sight of the Lord and were given over to the Midianites. What situation do you repeatedly find yourself in when you don't give God control of your life?

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