

Community Group Study Guide

For the Week of April 23rd-30th

Getting Started

1. As our six month exploration of the book of Judges comes to a close, what impressions are left on your mind? Scan back through these 21 chapters as a group. What stands out to you? What discoveries have you made about this book, the character of God, the nature of your own heart, or the good news of our salvation in Christ?

Digging Deeper

2. Toward the tail end of this book, we hear variations on a certain theme ring repeatedly like a funeral bell: “In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes (17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25).” How do we see this born out in the book of Judges, in our own nation, in the church, and even in our own lives?

Open Your Bible to Judges 3:7-11...

3. One of the most important takeaways from our study of this book has been the concept of the cycle of the judges (first introduced in 2:11-3:6, though most succinctly captured in 3:7-11). It's something that we're not going to want to forget as we walk into the days ahead. Though it's certainly biblical history, this (sadly) can also become an all too present reflection of our own lives. Do you remember the cycle?¹ Judges 3:7 describes the first step. What is it? In what specific ways does the author detail the depravity of God's people? Could it ever be said of us that: "They forgot the LORD their God?" Explain.
4. The second step in the cycle is outlined in 3:8. What's happening here? Painful as it is, we can also think of this as a *gift* of God. How is it that we might understand this step as an evidence of God's mercy? Compare what's happening here to what the author of Hebrews says in Hebrews 10:5-11. Do you have a personal experience of the Lord's corrective discipline in your own life that you'd be willing to share with the group? If so, please do so.
5. Sometimes the cycle of the judges isn't exactly linear. As a matter of fact, there are occasions where we might get stuck vacillating between step one and step two. Do you know what this is like (running back and forth between your *rebellion* and God's *reprimand* without coming to the point of repentance)? Explain.

¹ In case you need a nudge, here are the five steps: the horror of our rebellion, the gift of God's reprimand, the importance of our repentance, the wonder of God's rescue, and the grace of God's rest.

6. Let's take the next two steps together (vv.9-10). What are they? Do you suspect the author is describing genuine repentance in the hearts of the Israelites here? Whether simply in response to the misery of their suffering, or repentance from their sinning, the LORD does indeed deliver them. How about in our lives? What assurance do we have from God's Word when we confess our sins to him (1 John 1:9)? How often do you lay hold of this particular promise in your day to day walk with the Lord? How often do you remind others around you of this promise?
7. The last step in the cycle is more than a step, it's actually the goal of creation itself. Compare Judges 3:11 with Genesis 2:1-3. Fascinatingly, Judges 3:11 speaks specifically of rest for "the land" of Israel. Why the land? What's the author communicating here?
8. To what does Jesus call us in Matthew 11:28-30? Sounds pretty spectacular, doesn't it? So why is it so challenging for us to receive this from him, or to remain within it alongside him? Put another way, why do we rebel against this rest (note the way Judges 3:12 follows hard on the heels of 3:11)? Notice the same pattern in Isaiah 30:15 and following. In what specific ways is the cycle of the judges a warning and a reminder for us to stay close to Christ, dwelling in the rest he offers, as well as inviting others into that rest?