

COMMUNITY GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Cries for Mercy

AN EXPOSITION OF JUDGES: SUPREMACY OF SELF

*Judges 3:7-31***OVERVIEW**

The famed philosopher Frederich Nietzsche once said that “God was dead...and we have killed him.” While this is an impossibility, let us imagine for a moment a world where this was true. What would it be like? If we all just did what was right in our own eyes, what would our world be like? What if self was supreme? This is the question that the book of Judges seeks to answer.

APPLY // JUDGES 2:6-3:6

1. Read Judges 2:6-3:6
2. What’s the connection between verses 10-11?
3. What might tempt us to “not know the Lord or the work he had done” for us?
4. What are some practical ways we can cultivate “knowing” the Lord’s character and works in our generation and the next?
5. Verse 14 and verse 20 say the “anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel.” What is the anger of the Lord? Why is it good that Israel’s (and our) disobedience kindles the Lord’s anger? What might tempt us to minimize the anger of the Lord?
6. This passage describes Israel’s behavior as (1) abandoning the Lord and (2) whoring after other Gods. Why does God describe sin in these two ways?
7. Is this typically the way we think about our sin? Why or why not?
8. Verse 17 says Israel “whored after other gods and bowed down to them.” What gods are tempting to us? How would bowing down to them manifest itself in our lives?
9. Identify the Lord’s mercy in this passage. What does this tell us about the character of God?
10. Re-read 3:5-6. What do you notice about Israel in these verses? How does this inform our joyful obedience to God’s word?

STUDY // JUDGES 3:7-31

Study the passage of Scripture aiming to faithfully interpret and apply what you observe. Remember we study God’s word not just to increase our knowledge, but to increase our trust in and treasuring of Jesus Christ.

Note: Healthy Bible study asks three questions:

- **Observation:** What do I see?
- **Interpretation:** What does it mean?
- **Application:** Why does it matter?

These questions below are aimed at helping you observe and interpret the text. The following week’s questions for the same passage aim more toward application. While we cannot completely separate

these three types of questions, this is a helpful framework to have in mind as you lead your group through the passage.

1. Read Judges 3:7-31.
 2. What initial observations do you have from the text? Any repetitions or main themes?
 3. What is the main idea of this passage?
 4. What do you notice in comparing 3:7 and 2:1-11? What do you notice in comparing 3:11 and 3:12? What lessons do we learn from these verses?
 5. In verses 7-11, how do you see each stage of the “cycle”? (disobedience -> destruction -> distress -> deliverance).
 6. What actions of the Lord do you observe throughout 3:7-31? What does this tell you about the character of God?
 7. What similarities do you see between the episode featuring Othniel and the one featuring Ehud?
 8. What do we know about Othniel (cf. 1:13)? Do you think he is an expected or unexpected judge/leader? (NOTE: Othniel is from the tribe of Judah, the most favored tribe, and the text never speaks ill of Othniel).
 9. What do we know about Ehud? Do you think he is an expected or unexpected judge/leader? (Note: Ehud is from the tribe of Benjamin, the last/youngest, and he’s left-handed, which signifies weakness. The literal text says, “Ehud was unable to use his right hand.”)
 10. Who joins Eglon in battle against Israel? What’s significant about this?
 11. How does this passage leave us wanting for another Judge/Deliverer?
- General Bible study questions:
 - What does this passage teach me about the character of God?
 - What does this passage teach me about myself and my need for God?
 - How does this passage teach me that God has met my needs in the person and work of Jesus Christ?
 - How should I respond with my affections and my actions?
 - General ways a passage can point to Jesus:
 - **Predict** - Some passages predict God’s redemptive work in Christ by making specific mention of his coming person or work.
 - **Prepare** - Some passages that make no specific mention of Jesus prepare us to understand aspects of the person and work of Christ (e.g. sacrificial system).
 - **Require** - What does this text reveal of God’s nature that provides or requires redemption? What does this text reflect of human nature that requires redemption?
 - **Result** - Some passages will speak directly to the result of Christ’s atoning work. Results can be vertical, in our relationship with God, or horizontal, in our relationship with others.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Relationships developed and deepened during accountability provide regular encouragement, and when necessary admonition, to spur each other on to delight in the supremacy of Jesus Christ. Ask one another heart-probing, clarifying questions, and help each other apply the gospel to your lives.

QUESTION: Are there areas in your life where you are compromising God’s word? Where might you be tempted to compromise God’s commands?