

COMMUNITY GROUP STUDY GUIDE**The Corruption of Leadership**

JUDGES 9

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 // 1 JOHN 4:7-19

1. Read 1 John 4:7-19. How does this passage show us God’s love for us? Why is it hard for us to fully embrace this love? What happens if we truly understand and live inside of God’s love for us?
2. Why are we so quick to read a passage like this and focus on all the things we are supposed to do instead of receiving what God has already done?
3. How does our horizontal love of neighbor flow from vertical love of God?
4. Consider the normal rhythms of Restoration Church. Inside of these rhythms, how can we love each other?
5. How does our love for each other perfect/manifest who God is?
6. Spend time praising God for 8 years of faithfulness to Restoration, and pray that he would kindly grant us many more years of unity in and faithfulness to advance the gospel.

STUDY // JUDGES 9

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 8:31. Who is Abimelech’s father? Who is Abimelech’s mother? What does this tell us about Abimelech’s position in his family?
2. Read 9:1-6. Every other judge has been called by God without seeking the role. How does Abimelech depart from this pattern?

3. What do you notice about Abimelech's words to his mother's relatives? What do you notice about Abimelech's actions? What do these words and actions tell us about Abimelech?
4. How do the people of Shechem respond to Abimelech? Notice that they give "out of the house of Baal-berith" – that's a false god. What does this response tell us about these people?
5. Read 9:7-15. Why does Jotham say the people should listen to him? How would you summarize Jotham's words? What's the point in showing olive trees, fig trees, and vines passed over becoming king, while the bramble gladly agrees?
6. Read 9:16-21. How does Jotham explain his words? Do you think Jotham's words are in keeping with God's purposes?
7. Read 9:22-55. These verses describe Abimelech's violent reign and end. What do you notice about Abimelech's behavior in these verses? What do these verses teach us about the dangers of sin and rebellion against the Lord?
8. What are Abimelech's final words? What do they show he is most concerned with even as he dies?
9. Read 9:56-57. What does this passage teach us about the nature of God's judgment?
10. Did you notice that the covenant name, LORD, is absent from chapter 9? What might we infer from this?
11. How does this passage fit into the story of the Bible and point us to Jesus?

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: How has Restoration Church encouraged your delight in Christ and love for neighbor? How are you doing in these areas?