

COMMUNITY GROUP STUDY GUIDE

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JUDGES 10-12

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 9

1. Read Judges 9:1-57. Summarize the main events and idea of this passage.
2. How do we see the justice of God in this passage? In what ways does that “map on” to society’s call for justice to arrive on unjust leaders today? What are some ways you can speak of this evangelistically to friends/neighbors?
3. Reading vss. 56-57 we see that the Lord used (did not create it) an evil spirit to return the evil that Abimelech and the other leaders facilitated. Their sins found them out. In what way does this idea affect you personally?
4. Read Galatians 3:13 & 1 John 4:10 and take some time to consider all the ways Christ stood in your place so as to receive the penalty for your evil and then spend time in prayers of thanksgiving and worship.

STUDY // JUDGES 10-12

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.

You likely will not have time to cover all the below. So pick and choose what might be best for your group.

1. Read 10:1-5. Notice that 10:1 says after Abimelech, Tola “arose to save Israel.” Who was Tola saving Israel from? How is this different from previous cycles of deliverance?

2. Previous cycles of deliverance mention “the land had rest.” Do you see that here? What might this absence tell us about what is happening?
3. Read 10:6-9. In verse 6, what is similar to previous instances where we’ve seen this language (cf. 3:7; 4:1; 6:1; 8:33)? What is different? In comparison to previous cycles, what similarities and differences do you see regarding Israel’s oppression?
4. How do these verse show that idolatry leads to slavery?
5. Read 10:10-17. What does Israel say to God? Do you think this is true repentance? Why or why not?
6. How does the Lord respond to Israel? According to verse 14, what do you think the Lord wants Israel to realize?
7. How is Israel’s request and behavior in verse 15 different than their request and behavior in verse 10?
8. What does verse 16 tells us about the posture of Israel? What does it tell us about the posture of the Lord?
 - a. (Note: the phrase translated “he became impatient” is literally “His soul was short with the misery.” Or as the NASB puts it, “He could bear the misery of Israel no longer.” In other words, this may not be a reference to the Lord’s impatient with Israel’s rebellious behavior (though that’s true), but more a reference to his compassion for them in their misery.)
9. Read 11:1-3. What do we know about Jephthah? How does his “resume” fit with previous judges?
10. Read 11:4-11. Summarize what happens in these verses. What do these verses tell us about Jephthah? What do they tell us about Israel?
11. Read 11:12-28. How does Jephthah respond to the Ammonite king? What is Jephthah’s conclusion to the whole situation? What do you think we are to make of Jephthah according to these verses?
12. Read 11:29-40. What does Jephthah’s vow tell us about how he understands who God is? Why do you think Jephthah keeps the vow? What does keeping the vow tell us about his understanding of God?
 - a. (Note: Commentators disagree on whether or not Jephthah actually sacrificed is daughter. In light of God’s prohibitions against human sacrifice and in light of the daughter’s grieving over her virginity—i.e., a life without children, not the loss of her own life—it is could be that Jephthah dedicated his daughter to the Lord in temple service rather than in blood sacrifice. In any case, the vow was foolish and displeasing to God & Israel.)
13. How do the dark episodes in Judges 10-11 show us how gracious and good our Lord is?

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 where you are confessing sin but not truly repenting? If so, what does repentance look like?