

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

June 2022

(Member)



Season 1, Episode 3 (Part 3)

Instructions: Our faith was meant to be learned through *conversation* in the Word of God. This discussion guide is intended to function exactly as it is titled, as a *guide* to help your discussions as you watch The Bible, read the Bible, and work through these questions one by one. Please also feel free to allow the conversation to go where the Lord leads, remembering to focus your conversations about the movie on and in *His Word*. I always appreciate your feedback as I write these curriculum. I am not writing them for me but for you! God bless all of you in your faith and fellowship with one another.



We will spend the next two months looking at the story of Samson. This month we will consider the circumstances surrounding the rise of judges, why they were needed in the first place, and what we can learn from this time in Israel's history. Next month, we will look at two judges, in particular Samson and Gideon (not in the movie).

WATCH: *The Bible*, Episode 3, from **14:30 – 43:45** to the end of the episode.



Take a few minutes to discuss what you just watched.

Introduction to Judges

The book of Judges follows the book of Joshua. When reading continuously through the Bible, it is clear that the Lord inspired the opening of the book of Judges to stand as a stark and unsettling contrast with the end of the book of Joshua. This contrast sets the framework within which we are to understand the message of the book of Judges.

Review how the book of Joshua ends. Read Joshua 24:14-28. When you are finished reading, answer the following questions.

How would you describe the overall message of these verses?

How would you describe the overall tone and mood of these verses?

Are there any verses that stand out? If so, why?

- ***“You are not able to serve the Lord, for he is a holy God.” How are we to understand this?***

- *Why do you think Joshua is using such direct and confrontational language? Wouldn't you think someone would be "offended" by hearing "you are not able to serve the Lord?"*

"He will not forgive your transgressions or your sins." Oof! The Law is quite heavy in these final remarks in Joshua. Is there any Gospel?

The last words we heard from the Israelites in Joshua were, "The Lord our God we will serve, and his voice we will obey!" The last words we heard from Joshua were, "Therefore it shall be a witness against you, lest you deal falsely with your God." Now read Judges 1:21-2:23.

- It didn't take long at all for the Israelites to once again start worshiping Canaanite gods, did it? From what you read in Judges 1:21-2:23, why did Israel "deal falsely with God" as Joshua warned them not to?

The ESV Study Bible offers some helpful insights as to what contributed towards Israel's apostasy. *"The land of Canaan was awe-inspiring to the Israelites, as can be seen in the story of the spies who reported on its wealth and strength (Numbers 13). To a recently freed slave people, accustomed to the hardships of life in the wilderness, the cosmopolitanism and material wealth of Late-Bronze-Age Canaan, with its large urban centers, could not have failed to impress. The Canaanites were clearly superior to the Israelites on many levels: art, literature, architecture, trade, political organization, and more. It is not difficult to see how the Israelites would have been tempted by the elaborate Canaanite religious system, which ostensibly supported—and even provided—all of this. One prominent feature of Canaanite religion was its highly sexualized orientation. The system of sacred prostitutes—"priestesses" of Baal—allowed people to combine sensual pleasures with worship of Baal. This undoubtedly was attractive to many Israelites (cf. the Israelites seduced by the Moabite women in Numbers 25)."*

**Do we see this in our society/culture so many years later in America?
How are we faced with the same temptations today, as God's people?**

Pastor Jay's Thoughts

*Though there are certainly many reasons why Israel forsook God and worshipped false gods, one in particular stands out in our text in Judges 2:10, "And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers. And there **arose another generation** after them who did not know the Lord or the work that he had done for Israel."*

*When parents fail, society fails. Are we not experiencing that right now in our own time and nation? The real pandemic we have not only in our nation but **in our churches (yes, even St. Mark)**, is a pandemic of Godly parenting. What is Godly parenting? Raising children up to know the Lord by knowing His Word. As Christian parents, if we do fear and love God, we should ask ourselves on a daily basis, "Has faith in the Lord been the priority for our family this day? Has our time in God's Word, prayer, and living as a member of the Body of Christ, the church, been pushed aside and sacrificed*

for the sake of homework, sports, work, tv, video games, friends, “me time,” etc.?”

The Israelites failed in their vows to God when they said in Joshua 24, “The Lord our God we will serve, and his voice we will obey.” Consider what you, as a member of Christ’s Church at St. Mark, said in your vows to God when becoming a member. This is what every new member at St. Mark vows to when being installed (taken from the Lutheran Service Book).

P Do you this day, in the presence of God and of this congregation, acknowledge the free gift of salvation that God has provided through the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ, and that He has delivered to you in your baptism? If so, say, “Yes, I do.”

R Yes, I do.

P Do you renounce the devil and all his works and all his ways? If so, say, “Yes, I renounce them.”

R Yes, I renounce them.

P Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, in Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord, and in the Holy Spirit? If this is your faith, say, “Yes, I believe.”

R Yes, I believe.

P Do you hold all the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures to be the inspired Word of God and the doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, drawn from them and confessed in the Small Catechism, to be faithful and true? If this is your faith, say, “Yes, I do.”

R Yes, I do.

P Do you intend to hear the Word of God, attend worship, and receive the Lord’s Supper faithfully? If you do, say, “I do, by the grace of God.”

R I do, by the grace of God.

P Do you intend to live according to the Word of God, and in faith, word, and deed to remain true to God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, even to death? If you do, say, “I do, by the grace of God.”

R I do, by the grace of God.

P Do you intend to continue steadfast in this confession and Church and to suffer all, even death, rather than fall away from it? If you do so intend, say, “I do, by the grace of God.”

R I do, by the grace of God.

P Will you support the work our gracious Lord has given this congregation with your prayers and the gifts God has given you? If you will, say, "Yes, with the help of God."

R Yes, with the help of God.

P Do you desire to become a member of this congregation? If so, say, "Yes!"

R Yes!

As a group, share your thoughts on and discuss the vows you just read

All of us, like the Israelites, have failed in our intentions, vows, and faithfulness to God. God, however, never fails us. Even when it hurts our pride to hear it, God comes to us through His "sent sinners" (prophets, judges, kings, apostles, and pastors) to call us to repentance, deliver us, and renew our hearts in faith toward Him. The Good News of the Gospel is that God remained faithful to His promises given to Israel even amid their rejection of Him; and even through sinful judges sent to call sinful people to repentance. Whether Samson, Gideon, Deborah, or any of the other judges, they were all "types" of Christ. Though sinners themselves, God raised up judges not only for the time, but to point ahead to the One Judge of all mankind, Jesus Christ, who gave His life in our place, that we sinners would be judged and be declared as "innocent" through faith in Him.

God's grace in Christ, however, should not foster further complacency in our hearts, but should rather inspire and motivate us. As Paul the Apostle writes in Romans 5:19-6:4, "For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life."