

# PERSONAL STUDY: DAY 1

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## **The point: God punishes evil.**

### **Read Judges 2:11-15.**

According to verses 11-13, what did the Israelites do to make God angry? Why do you think their actions angered Him? Explain.

Reread verse 14. What did God give His people in response to their rebellion?

Summarize verse 15 in your own words.

### **God is holy and just. He can't allow sin to continue without consequences. Read about God's promise to punish Israel's disobedience in Leviticus 26:14-17.**

List the two ways God said He would punish the Israelites if they failed to obey Him.

The Israelites experienced times of intimate relationship with the Lord and periods of rebellion. During both the times of obedience and disobedience, they remained God's chosen people. In what ways does this bring comfort to believers today?

### **Respond**

Read Judges 21:25 and reflect on it as you respond to these questions.

- What are some ways you are tempted to do what is right in your own eyes?
- Have you ever been more concerned about your own desires and plans than obeying God?

Develop a plan to use God's Word to fight against these sinful desires in your own life. Include a few verses to memorize and use in prayer. (Hint: Check out Eph. 6:10-18 and Matt. 4:1-11.)

# PERSONAL STUDY: DAY 2

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## **The point: God saves His people through a chosen leader.**

What qualities, characteristics, and words do you usually associate with leaders? Journal your response.

### **Read Judges 2:16-19.**

Who “raised up judges” (v. 16)? Why is this important?

In your own words, explain what the judges did (v. 16b).

Use verse 17 to help you fill in the blanks in the following statements.

The Israelites \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord's commands.

They did not obey God like their \_\_\_\_\_ did.

God didn't raise up leaders because of His people's obedience. What reason does verse 18 give for God's provision of judges? What does this say about God's love for His people?

According to verse 19, how did the Israelites act once a judge died? Why do you think they responded in this manner? Do you see people responding in the same way when a leader dies today?

### **Respond**

The downward spiral of sin and disobedience continued despite the judges' calls to repent. We also need a Savior who can free us permanently from the pattern of sin. Through faith in Christ, we have access to this freedom from sin.

Prayerfully consider your own life. Are there times God has delivered you from bad situations, even though you were disobedient to Him in some way? How did that situation affect your relationship with Him?

# PERSONAL STUDY: DAY 3

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## **The point: Faith leads us to use our gifts in service to God.**

### **Read Judges 4:1-7.**

Underline the phrase “did what was evil in the sight of the Lord” (v. 1). What do you think this says about the Israelites’ belief in God?

According to verse 3, what was the Israelites’ response to their oppression?

Underline the phrase “hasn’t the Lord ... commanded you” (v. 6). Deborah reminded Barak of God’s command, and then she reminded Him of God’s promise. Summarize the promise of God at the end of verse 7.

### **Read Romans 12:3-8.**

Paul said believers “do not have the same function” (v. 4) in the body of Christ. How can this encourage all believers to use their gifts to serve God? Explain.

List the gifts Paul mentioned in verses 6-8.

### **Respond**

What gifts do you know God has given to you? List a few of your God-given gifts and talents. Then, jot down some ways you could use those gifts to serve God in your church or community.

Deborah used her gift of prophecy and her position as a judge to lead God’s people well. Ask God to reveal your gifts to you and to show you how to use them to serve Him.

# PERSONAL STUDY: DAY 4

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## **The point: Faith leads to courage and giving God the glory for our victories.**

### **Read Judges 4:12-16.**

Underline the number of chariots Sisera had. He also had many other soldiers with him. Barak had 10,000 men. What would logic tell us about the outcome of this battle? What happened to Sisera's army?

In your own words, jot down Deborah's command to Barak in verse 14.

God fought for the Israelites. How do you think this affected the outcome of the battle? Explain.


### **Respond**

Reflect on challenges you have faced in the past year. Were you sometimes tempted to rely on yourself to make it through? When you conquer a problem in your life, are you tempted to glorify yourself instead of God?

Just as God was the hero in Barak and Deborah's story, Jesus is the hero of our story. Take a minute to jot down a prayer of praise to Jesus for rescuing you from sin.

# PERSONAL STUDY: DAY 5

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 **The point: Faith leads to worship as we reflect on God's goodness in our lives.**

 **Read Judges 5:1-11.**

What is the main focus of the praise in these verses?

What's the main characteristic of God that you see in this song?

Sometimes songs are the best way to communicate a story. When Americans attend a sporting event, they stand together and sing a story: "O say, can you see by the dawns early light?" They sing Francis Scott Key's account of the War of 1812. It's war history, and "The Star Spangled Banner" reminds Americans of who they are and their story as a nation. Similar to a national anthem, the song of Deborah and Barak was a victory song.

The focus of this song is not on the characters in the story, but on God as the rescuer. The leaders' egos and the people's accolades fade away in light of the glory of the one true God (4:14). It was the Lord who called Deborah to sit as a judge over His people. It was the Lord who gave Barak skills and leadership to assemble and train an army. It was the Lord who gave Sisera into the hands of a housewife (Jael, the woman who struck down the mighty general with a tent peg). It was the Lord who went out before them.

 **Respond**

We saw in this story the song of Deborah and Barak. It is interesting that other religions aren't known for singing and writing hymns and praise songs. Buddhism, Islam, and Hinduism are not marked by song the way Christianity is. As Christians, we can't seem to help but sing. Our faith sings. And here, after God gave His people the victory, Deborah and Barak broke into song, which is exactly what happens in our own hearts when we reflect on the love of God and His victory over sin in our lives.

What are some Christian songs that cause you to reflect on God's love for us in Jesus, leading you to worship?

How does this story help us think about the circumstances that lead us to worship through song?