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A Study Of The Book Of Judges

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Learning Objectives For The Study:

- To mature as obedient, faithful worshippers of Almighty God.
- To develop wise, godly leaders in the kingdom of God.
- To identify and overcome what prevents an individual or group from achieving goals.
- To gain a better understanding of the risk-taking element of faith.
- To repent of and receive forgiveness for sins that have brought on the judgment of God and walk in the restoration that God desires to give the repentant.
- To raise a generation that will understand and hold fast to the values that promote prosperity.

A Brief Background To The Book Of Judges

Judges covers a period of approximately 300+ years. It covers a period of Israel's history between Joshua's death and the rise of Samuel. It was a time of transition, when scattered tribes were held together only by their common faith. Loyalty to God made them strong and united as a nation. Turning away from Him to other gods brought weakness and division.

This is the account of a people receiving a land promised to them by God. According to the Life Application Study Bible, Canaanites lived in city-states where each city had its own government, army, and laws. One reason Canaan was so difficult to conquer was that each city had to be defeated individually. There was no single king who could surrender the entire country into the hands of the Israelites. Canaan's greatest threat to Israel was not its army, but its religion. Canaanite religion idealized evil traits: cruelty in war, sexual immorality, selfish greed, and materialism. It was a "me first, anything goes" society.

God promised the Israelites Canaan and He is now proving Himself faithful to His word. He gave vision to their forefathers and now they are partnering with God because they want the vision to become manifest. The vision becoming a reality was no easy task. It would require victorious warfare, righteous leadership, and tenacity.

Moses had already begun the Conquest and it was almost realized under the leadership of Joshua. They are both now deceased and a cycle of struggles among the people of God begin: a cycle of rebellion, retribution, repentance, and restoration. This cycle prevented them from maximizing their potential.

From the book of Judges we learn a lot. We learn that there is a price for individual and corporate disobedience. We learn that God is faithful to forgive us when we repent and obey. We also learn that along the way to making a vision manifest there are plenty of opportunities to get off-track.

What are we to do to stay on track with God's purpose for our lives? What are the lessons we can learn from this examination of Judges in order to maximize our individual and corporate potential? Let's look into Judges and come out of this study more focused, discerning, and determined to do what He has purposed for us to do.

A Bible Study On Judges Chapter One (1:1-2:5)

Issues from Chapter One: Praise, Teamwork, Excuses, and Complacency

Unfinished Business

When the Israelites first entered the Promised Land, they united as one army to defeat the Canaanites until they were too weak to retaliate. Once the land was divided among the twelve tribes, each tribe was responsible for driving out the remaining enemy from its own territory.

Reuben, Gad, and half of the tribe of Manasseh had already received their allotted portions of land. Moses had taken care of this prior to their crossing the Jordan River (Num. 32:1-42; Deut. 3:13-17; Josh. 13:8-33). Judah had already received theirs (Josh. 15:1-12) along with Ephraim (Josh. 16:1-10), and the other half of the tribe of Manasseh (Josh. 17:1-11). The other seven tribes received their allotments of land as well (Josh. 18:10-19:51).

There was unfinished business in regards to seizing Canaan and Judges helps us to understand some details as to what happened with the vision of the Promised Land.

Is there any unfinished business in your life? Are there any unconquered areas in your walk with Christ? I'm asking if there are any areas where you still experience defeat. If we're honest we all have to say that there are. It could be that we still have unfinished business as it relates to obedience with finances, anger management, sexual lust, forgiveness, submission to authority, or studying the word of God to name a few.

I'm not going to ask you to literally list any areas of unfinished business in black and white. There's no telling what might happen to you if the wrong eyeballs saw your list! But take a moment to identify some areas of unfinished business in your life. What are some areas of weakness that still need to be conquered in your walk with Christ? Greater is He that is in you and you can win, but only if you're honest and willing to take it on and conquer.

What areas do we, as African Americans, have yet to conquer? List some:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

What areas would you say the body of Christ has yet to conquer?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

We have unfinished business to take care of. Let's walk as more than conquerors as the word of God says! *Feel free to do a word study on Rom. 8:37.*

Who Will Succeed Joshua?

Verse one raises a question. I think another should've been asked first: who would succeed Joshua? This is a very legitimate question to ask especially when Judges shows us how the Israelites repeatedly got off track with God without spiritual leadership.

We need spiritual leadership. Everyone does, including pastors. We need spiritual, anointed, godly leaders/coaches/mentors in our lives who study the word of God, seek the heart of God, and hear the voice of God. What difference do they make?

1. Josh. 1:6 _____

2. Jer. 3:15 _____

3. Rom. 1:11 _____

4. Eph. 4:11 _____

5. II Tim. 1:1-8 _____

6. Heb. 13:17 _____

7. Hab. 2:1-3 _____

Where Does Praise Fit In?

Well, they lost their leader, but they did not lose momentum. Their still fighting and we need to appreciate the power of momentum. It's the tempo of our movement toward the exceeding abundant things of God. Many of us, like the people of Israel, lose certain relationships or other things that are precious to us and we lose momentum. Do you know anyone like that? Guard your momentum. Be careful with the progress you've already made and don't lose heart (Gal. 6:9).

Praise helps us with our momentum. We start our study in Judges with Judah mentioned first as to who would go to fight in Canaan. Judah means praise. Praise goes first. Judah is among the first tribes mentioned in Joshua when it comes to the allotment of land and received the biggest portion of land. We could probably say that praise is to be a high priority in the life of the Believer and that it covers a lot of ground for the growing Believer who finds themselves in battle.

Praise is adoration toward God. Praise is how we express how we feel about Him. It is to be a normal part of our life just like breathing. Where does praise fit in your life? Do you ever take praise breaks during the day? Do you ever offer up prayers of praise as if God already knows your needs and is worthy of your praise without your asking for anything?

Anyone who is serious about accomplishing goals and staying focused must be serious about praising God. One dictionary says of praise, "Nothing so deepens our awareness of his power and presence in our lives as to praise him".

How does praise help us in fulfilling our God-given goals?

1.Ps.30:1-2 _____

2.Ps.34:1,4 _____

Teamwork

Judah and Simeon work together to help Judah seize their inheritance. They must have known John C. Maxwell's Law of The Big Picture as discussed in his book, The 17 Indisputable Laws Of Teamwork. Let's share some insight about this law.

Excuses

The people of God had God on their side, but they could not drive out the enemy who had iron chariots (v.19). How many times do we have the promises of God, the presence of God, progress from having followed God, and yet be hindered because of one excuse or another? Be careful with excuses. Although we can have legitimate explanations as to why a move of God is delayed, however, some excuses can serve to be serious enemies of faith and accomplishing what God has said we could accomplish individually and collectively. Where else in the Scriptures can we see people coming up with excuses as to why they couldn't do what God had commanded?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What are some of the excuses you've come up with as to why you can't do what the Lord has ordained for you to do?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

How can we overcome our excuses?

Complacency

The people of Israel made a certain amount of progress and quit before they were finished. Has this ever happened to you? What can we do to strengthen ourselves so that we're much more apt to complete what we begin?