

ADULT BIBLE STUDY IN SIMPLIFIED ENGLISH

TEACHING GUIDE

God Sends Help: A Study from Judges

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BAPTISTWAY PRESS • Dallas, Texas • baptistwaypress.org

Adult Bible Study in Simplified English Teaching Guide

God Sends Help: A Study from Judges

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First edition: May 2021

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These lessons use the New Life Version (NLV) of the Bible. You can read it online at www.biblegateway.com and at www.studylight.org. BibleGateway has a free app available for iPad, iPhone, Android phones, and Kindle Fire. If you prefer a hard copy of the NLV, go to barbourbooks.com (search for "New Life").

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Introduction for Teachers

Welcome!

The purpose of this Teaching Guide is to provide teachers with a plan for teaching a quality Bible lesson while helping participants improve their English language skills. Use of this material is suggested for International Sunday School classes or any Bible study group taught at a Basic English level.

The Teaching Guide begins with listings of the Lesson Focus, Focal/Background Text, and Memory Verse, all of which provide the premise for the lesson. This information is followed by a teaching plan under headings of Prior Preparation, Connect with Life, Guide the Study, and Encourage Application. At the end of each lesson, Extra Teaching Ideas are provided under those same headings. As the teacher, you may pick and choose from these helps to use along with the student's Study Guide to fit the lesson to your class members' abilities and needs.

Pray and prepare

Prayer is key to every teacher's preparation, as well as an integral part of every teaching experience. We include a time of prayer in every lesson plan, but you can rearrange the plan to place the prayer time at a segment that is most conducive to your class experience. Use your own judgment as to where it best fits into your teaching session.

Online Resources and Study Helps

At **Bible Stories for Use with ESL Students**, you will find free materials, including picture sequence pages for both Old and New Testaments. Go to: <http://pages.suddenlink.net/eslbiblestories/index.htm>. The picture pages cover all important Bible passages and are copyright-free, so you can make handouts and posters for your students.

EasyEnglish is a form of simple English developed by Wycliffe Associates (UK). Their website: www.easyenglish.info contains Bible commentaries, Bible translations, Bible studies, and other materials written in simple English. They are free for download and use.

At **BaptistWay Press**, you will find additional adult Bible study helps. Go to BaptistWayPress.org and click Teacher Helps > Teaching Resource Items. While these are not specifically coordinated to the Simplified English Teaching Guide, they do coordinate with the theme/Bible passage for each unit.

The **Baptist Standard** online edition provides additional commentary on current lessons at www.baptiststandard.com > Resources > Bible Study (or www.baptiststandard.com/resources/bible-study).

Which Bible translation is used with these lessons?

The Bible text printed in this curriculum uses the New Life Version (NLV), a translation (not a paraphrase) which uses a vocabulary of about 1,000 words.

The NLV is accessed free online at: www.biblegateway.com and www.studylight.org, so it is easily available to your students via their tablet or phone in class.

Bible Gateway also has a free app available for iPad, iPhone, Android phones, and Kindle Fire.

To order a hard copy of the NLV, go to barbourbooks.com (search for "New Life").

Why use the New Life Version (NLV)?

The NLV Bible often uses simplified phrases to express terms generally familiar to anyone raised in a Christian environment. In the Teaching Guide, these terms will usually be expressed using the NLV terminology, followed by the more common term in parentheses; for example, "proud religious lawkeeper (Pharisee)" or "early preacher (prophet)." The teacher has the option of using the NLV term for new Christians or beginning students or the common term where it will be better understood and less cumbersome in teaching. Once a word or phrase has been introduced in the Word List or teaching procedures, the familiar expression may be used to help students add it to their vocabulary.

This unique translation is gender-correct (same as the King James Version). All pronouns referring to God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are capitalized. Short sentences are used with the subject usually preceding the predicate. No contractions are used. Many paragraphs are preceded with captions which summarize the content. There are no footnotes. Most Old Testament quotations in the New Testament are followed by the reference. Most words are limited to one meaning, an important feature for new readers and people learning English as a second language.

Ideas for Adapting Your Instruction to Video Conferencing, Email, and More

These are unusual times...

This is the fourth unit produced during the era of COVID-19 which has disrupted our normal church and meeting routines. Many churches are now back to meeting — but in smaller numbers. Classes that meet in person still have members who have chosen to continue attending virtually due to health risks. We are beginning to anticipate we will never truly return to our “old normal,” so we all must continue to provide Bible study methods to our audiences in a variety of ways: socially distanced classroom settings and virtual instruction.

This page gives you a few ideas for how to adapt these lessons to a method that will meet your students’ needs in an online, prerecorded, or self-guided method. As a teacher, you know best what your class members are able to do and what level of distance teaching will work. We hope you find these ideas helpful.

Low Tech: Mail and Phone Calls

- **Mail or deliver a hard copy of the Study Guide lessons to each class member.** If your class is small, deliver each lesson weekly. For larger groups, a monthly delivery or mailing might be more practical.
- **Each week, call your members to discuss and review the lesson content briefly.** Personal contact is vitally important in these isolated times; the fellowship and genuine care shown by believers can be essential to those who are living alone.



Medium Tech: Email

- **Option 1:** Email the Study Guide lesson to your class members each week. In this unit’s download, we have included a folder with these lessons as individual PDFs so you can easily attach each lesson’s Study Guide to your weekly email. Along with the Study Guide, include in your email a few paragraphs to introduce or comment on the lesson material. Encourage them to read the lesson carefully, to read it several times during the week for practice, and to make their own observations about the content.
- **Option 2:** Send a weekly email in which you explain the lesson content in a summarized form. You can send the Study Guide PDF or copy/paste some of its content as you “teach” through the email. Explain the verses; apply them to current situations. If you want to include video links, music links, etc., pull those from the Teaching

Guide. Give a homework assignment to read the next lesson or next Scripture passage.

- **Remember: The Bible verses are what is most important.** Place the verses early in the body of the email (not down at the end). Encourage them to read the verses in their heart language as well as English.

Medium Tech: YouTube and Texting

- **Make a YouTube video:** Simply turn on your camera phone’s video feature and record yourself teaching the lesson, explaining it as if sitting across the table from a student. Post the video to a private YouTube channel that you create for free, then send your group the video link by email.
- **Create a Text Group:** Give your class a way to communicate with each other for virtual class discussions. Most texting apps on phones only allow a small number of people in a text group (sometimes only 10). Consider using the free “WhatsApp” app as it allows groups of 250 members. Your students will need to download WhatsApp on their phones.



High Tech: Video Conferencing

If your class members are computer savvy and have high-speed Internet, then video conferencing is by far the most interactive option. As a teacher, you can teach “live,” you can “share your screen” to show a PowerPoint, video, etc., and you can conduct class much as you normally would. Students can see you, see each other, and get that group experience they are missing.

- **Zoom:** (Zoom.us) Zoom allows you to host video meetings for free with up to 100 participants – but free meetings are limited to 40 minutes. To host with no time limit, a monthly subscription is needed. Check with your church staff to see if they already have a subscription you can use. Or one of your class members may have a Zoom account.. Your members will not need a subscription to attend your session.
- **Facebook Messenger Video Chat:** Using Facebook Messenger, add your students to a Messenger group, then click the video chat icon.
- **Facebook Live:** Host a livestream video presentation with your students. They can type their messages via a chat box but cannot see each other.
- **Cisco Webex:** (www.cisco.com) Teach virtually, facilitate group projects, and host webinars.
- **Hangouts Meet:** hangouts.google.com
- **Microsoft Teams:** www.microsoft.com/Microsoft/teams
- **Skype:** www.skype.com

God Sends Help: A Study from Judges

Suggestions for Teaching

General Suggestions

1. Provide language edition Bibles so students can read the focal passage in their native languages.
2. Beginning students may require three sessions to complete one lesson.
3. Review the Word List before beginning the study. Provide Study Guide pages for class to keep vocabulary studies in their notebooks.
4. Prepare 9-12 core sentences which tell the most important part of the Bible focal text. Illustrate each sentence with stick figures and symbols in *picture sequence* form (see details below).
5. Prepare lesson outlines or written materials before class—make your own cling sheets by cutting apart white plastic garbage bags and writing on them with markers. The plastic bags will cling to the wall.

Bible Comments/Focal Text

1. Help students hear English and practice their pronunciation by modeling phrases and sentence. Allow the entire class to repeat. Be consistent with stress and intonation. Speak naturally.
2. Allow individual students to read a sentence or paragraph at a time. For further practice, ask students to tell sections from Bible comments in their own words.
3. When time allows, pairs may read the lesson again to each other.
4. Class may close books and listen as a native speaker reads the section again.
5. Discuss lesson using “Things to Think About.”

Memory Verse

1. Challenge class members to say the Memory Verse several times each day.
2. Provide blank paper for students to write Memory Verses.
3. Write phrases or individual words on separate pieces of paper. Give to students to place in order.
4. Write entire verse on board. Read in unison. Erase key words a few at a time. Recite until entire verse is erased and class can repeat by memory.
5. Make a symbol for each word or phrase of the verse.
6. Use the symbols as a reminder for saying the verse.

Picture Sequencing (Lipson Method)

This method is especially suited for teaching beginners. It consists of a series of pictures with accompanying sentences that tell a story. It may be used solely for oral production (using pictures alone) or for integrated skills (engaging students in reading and writing the story).

You may use real pictures, videotape, pictures that are professionally drawn, or stick figures.

Other benefits include the following:

1. Relaxed, low-anxiety atmosphere as students focus on the pictures and create their own sentences to tell the story

Focus on fluency, not just accuracy

Focus on a message or task rather than form or grammar

Minimal error-correction as students tell the story

2. Pictures (even stick figures) convey meaning in every language.
3. The same set of pictures can be used with more than one level of students by making the sentences easier or more difficult.
4. The use of pictures helps students learn the language in “chunks” rather than words in isolation.
5. The only item needed is a piece of chalk—or a marker, if using a cling sheet or overhead transparency.

Picture Sequence pages for both Old/New Testaments are available free at Bible Studies for Use with ESL Students: <http://pages.suddenlink.net/eslbiblestories/index.htm>. The picture pages cover all important Bible passages and are copyright-free, so you can make handouts and posters for your students.

Preparation

1. Put a story into sentences that are suitable for the level of your students. Try to tell the story with a maximum of ten sentences. For low beginners, choose the simplest and fewest words possible. Keep sentences in their most basic form, so students can combine sentences later.
2. Draw simple pictures or stick figures to illustrate key points in the story. These serve as prompts for the telling of the story. Other drawing tips:

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An “x” in a small square beside a picture enables you to cue for a negative as you tell the story.

Direct quotations may be indicated with a cartoon-type bubble.

Procedure

1. Introduce the story by following your prepared script of sentences (for consistency) and pointing to the pictures as you speak. This will give students the main idea and help them think in chunks of language (as in real-life language use).
2. Introduce the new words as you again reference the pictures. Use props and/or dramatization as needed to establish understanding. Work on individual sounds and word stress as students repeat new words.
3. Lead students in repetition of the story, one sentence at a time, working on sentence stress and intonation.
4. Lead the class in one more repetition of the story (going straight through and continuing to refer to the pictures throughout the story).
5. Ask the class to tell you the story as you cue the story sequence by pointing to the pictures. (You become “stage prompter” at this point.)
6. Then ask for a single volunteer to tell the story. (This may open the door for several more proficient students to use what they know.)
7. Divide the class into small groups of 3-5 students to give each person practice in telling the story. (Inevitably, the most eager student will go first, followed by another “semi”-eager student. By the time it is the least proficient student’s turn, he/she will have learned a lot by listening, will have observed a good model at least a couple of times, and will have bolstered courage for risk-taking.)
8. Follow with questions to review story (begin by naming the setting, the characters, etc.—easy questions).
9. Conclude with life application questions that require some thought and give students opportunity to express opinion, emotion, and their own ideas.

Lesson Expansion

If the setting and circumstances permit, use these ideas:

- Sequencing pictures (a set for each pair of students) while listening to you or to a taped voice tell the story
- Picture sequencing without hearing the story told
- Matching pictures and sentences

—Scrambled sentences to arrange in order (writing numbers or letters in front of sentences to show sequence; cutting up sentences and moving around to position correct order)

—Strip story (cutting up sentences, issuing one strip per student, asking students to arrange themselves in order, having them retell the story by contributing the portion on their paper strip)

—Cloze (supplying a written copy with every nth word blank; students work in pairs to fill in the missing words)

—Dictation (teacher or student telling the story while students write what they hear)

—Provide a copy of the sentences for each student. Ask that they read the story to a partner.

—Ask students to write the story in their own words.

Bible passage as content for reading

Procedure

1. Tell the parable or story using pictures. Use animation and simple sentences.
2. Ask questions about the main idea of the story.
3. Read story aloud while students follow along and underline unknown words. Go over the meaning of these words with the whole class.
4. Intermediate or advanced students: Have students read silently a second time to look for answers to two or three questions about details that you have written on the board. Ask students to discuss their answers with a partner. Then go over answers with the whole class.
5. Beginning or low-intermediate students: Read story again and ask students to repeat it with you line by line.
6. Invite the class to read the story with you in unison.
7. Ask pairs to read the story to each other.
8. Ask for volunteers to tell the story in their own words.
9. Make drawings large enough for the back row to see.
10. Select a list of new words in the story—unfamiliar words that the students would not likely be able to figure out from context (generally 8-10 new words per lesson).
11. List the new words in categories: verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs. When listing verbs, you may write both simple present and past tense forms (e.g., eat/ate, walk/walked). Basic beginners would do well to tell the story in present tense, but high beginners could work in present tense, then retell the story in past tense.

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Checklist for Successful Classrooms*Right Kind of Input*

1. New language in every lesson
2. Input that is slightly above the students' current level of proficiency
3. Content relevant to the students' real-life needs and interests
4. Language learned in meaningful chunks, not words in isolation
5. Comprehensibility achieved by use of the following:
 - Realia or authentic materials
 - Simplified language (rephrasing, repeating, clear enunciation)
 - Demonstration and multiple examples rather than explanation
 - Lots of gestures and nonverbal language

Low Anxiety Environment

Students should not be afraid to make mistakes or take risks in language learning. The following factors contribute to a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere and build a sense of community:

- Personally greeting and bidding farewell to students
- Sincere and frequent affirmation
- Minimal error correction from the teacher
- Frequent reference to the culture(s) of the students
- Smiles and laughter that are commonplace
- Connecting with students through eye contact and positioning yourself on students' eye level
- Calling students by name

Checklist for Real-Life Interaction

1. Pace activities with a balance of noisy/quiet and still/active
2. Attention to different learning styles (visual, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic)
3. Variety in grouping (predominately pairs and small groups of three or five; using whole class in initial presentation and again for feedback and wrap-up at the end)
4. A focus on a task or message rather than form (grammar)
5. Provision for all four skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing)
6. Avoidance of questions for which answers are known
7. Use of information gap activity in which partners have different pieces of information and must ask

each other questions in order to fill in their gaps of understanding

8. Other useful activities: surveys, interviews, role-play, problem-solving, and interactive games
9. Review previous material.

Some suggestions based on material developed for the *EFL Training Manual—Beyond our Borders*.

Meet This Unit's Writers

Janet Roberts wrote lessons 1-2. She has taught ESL since 1976, trains teachers in Plano, Texas, and enjoys traveling to teach English overseas.

John Vasut wrote Lessons 3-4. John teaches physics at Baylor University in Waco, and his wife, Maggie, homeschools their four children.

Judy Hughes wrote lessons 5-8. Judy has taught English to internationals in the U.S. and abroad, and now lives near Moody, Texas.

Jennifer Carson wrote Lessons 9-11. She and her husband, Mark, have six children and live in Saginaw, Texas. She is an English teacher.

Emily Martin wrote Lessons 12-13. She is a librarian at Park Cities Baptist Church in Dallas and is a freelance writer and Bible teacher.

Teaching Guide

Adult Bible Study in Simplified English

God Sends Help: A Study from Judges

Lesson 1: Caleb Was Used by God

Lesson Focus

To lead adults to learn that faith can be stronger than fear when we trust God with our fears and obey Him. Caleb is a good example that we can follow. Like Caleb, we can be used by God, too.

Bible Text

Judges 1:1-2, 8-13, 20

Memory Verse

"Be strong and have strength of heart. For you will bring the people in to take this land which I promised to their fathers to give them." (Joshua 1:6)

Prior Preparation

- ♦ For Connect with Life #1, write the question on the board before class.
- ♦ For Guide the Study #4, copy the cards for each group and make enough copies for the expected number of class members, divided by three as they will be in three groups. Give each group extra paper and pens for notetaking.
- ♦ For Guide the Study #7, be prepared with your testimony and/or a story of how God helped you conquer your fear.
- ♦ For Extra Teaching Ideas/Connect with Life, bring in a game that requires a steady hand like Jenga, Operation, or Don't Break the Ice.

Connect with Life

1. Before class, write this question on the board: *What are you afraid of?*

As class members arrive, ask them to write their answers under the question. When it is time to start class, read the list and ask if they know of any other fears. Mention that fear of snakes and spiders has been the biggest fear in the past, but the pandemic made the fear of death the biggest one. Other fears like fear of failing or fear of speaking in front of others can stop a person from doing something that would be good in their life.

Divide the list of fears into "good" or "healthy" fears

and "bad" or "harmful" fears (depending on the English level of the class members). Ask class members to add more to each list. (Note: Good/healthy fears are those that help you to avoid situations that can hurt you, such as pain, death, animals that can kill you, things that are too hot to touch, illness, and more. Bad/harmful fears can stop you from living a normal life or doing things that would be good for you, including flying, giving a speech, failing, not pleasing others, etc.)

Read the first three paragraphs of the introduction to the Study Guide Lesson 1 to add to the discussion about fear.

After the discussion about fear, write the word "Faith" at the top of the other side of the board. This will be used during the study.

Guide the Study

2. Open in prayer, asking God to guide this 13-week study of Judges. Pray that today we will learn how faith can be stronger than fear.
3. Finish reading the introduction, starting with the paragraph that starts "The people of Israel needed..." and then ask: *Do you think the people of Israel kept their promise to Joshua and to God? How did their faith help with their fear? Let's find out.*
4. Divide the class into three groups, one for each section of the study. Give each group a few minutes to introduce themselves to each other by telling their name, where they are from, how long they have been in this country (if your group is a mix of internationals), and something interesting about themselves. After that, give each group their assignment card.

Group 1

- Read "Fear Stronger Than Faith" and write what you want to tell the class about this section of the study.
- Write and answer question #1 from Things To Think About.
- Make a list of what you learned from this section about how faith can be stronger than fear. Write your best answer on the board under the word "Faith."

Group 2

- Read "Faith Goes from One to Others" and write what you want to tell the class about this section of the study.
- Write and answer question #2 from Things To Think About.
- Make a list of what you learned from this section about how faith can be stronger than fear. Write your best answer on the board under the word "Faith."

The card for Group 3 is on the next page.

Group 3

- Read “Faith Becomes Strong” and write what you want to tell the class about this section of the study.
- Write and answer questions #3 and #4 from Things To Think About.
- Make a list of what you learned from this section about how faith can be stronger than fear. Write your best answer on the board under the word “Faith.”

5. After giving each group their assignment cards and giving them time to read them, give a summary of the instructions and ask for questions. Tell them that they will be reading aloud what they write to the class.

Suggest that they might want to have one person give the answer for each part of the report. (One person reads the verses, another person reads what the group wrote about the section, another person reads the answer to the question, and another person reads what the group wrote about faith.) Circulate between groups to make sure they are on track and to help them with questions.

6. When all groups are finished, have each group teach the class about their section, encouraging them to start by reading the verses from their section out loud to the class, reporting on the answers they pulled from their section, and reading the answer written on the board under “Faith.” (If they haven’t written on the board yet, write it for them as they give their report.)

7. Read the Things to Remember section and be prepared, as God leads, to give your testimony of how you trusted God to conquer a fear in your life.

Encourage Application

8. Read the Memory Verse together and help the class remember it by using one of these methods:

- Repeat the verse several times aloud as a group.
- Write the verse on the board, read it aloud together, then erase one or two words and read it aloud again, encouraging them to fill in the missing words from memory. Keep erasing words and repeating the verse aloud until most or all of the words are gone, and the class can repeat the verse by memory. Encourage them to use this method during the week to commit the verse to long-term memory.

9. Review the answers to your first question about fears from the beginning of class. Review the ideas about faith from the reports. Direct the class members’ attention to the last question in Things to Think About and lead a discussion about what advice they would give each other or someone else they know about their fears. Ask: *What would you say about how to conquer these fears that are written here? What will you do to conquer your own fears? Will you use what you have learned today about faith?*

10. Finish the class by asking how you can pray for

class members. Pray for those requests and pray each person will trust God to help them conquer their fears.

Extra Teaching Ideas

Connect with Life

♦ Bring in a game that takes a steady hand and involves some stress for the player, like Operation, Jenga, or Don’t Break the Ice. Play the game with class members as they come in, teaching the first one, then having that person explain it to others as they join in. Have each group do just one round and then give it to the next group until everyone has had a chance to play one round (or each person has had a chance to try it). When everyone has had a turn, ask the class: *How did you feel while you were playing? Was fear a problem for you? Did you fear failing and what would happen if you did fail? Let’s talk about fear.*

Read the first three paragraphs of the introduction in the Study Guide and discuss other fears the class members may have. Help the class to separate good/healthy fears from bad/harmful fears, as described at the end of Connect with Life #1.

Guide the Study

♦ Instead of breaking into groups and reporting on whole sections, ask for volunteers to read the verses and sections of the Study Guide. Next, break into groups to answer the questions from Things to Think About and reconvene to hear answers from each group.

- Group #1 considers question #1 from Things to Think About as they look at the first section (Fear Stronger Than Faith) for an answer but also consider the whole study.
- Group #2 considers question #2 from Things to Think About as they look at the second section (Faith Goes from One to Others) to help with their answer but also consider other parts of the study.
- Group #3 and Group #4 consider their respective questions in Things to Think About as they look at the last section (Faith Becomes Strong), as well as looking at the overall study content.
- Present question #5 as a discussion for the whole class after each of the groups has presented.

Encourage Application

♦ Say: *Caleb was not Jewish by birth. He was from a family group that had been enemies of the people of Israel. He came from another country to live with the people of Israel. God chose Caleb to be a leader of these people even though he was born somewhere else. Maybe he was afraid when he came to live with the Israelites. God helped him to be brave. God helped him learn how to obey and listen to the Lord. This is good news for all of us because it means God will help us. He will save anyone who comes to Him. God loves everyone from every country. How does this make you feel? Do you want to put your trust in the only true God who loves you?*

Teaching Guide

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

God Sends Help: A Study from Judges

Lesson 2: God Sends Othniel

Lesson Focus

To lead adults to learn that there is often a pattern to sin that leads to separation from God, and to understand that pattern changed when Jesus paid the price for our sin. There is a repeated sin pattern in all of Judges.

Bible Text

Judges 2:11-12, 15-16, 18-19, 3:5-7, 9-11

Background Texts

Judges 2:11-20, 3:5-11, Exodus 20:3-17, Joshua 23:15-16

Memory Verse

"Have no gods other than me." (Exodus 20:3)

Prior Preparation

- ♦ For Connect with Life #1, bring a calendar page filled in with a schedule (maybe yours) to show a pattern or any other example of a pattern that you can share. Show this as a PowerPoint slide or make a large poster-size version of the page so everyone can see it easily.
- ♦ For Guide the Study #3, print copies of God's Ten Great Laws for each class member.
- ♦ For Guide the Study #5 and Encourage Application #7, be prepared to draw the diagrams on the board (or prepare a poster of each diagram before class).
- ♦ For Extra Teaching Ideas/Connect with Life, if you decide to use this idea, bring enough clay or playdough for each class member to have a good handful to work with.

Connect with Life

1. Show your calendar page that displays a pattern or routine, such as a regular exercise class, piano lessons, soccer practice, church service, and this class. Point out the definition of *pattern* in the Study Guide. Show any other common pattern of behavior that the class members can relate to. Discuss what they see in your schedule, and ask them to identify the patterns they see in their own lives or in others. Say: *We see patterns every day. Today we are going to talk about a pattern we will see in all of the book of Judges that we are studying in the coming weeks.*

Guide the Study

2. Ask three class members to each read one of the first three paragraphs of the introduction in the Study Guide. Discuss any comments or questions as each paragraph is read.

3. Read the Memory Verse and ask if anyone knows what this verse is part of. (It is one of God's Ten Great Laws or the Ten Commandments.)

Say: *God gave these great laws to Moses for the people of Israel to obey. Did they obey this one? Let's find out.* Continue reading the rest of the introduction paragraphs in the same way and when finished, ask the question above again: *Did the people of Israel obey the Great Law that is our Memory Verse today? What is the word for not obeying God? (Answer: sin) What are the other Great Laws?*

Distribute the Ten Great Laws handout now.

God's Ten Great Laws

Exodus 20:3-17

- 1 Have no gods other than Me.
- 2 Do not make for yourselves a god to look like anything.
- 3 Do not use the name of the Lord your God in a false way.
- 4 Remember the Day of Rest, to keep it holy.
- 5 Honor your father and your mother.
- 6 Do not kill other people.
- 7 Do not do sex sins.
- 8 Do not steal.
- 9 Do not tell a lie about your neighbor.
- 10 Do not have a desire for your neighbor's things.

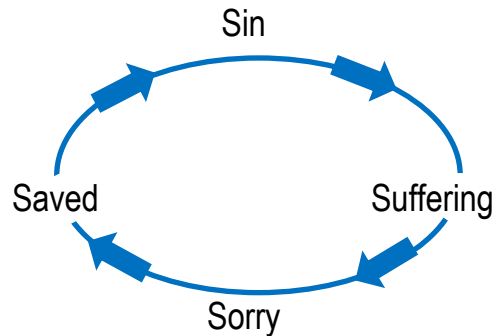
4. To clarify the "suffering" part of the pattern, read out loud the warnings that God gave the people of Israel about what would happen if they did not obey Him:

Exodus 20:4-5: "Do not make for yourselves a god to look like anything that is in heaven above or on the earth below or in the waters under the earth. Do not worship them or work for them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God. I punish the children, even the great-grandchildren, for the sins of their fathers who hate Me."

Refer to Joshua's last words to the people:

Joshua 23:15-16: "Every good promise the Lord your God made to you has come true. But in the same way, He will keep His promises to punish you. He will punish you until He has destroyed you from this good land the Lord your God has given you. If you do not keep the agreement the Lord your God made with you, and serve other gods and worship them, then the anger of the Lord will burn against you and you will be destroyed from the good land He has given you."

5. Ask for volunteers to read the first section with the verses called “Sin, Suffering, Sorry, and Saved.” After the readings, draw the oval diagram (below) on the board or display the poster you prepared. (Consider using this poster throughout this whole unit.) This gives a visual to the pattern that class members will be seeing throughout the study of Judges.



Start a list of the judges in the middle of the oval, putting Othniel at the top of the list. (Add to the list as the class learns about the other judges in the weeks to come.)

6. As the class continues to read through the Study Guide, refer to the section, “A Cause and Repeat.” Point out that it was probably not only those who married the idol-worshiping people who sinned and began to worship those idols; another cause of this sinful behavior pattern was that the younger generation did not know God the way Moses, Joshua, Caleb, and Othniel did. They had not been slaves in Egypt. They had not seen the many miracles of God, nor had they depended on God for everything while traveling in the desert for 40 years. They did not know the God of their families that came before them. This is another cause for their sin pattern. The older generation has a responsibility to pass along the truths of faith to the younger generation.

Encourage Application

7. Draw the diagram below or display the poster you prepared before class. Divide the class into groups of 3-4 and ask them to look at the first question in the Things to Think About section (“What was the bad pattern that the people followed in the time of the judges? Do you see this pattern today?”). Say: *Write your biblical times answers in the left column, then write current examples in the right column.*

| BIBLE DAYS (examples in Judges) | THE PATTERN | TODAY (examples in our world) |
|------------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|
| | Sin | |
| | Suffering | |
| | Sorry | |
| | Saved | |

After sufficient time to finish, ask each group what they wrote and keep a running list on the board. Ask: *What is the answer to stopping these bad patterns?* (believe in Jesus and trust Him to help you have power over your sin)

8. Refer back to the calendar from the beginning of class. Have each class member jot down the patterns they discovered in their own routines and calendars. Ask: *What do you do with your time most often? Are there other things you do that are not on your calendar? Do you use your phone or computer for many hours every day? Could any of the things be more important to you than God? Could it be an idol in your life? If the answer is yes, tell God that you are sorry. Because of Jesus dying on the cross for your sins, He will forgive you. Ask God to help you make Him more important than anything in your life.*

9. End with prayer that each person will know the power of Jesus in their lives to break the power of sin and to make a new pattern of love and trust. Allow time at the end of class for questions and be prepared to share your testimony and the gospel with any who are not yet followers of Jesus.

Extra Teaching Ideas

Connect with Life

♦ Give each class member a big lump of clay or playdough as they come to class. Tell them to make something that is very important to them, something that they love, or something they do often. Write these instructions on the board. When finished, ask each class member to share what they made and why. Ask how important the thing that they made is in their life. Ask if it is more important than Jesus in their life (if appropriate). Have each class member keep their creation on or near them throughout today’s study.

Guide the Study

♦ As the class goes through the study and starts to understand about the worship of other gods, ask them again if the thing they made is like a god/idol to them. If the answer is yes, see the explanation above.

Encourage Application

♦ End the class by having each class member put their clay/playdough creations in front of them. Tell them that we are all made by God and everything was made by God (Genesis 1). Anything that we make can never be a god and can never even look like God. God is the only one Who is good enough, great enough, and all powerful enough to be worshiped. Worshiping anything else or serving anything else or putting anything else first in our lives is sin. God can and will forgive us if we tell Him we are sorry. Jesus paid for all our sins when He died on the cross and rose again.

Teaching Guide

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

God Sends Help: A Study From Judges

Lesson 3: Turning to God

Lesson Focus

To lead adults to know that God can use anybody for the good of His people and the glory of His name.

Bible Text

Judges 3:12, 14-23, 26-30

Memory Verse

"[God] answered me, 'I am all you need. I give you My loving-favor. My power works best in weak people.' I am happy to be weak and have troubles so I can have Christ's power in me." (2 Corinthians 12:9)

Word List

escape: to get out of something or to get away from someone

handicap: a physical condition that may limit what a person can do

ordinary: normal or usual, not different or special

Prior Preparation

- ♦ For Connect with Life #1, bring a small ball or other similar object.
- ♦ For Guide the Study #4, prepare a map of Ancient Israel and its neighbors, either a printed map, a simple-hand-drawn map, or if everybody is using the same Bible and it has Bible maps in the back, share the page number with the class. A basic map is provided on the next page. To find more detailed maps, do an online search for "Ehud, map" and click on Images to view a variety of maps.
- ♦ For Guide the Study #5 and Extra Teaching Ideas #10, have a chalkboard, dry erase board, or large paper to write on.

Connect with Life

1. Ask a class member stand up and then toss the ball to him. Have that member toss it to another member. After a few tosses, tell them to use only their left hand. Discuss which hand was easier. If there are any internationals in

your class, ask them if it is common to have left-handed people in their culture or if children are encouraged to switch to being right-handed when they are young.

2. Ask the class how they would do if they had to use only their left hands when given an important task. Ask: *What do you do when you are faced with a difficult task?* After those answers are given, ask: *When faced with challenges, we can turn to God (rely on God, depend on God) for help in the times of difficulty.*

Guide the Study

3. Ask a volunteer to read verses 12 and 14. Remind the class of the previous lesson and the cycle of "Sin — Suffering—Sorry—Saved" (refer to the diagram in Lesson 2) that we will see throughout the study of Judges. Israel had done evil in the sight of the Lord (sin); they had been ruled by a foreign ruler (suffering). The people cried out (sorry) to the Lord who sent somebody to save them (saved).

Much of the same thing is happening again in today's lesson. The people sinned. The Hebrew text implies it was the sin of idolatry. At least a part of Israel gets conquered by an outside enemy (the joined forces of Moab, Ammon, Amalek). Explain that this is not so much a punishment from God as a reminder. If they continued to sin against God, worse things could happen. By letting the people experience the consequence of their sin, they would hopefully see the need for God and turn back to Him.

4. Explain that the Moabites were distant relatives of the nation of Israel. They were the descendants of Lot, who was Abraham's nephew. Despite their relationship with Israel, they were often on unfriendly terms with Israel and worshipped false gods. Their homeland was southeast of the lower Jordan River and the Dead Sea. Verse 13 mentions that they invaded Israel and took the city of Jericho, which was west of the Jordan River. Point out (or have the class point out) on the map where Moab is located. Also point out where the tribes of Benjamin and Ephraim are along with the city of Jericho.

5. Have a volunteer read Judges 3:15-21. Discuss how God again raised up a deliverer to save them. Write on the board some characteristics of Ehud and King Eglon. Ask the class to pull from the Study Guide and the Scriptures the characteristics about these two men. Speculate on some of their personality traits (shown in italics on the chart).

| Ehud | King Eglon |
|---|---|
| Son of Gera | From Moab |
| Of the tribe of Benjamin | Worshipped false gods |
| Left-handed (right hand may have been crippled) | Good diplomat (v. 13, allied with other nations) |
| A leader or perhaps an accountant (sent by Israel to pay the taxes) | Military leader (captured Israel) |
| Sent from God to rescue Israel | Very fat |
| <i>Talented</i> (made a sword) | Sent by God to punish Israel |
| <i>Clever</i> (figured out how to approach Eglon) | <i>Trusting/Prideful/Brave</i> (allowed potential enemy to be alone with him) |
| | <i>Curious</i> (wanted to hear secret message from God) |

6. Have a volunteer read verses 3:26-30. Ask the class if they think that the people of Ephraim were waiting for the horn to be blown. The horn was blown and they quickly responded. The Moabites were cut off and defeated. Our text says that the 10,000 Moabites were all strong men with strength of heart. The Hebrew word for strong men usually means “fat,” similar to their very fat king. Perhaps they had grown fat off of the work of the Israelites. They had strength of heart but were no match for the Israelites, led by Ehud. The victory was so overwhelming that the Israelites had peace for 80 years, one of the longest stretches of peace in the book of Judges. Summarize by saying: *When God raised up a leader, there were people who were ready to follow God’s leader.*

Encourage Application

7. Have the class discuss if the people of Israel in the area of Ephraim were part of the plan of Ehud. It seems like Ehud had a plan but if it was his plan, he may have gone to the area of Benjamin, his own tribe. Discuss where/when in our lives we need to be ready to be a part of God’s work. Discuss how we can be ready to do God’s work at the proper time.

8. Read or summarize 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 about how Paul rejoices in his weakness because then he must rely on the strength of God. Encourage the class to think how they can use the skills, talents, abilities, and experiences that God has given them to serve Him. Then ask them to consider how God might use some of the weaknesses that He has given us to serve Him. Lead the class in reading the Memory Verse together.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

7 The things God showed me were so great. But to keep me from being too full of pride because of seeing these things, I have been given trouble in my body. It was sent from Satan to hurt me. It keeps me from being proud.

8 I asked the Lord three times to take it away from me.

9 He answered me, “I am all you need. I give you My loving-favor. My power works best in weak people.”

I am happy to be weak and have troubles so I can have Christ’s power in me.

10 I receive joy when I am weak. I receive joy when people talk against me and make it hard for me and try to hurt me and make trouble for me. I receive joy when all these things come to me because of Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

9. Close the class with prayer.

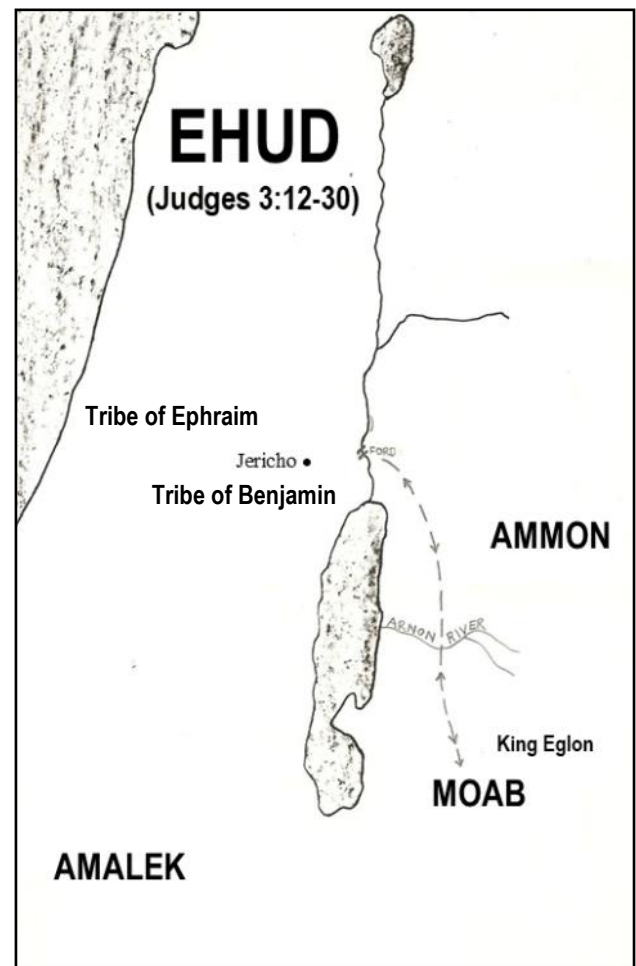
Extra Teaching Ideas

Connect with Life

♦ On the chalkboard or whiteboard, make a list of things that people might consider a weakness. Then go back over the list and consider specific cases where those “weaknesses” may become an advantage.

Encourage Application

♦ Discuss the Study Guide section, “Things to Think About,” as a group or divide into small groups with a time of sharing answers at the end.



Source: Adapted from an original drawing at GenerationWord.org

Teaching Guide

Adult Bible Study in Simplified English

God Sends Help: A Study From Judges

Lesson 4: Shamgar Saves Israel

Lesson Focus

God can use anybody to accomplish His Will. He will equip those whom He calls.

Bible Text

Judges 3:31

Memory Verse

"Those who know Your name will put their trust in You. For You, O Lord, have never left alone those who look for You." (Psalm 9:10)

Word List

Canaanite: a person born in the land of Canaan who lived on the land that God gave to Israel before Israel captured it after the Exodus

equip: to give someone the skills or tools needed for a task

oxgoad: A pointed stick used to get cattle to move; a farmer's tool

Prior Preparation

- ♦ For Guide the Study #4 and #6, bring a map of the Middle East.
- ♦ For Guide the Study #5, bring a wooden pole, for example, a broom handle. You might want to put some type of point on it, perhaps with aluminum foil or tape a pencil to the end. Find pictures of an oxgoad on the Internet (a good one for the lesson is at: <https://katherineschuber.com/the-lesson-of-the-ox-goad/>)
- ♦ For Extra Teaching Ideas/Guide the Study, prepare summaries and pictures of the Tank Man, Desmond Doss, and August Landmesser.

Connect with Life

1. Before class, write on the board a list of famous people from the Bible. Examples:

- Moses
- David
- Isaiah
- John the Baptist
- Mary, Jesus' mother
- Peter
- Paul

Now, write another list of not-so-famous people from the Bible. Do not list the information in parentheses; use it as talking points during class. For example:

- Jethro (the father-in-law of Moses, Exo. 18:1)
- Rhoda (the woman who left Peter at the door when they were praying for his release, Acts 12)
- Onesimus (the runaway slave who was the subject of Paul's book of Philemon)
- Og (Deut. 3:11 tells of a giant, the king of Bashan, whose bed was 13 feet long by 6 feet wide. He was defeated by Moses [Deut. 1:3-4].)
- Bildad the Shuhite (a friend of Job, a joke goes that he was the shortest person in the Bible because he was only "shoe-height")
- Shiprah and Puah (midwives who defied Pharaoh and safely delivered the Hebrew baby boys, Exo. 1)

As class begins, refer to the first list and ask the class how many of those names they recognize and let them tell a little about each person. Ask what other names they would add to the famous list.

Now refer to the list of not-so-famous people. Explain we know a little about these people but it would be nice to know more. See who can identify these people. Prompt them with the parenthetical details as needed.

Then write the name of *Shamgar* and explain that this "not-so-famous" judge is the focus of our lesson today. We know just a little about him, but what we do know about him is how he was amazingly used by God.

All the people on both lists have their names listed in the Bible, and history remembers them to this day. Whether or not our names are remembered to history is not the goal; our goal is to have our name written in Jesus' Book of Life.

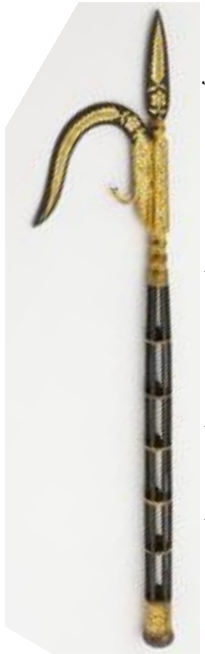
Guide the Study

2. Have a volunteer read Judges 5:1, 6-7a. Discuss what life was like in the time of Shamgar. Discuss why nobody would travel on the wide roads.
3. Have a volunteer read Judges 3:31. Make a list (either on the board or just verbally) of all the things that we know about Shamgar.
 - We know his name, Shamgar.
 - He was "son of Anath."
 - He was a leader.
 - He killed 600 Philistines.
 - He did so with a pointed stick.
 - His actions saved Israel.

4. Discuss his name: Shamgar, son of Anath. Explain this was not a Jewish name but it came from the Hurrian or Hittite region. Show on the map where the Hurrians and Hittites came from (modern northern Iraq or modern

central Turkey). Their empires were in the process of collapsing, so many of them moved elsewhere. For example, Uriah and several of David's "Mighty Men" were Hittites or Hurrians (2 Sam. 11 and 23). Also discuss what it meant to be a "son of Anath," drawing information from the Study Guide.

5. Explain what an oxgoad is. If you brought a stick, then show it now. You may also want to show some photos of an oxgoad or draw a picture on the board. Explain: *They were typically about 8 feet long and about two inches wide. Often, they would have something like a spade at the end to clean dirt off of the plow. Many versions would be very similar to a spear. God equipped Shamgar with a farm tool, something an enemy would not see as powerful.*



Direct discussion to the Memory Verse. Read it aloud or ask a member to do so. Ask the group: *What are the main ideas/themes in this verse? Armies put their trust in powerful weapons, but Shamgar put his trust in God. God used a simple farm tool and the obedience of one man to save Israel in this period of history.*

6. Explain: *Other than a listing of the nations that were not driven out of the area, this quick reference is the first time the Philistines have been seen in the period of the judges. We will see them later in this study; they were the primary enemy of Israel in the two books of the final judge, Samuel.*

7. Summarize what we know and what we don't know about Shamgar. Create a chart on the board if it would help your class to visualize and organize the information better. Encourage contributions from the class to add to each list, especially column 2.

| What we know | What we do not know |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some info about his name The purpose of an oxgoad Some info about the times he lived in Who he killed How many Philistines he killed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How he became a leader How his actions saved Israel How he killed so many with just a pointed stick Was he a leader after this military victory? |

Encourage Application

8. Ask the class: *Why did Shamgar risk his life fighting the well-armed Philistines when he had nothing but an oxgoad?*

Ask if they can think of any Bible verses that might relate to his situation. Shamgar lived before most of the Bible was written down, so he would not have known most of those verses, but he knew and trusted in the God that those verses talk about. Some possible

examples are below.

| | |
|-------------|------------------|
| Exodus 15:2 | Psalms 56:3 |
| Psalms 23 | Isaiah 41:10 |
| Psalms 9:10 | Luke 1:37 |
| Psalms 16:1 | Ephesians 6:10 |
| Psalms 46:1 | Philippians 4:13 |

9. Ask what we can learn from the life of Shamgar. Discuss some or all of the questions from the "Things to Think About" section of the Study Guide.

- Shamgar had a pointed stick to use to serve God. *What has God given you in order to serve Him?*
- Shamgar seemed to know that God was all that he really needed. *Is God all that you need or do you seek help from something else?*
- Shamgar offered everything, risking his life to serve God. *What do you offer to God? Do you risk everything in His service?*
- What is God calling you to do for Him?*
- Is your name written in the Lamb's Book of Life?* "Nothing sinful will go into the city. No one who is sinful-minded or tells lies can go in. Only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life can go in" (Revelation 21:22-27).

Be ready to present a clear explanation of what it means to have your name written in the Lamb's (Jesus, the perfect, sacrificial lamb) Book of Life and what it means to make Jesus the Lord of your life. Every person can leave class today and be assured that their name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life if they ask Jesus to forgive their sins and ask Him to be Lord of their life.

10. Close the class with prayer.

Extra Teaching Ideas Guide the Study

♦ Shamgar was a single individual who had the courage to face an army. Present these examples of extreme bravery. Discuss what these people had in common that gave them the courage to face an army.

- The Tank Man of Tiananmen Square: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tank_Man
- Desmond Doss. A combat medic who saved 75 men in World War II while under heavy enemy fire. His story is told in the movie, *Hacksaw Ridge*.
- August Landmesser, the only man in the German crowd who refused to give the Nazi salute. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/August_Landmesser#/media/File:August-Landmesser-Almanya-1936.jpg

Encourage Application

♦ Ask if anybody in the class would like to share a time when they managed to do something with God's help that seemed impossible otherwise.

Teaching Guide

Adult Bible Study in Simplified English

God Sends Help: A Study from Judges

Lesson 5: Deborah: A Woman of Faith

Lesson Focus

To lead adults to see themselves as a part of a team of faithful and courageous people God uses to achieve His plans.

Bible Text

Judges 4:1-9, 17-22

Memory Verse

"The One who called you is faithful, and He will do what He promised." (1 Thessalonians 5:24)

Word List

chariot: a carriage with two wheels that was pulled by horses and raced or used in battle in ancient times

devote: to decide something is to be used for a special purpose

Prior Preparation

- ♦ For Guide the Study #2, bring a tent peg to class.
- ♦ For Guide the Study #3, prepare to show a map of the twelve tribes of Israel. Prepare labels for Homes of Deborah, Barak, Jabin, and Sisera. Also make labels for Mt. Tabor and the River Kishon.
- ♦ For Guide the Study #10, secure a picture of a chariot from the bronze age to bring to class.
- ♦ For Extra Teaching Ideas/Connect with Life, make preparations for singing "Where The Spirit of the Lord Is."

Connect with Life

1. Ask: *Has God ever surprised you with the way He has answered your prayers? Does God always use the people and things we expect to do His will?* Use the introduction to this lesson in the Study Guide to caution learners about how they read this story.

Guide the Study

2. Begin the lesson with a brief, simple retelling of the entire story to give an overview before going into the

details of the story from Scripture. Show the tent peg you brought to class. Explain that while this is a modern peg, it might not be very different in size from the one Jael used.

3. There are many difficult names in this lesson. Post this list of the most important names and pronunciations on the board. Explain that all these names put the stress on the first syllable of the word. Practice saying them together to reduce any anxiety students might have about using these names. Then use a map to point out the important places and connect those places with the major characters.

Deborah (**Deb**-o-rah)
Barak (**Bay**-rik)
Heber (**He**-ber)
Jabin (**Jay**-bin)
Jael (**Jay**-el)
Kenite (**Ken**-ite)
Mt. Tabor (Mount **Tay**-bor)
Kishan River (**Ki**-shon)
Sisera (**Sis**-er-a)

4. Read aloud or invite a good reader to read Judges 4:1-5. Ask: *Does God use war for His purposes? Is there ever a good war? Say: The goal for any war should always be peace. Peace among men and peace with God.*

5. Point to the map and explain that this was not the first time Israel had to fight a man named Jabin from Hazor. Read Joshua 11:10-11 to point out that although Israel thought they had destroyed this enemy, evil came back again. Ask: *Will we ever win the final battle against evil in this world? Who is the One who will win the final battle against evil?* (God alone.) Read Matthew 7:15. Say: *Jesus warned us that we must always be watching for the evil that comes again and again to destroy our lives.*

Joshua 11:10-11

10 Then Joshua turned back and took Hazor and killed its king with the sword. For Hazor had been the head of all these nations. 11 They killed every person in it with the sword, destroying all of them. There was no one left who breathed. Then he burned Hazor with fire.

Matthew 7:15

"Watch out for false teachers. They come to you dressed as if they were sheep. On the inside they are hungry wolves."

6. Say: *Chapter five of Judges is a song sung by Deborah and Barak about this battle. In that song, we learn details about the story that are not in chapter four.* Read Judges 5:6-7. Point out that Deborah described herself as a mother. Ask: *How would thinking of herself as a mother change the way Deborah served the Lord?*

Judges 5:6-7

6 "In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath, in the days of Jael, the wide roads were empty. Travelers walked on the side roads. 7 Country towns were empty. They were no more in Israel, until I, Deborah, came. I came as a mother in Israel.

7. Read Judges 4:6-9. Point out the difficulties in traveling. Refer to the map. Say: *It would have taken 3 days to travel from Barak's home to Deborah's home on good roads. It would take much longer and be very dangerous on the side roads. When Deborah sent for Barak, he was willing to make this hard trip.*

8. Ask: *What did God promise to do?* (to bring Sisera and his army to the battle and defeat them) *What did God expect Barak to do?* (to gather an army of 10,000 men and take them to Mt. Tabor) *Are battles usually fought on mountains?* (No, God used a surprising place for this battle.)

9. Display the picture of the chariot you prepared. Ask: *Why would this be a very difficult battle to win?* (Jabin had chariots, Israel had none. Jabin's army had shields and weapons that Israel did not have. Jabin's army was made up of soldiers, Israel's was a volunteer army.) Say: *So there were many brave people in this story.*

10. Ask: *What is your first thought when you read that Barak refused to go into battle without Deborah?* Read Hebrews 11:32. Ask: *What does the writer of Hebrews say about Barak?* (He was a man of faith.) *Does that change your opinion of Barak? Now why do you think he insisted Deborah go with him?*

Hebrews 11:32

What more should I say? There is not enough time to tell of Gideon and of Barak and of Samson and of Jephthah and of David and of Samuel and of the early preachers.

11. Remind the class of Moses' refusal to go unless the Lord went with him in Exodus 33:14-16. Ask: *Why did Moses insist upon having the presence of the Lord with him?* (so that the people would be seen as different from other people) *Now why might Barak have insisted that Deborah go with him?* (She had the presence of the Lord. His army would be different from Jabin's army.)

Exodus 33:14-16

14 The Lord said, "I Myself will go with you. I will give you rest." 15 Then Moses said to Him, "If You Yourself do not go with us, do not have us leave this place. 16 For how will it be known that I and Your people have found favor in Your eyes, unless You go with us? Then I and Your people will be different from all the other people on the earth."

12. Ask: *What was Deborah's warning?* (Everyone would say that a woman won the battle.) Invite someone to read the third paragraph in the Study Guide section entitled "Barak Helps Israel."

13. We do not have the details of the battle in today's passage, but Judges 5:21-22 explains how God won this battle. As Barak led his army down the mountain and into the valley where the army of Jabin was with their

900 chariots, God sent a terrible storm that flooded that valley. Judges 4:15-16 tells how the Lord brought trouble on Sisera and his army. Explain to the class that Barak chased Jabin's army to Sisera's hometown and destroyed it. When Sisera escaped, Barak chased him to Jael's tent.

14. Read Judges 4:17-22. Say: *The violence in this story is hard for us to understand. We must not think that Jael was eager to take a man's life. Judges 5:24 says she was "most blessed of women."*

Ask: *Why would this situation be a difficult one for Jael?* Explain that she was a woman facing a very violent man. Her husband did not honor God or Israel. No one asked Jael to do this. In those days women were almost like slaves. Jael would have been the one who set up the tent for her family. She knew how to use that hammer and nail. She had practiced driving the nail hard enough to hold a tent on the ground.

Ask: *Why do you think Jael volunteered to stop Sisera?* Then say: *Surely, we must agree that only God could have moved a woman to act in such a way.*

Encourage Application

15. Invite discussion by using the questions in Things to Think About. Summarize the lesson from Things to Remember. End in prayer that each of us would be brave enough to do our part to stop evil in our land and among God's people.

Extra Teaching Ideas

Connect with Life

♦ Begin the class by singing this little chorus about the presence of the Lord in our difficult days. Examine Barak's insistence that Deborah go with them in the light of these words.

Where the Spirit of the Lord Is

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is peace

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is love

There is comfort in life's darkest hour

There is light and life

There is help and power in the Spirit

In the Spirit of the Lord

Encourage Application

♦ Explore the concept that God wastes nothing and is under no obligation to explain Himself to us. Invite class members to examine their own lives for ways God has used their past to prepare them for service. Ask for times God has acted in ways that surprised them.

Teaching Guide

Adult Bible Study in Simplified English

God Sends Help: A Study from Judges

Lesson 6: God Chooses Gideon

Lesson Focus

To lead adults to learn that our excuses before God are nothing when we see that God is with us and trust Him enough to obey.

Bible Text

Judges 6:1-6, 11-16

Memory Verse

“Be strong and take heart, and have no fear of them: for it is the Lord your God who is going with you; he will not take away his help from you.” (Deuteronomy 31:6)

Word List

idol: something made by man that is worshiped and praised instead of God

scorched-earth plan: a fighting plan in which all the houses, crops, etc., in an area are destroyed so that the enemy cannot use them

Prior Preparation

- ♦ For Connect with Life #1, prepare to show a video of Lauren Daigle’s “You Say” with the lyrics.
- ♦ For Guide the Study #3 & 4, Print the title of the first five lessons we have studied, each on a single sheet of paper. Plan to hang these across the front of the classroom. Print Deuteronomy 28:1-6 and Deuteronomy 28:15-18 on posters or on individual sheets for the class to read.
- ♦ For Guide the Study #6 & #8, search the internet for pictures of a scorched earth area, threshing grain by hand, and an ancient winepress. Be prepared to display the images in class.
- ♦ For Encourage Application #15, prepare bookmarks for each learner with the words from “You Say” by Lauren Daigle as illustrated on the next page.
- ♦ For Extra Teaching Ideas/Guide the Study, enlist two people to act out the conversation between the angel of the Lord (God) and Gideon. Provide a script by printing out the Scripture and highlighting the lines for each character.

Connect with Life

1. As the class begins, show a video of Lauren Daigle’s “You Say” with the lyrics.
2. Explain that this song was very popular in 2019 and won the Song of the Year award. Ask: *Why do you think it was so popular? We all ask God these questions at times. But just as the song says, we must come to the point that we believe and obey.*

Guide the Study

3. Distribute the pages with lesson titles to students. Ask them to put the pages in order across the front of the classroom. Compliment the class on being able to remember the order. Then point out that each time the people fall into sin because they forget what God has already done for them.

4. Display the posters or distribute copies you made of the two Deuteronomy 28 passages. Explain that this is the message God gave Moses just before they entered the Promised Land. Write on the board: Promises of God and form two columns beneath for Blessings and Curses. Ask the class to name the curses and blessings God promised as each passage is read. Record responses in each column.

Ask: *What makes it possible for us to receive God’s blessings? Why might we suffer the curses? Are we more willing to believe God’s blessings or His curses?*
Below the list, write “Trust and Obey.”

| Promises of God | |
|-----------------|--------|
| Blessings | Curses |
| | |
| Trust and Obey | |

5. Invite someone to read Judges 6:1-6. Ask learners to identify how the Midianites practiced scorched-earth warfare in Israel. Point out that this lasted seven years. Guide the class to understand that people were becoming desperate for food and shelter. Ask: *What should have they done first?* (repented and cried out to God) *Instead, what did they do?* (tried to fix things in their own strength) *How?* (replanting each year, moving to caves, etc.)

6. Display the image of scorched earth you prepared. Guide a discussion of why an enemy would use this type of warfare. Lead learners to understand that this would make life hard for everyone. It would not be just the soldiers who suffered, but everyone in the land.

7. Summarize Judges 6:7-10 for the class. Explain that God first sent a prophet with a message for the people. He told them what God had already done for them. And then he reminded them of how they had disobeyed God.

8. Invite a reader for Judges 6:11-16. Display the images of how grain was beaten out by hand. Point out that this would have been done where the wind could blow away the trash and leave the grain. Ask: *Why would Gideon not beat his grain in this way?* (The Midianites would see him

and take his grain.) Show the picture of an ancient winepress. Point out that we know Gideon's harvest was small because it fit in a winepress. Make certain that learners understand that Gideon was hiding in this pit to save his crop.

9. Write on the board: "The Lord is with you, O powerful soldier." Ask: *How did Gideon disagree with this greeting?* Beneath the first phrase write the observations Gideon made. (Why has all this happened? Where are the Lord's great miracles? Why do we feel all alone?)

The Lord is with you, O powerful soldier.

10. Ask: *Have you ever known someone who felt like they did not matter much in their family? What causes children to think that way? Say: God sometimes makes us different from the others in our family. This is never an accident of birth, it is a plan of God.*

11. Ask: *How did the Lord respond?* ("Go in this strength of yours. And save Israel from the power of Midian. Have I not sent you?") *What did God NOT do?* (Explain His actions to Gideon.) Say: *But God confirmed that He had created Gideon with a strength he did not know he had.*

12. Read Habakkuk 1:5 aloud. Ask: *Would Gideon have believed what God was planning to do if God had explained it to him? (No) Why does God not explain Himself to us?* Confirm two important truths: 1) We are called to live by faith, which means we trust God even when we do not understand or know all the details. 2) God has unlimited power and authority. He does what He does in the way He chooses to do it.

Habakkuk 1:5

"Look among the nations, and see! Be surprised and full of wonder! For I am doing something in your days that you would not believe if you were told."

13. Ask: *What was Gideon's response to the Lord's command? (How can I save Israel?) Say: Gideon was surprised that God would choose him to save Israel. He thought he was an unimportant member of an unimportant family. Have you ever felt that way?*

14. Ask learners to call out other surprising people God called to serve Him. Use the last paragraph of the Study Guide section "God Listened to Israel" for examples.

Encourage Application

15. Prepare a book mark for each student with the words taken from "You Say" by Lauren Daigle. If you choose to read this as a chant, divide the class into groups 1, 2, 3, and 4, and assign lines for them to read. All students will read the bolded lines.

Conclude the lesson with the thought that if we truly believe what God says about us, we will willingly obey all His commands and be blessed.

Extra Teaching Ideas

Connect with Life

♦ Begin class today with the song "You Are My Hiding Place." Or use the lyrics as a chant. Emphasize that the safest place we can be is where God is. Gideon was hiding in a pit and afraid. God calls us to have no fear and follow Him.

Guide the Study

♦ Consider having two people play the parts of the angel of the Lord (God) and Gideon. Use the scripts you prepared and allow them to act out the conversation between God and Gideon.

Encourage Application

♦ If time allows, consider examining these verses for the truth of God's constant presence with us. Ask students to draw conclusions about God presence.

Deuteronomy 31:8

"The Lord goes ahead of you."

There will never be a **time** God has not prepared for you.

Joshua 1:9

"The Lord is with you wherever you go."

There will never be a **place** God is not with you.

Matthew 28:20b

"I am with you always even to the end of the world."

There will never come a **time in history** that God is not there.

Deuteronomy 31:6

"God will never take His help away from you."

There will never come a **difficulty** you have to face alone.

"You Say" by Lauren Daigle

1. You say I am loved when I can't feel a thing.
2. You say I am strong when I think I am weak.
3. You say I am held when I am falling short.
4. And when I don't belong, oh, You say I am Yours.

And I believe, oh, I believe what You say of me.

Oh, I believe.

1. The only thing that matters now
2. Is everything You think of me.
3. In You I find my worth,
4. In You I find my identity.

And I believe, oh, I believe what You say of me.

Oh, I believe.

Teaching Guide

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

God Sends Help: A Study from Judges

Lesson 7: God Is Gideon's Peace

Lesson Focus

To lead adults to learn that the power of God can change our lives by His peace, His power and authority, and His Spirit.

Bible Text

Judges 6:22-31, 33-34

Memory Verse

"The Lord said to him, 'Peace be with you. Do not be afraid. You will not die.'" (Judges 6:23)

Word List

in a nutshell: to state very briefly, to make a long story short

Prior Preparation

- ♦ For Connect with Life #1, bring an empty walnut shell and your Bible to class to demonstrate the difference in the full Gospel story and the Gospel in a nutshell. Print John 3:16 small enough to fit into the nutshell.
- ♦ For Guide the Study #4, 5, 6, 9, & 14, write on the board, make posters or slides, or print these verses on cards for each class member: Ephesians 2:14, Revelation 1:17-18, John 3:16, Romans 6:23, Matthew 6:24, Luke 12:6-7, and Matthew 28:18.
- ♦ For Extra Teaching Ideas/Encourage Application, prepare a handout for each student. List the names of God in Hebrew and in English, and give the passage of Scripture where they are found. Offer this as a home study activity.

Connect with Life

1. As the class begins, hold up your Bible. Say: *Every word written in this book is the gospel, the Good News. It is important that we know what the Bible says.*

Hold up the nutshell. Say: *In order to put the truth of the gospel in this nutshell, we would include only the most important things God has told us.* Invite the class to offer suggestions that need to be included to state the Good News in a way that it would fit in a nutshell.

Say: *Many people believe John 3:16 is the gospel in a nutshell.* If your class has memorized John 3:16, invite them to repeat it as you slip the paper into the nutshell. Say: *Today, we will see that God Himself puts the Good News very briefly. He says that with Him we have peace, there is nothing to fear, and we will not die.*

Guide the Study

2. Ask the class to recall what we learned last week about Gideon. Record these things on the board. Guide the discussion so that these points are included:

- He was afraid.
- He thought he was not important.
- He was discouraged.
- He felt powerless and hopeless.
- He was visited by the Lord.

3. Invite a reader for Judges 6:22-24. Remind class members that when Gideon realized he was face to face with God Himself, he was afraid. But Gideon did not run and hide. He confessed his fear to the Lord.

Say: *That is when God gave Gideon the gospel in a nutshell.* Read verse 23 again and ask: *Do you agree that these three statements from verse 23 could be used to lead someone to faith in God?*

4. Invite someone to read the first paragraph of the Study Guide section entitled "God Is Peace." Read Ephesians 2:14. Point out that the only way for any of us to live in peace is through Jesus Christ. He is our peace.

Ephesians 2:14 (NIRV)

Christ himself is our peace. He has made Jews and Gentiles into one group of people. He has destroyed the hatred that was like a wall between us.

5. Read Revelation 1:17-18. Say: *God wants our faith in Him to be so strong that we live boldly for Him. God is the beginning and the end. He is a living God who lives forever. He holds the keys to death and hell.*

Revelation 1:17-18

When I saw Him, I fell down at His feet like a dead man. He laid His right hand on me and said, "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One. I was dead, but look, I am alive forever. I have power over death and hell."

6. Read John 3:16 and Romans 6:23. Say: *Whoever believes in God's Son will live forever. Life that lasts forever is God's gift to us.*

John 3:16

For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son. Whoever puts his trust in God's Son will not be lost but will have life that lasts forever.

Romans 6:23

You get what is coming to you when you sin. It is death! But God's free gift is life that lasts forever. It is given to us by our Lord Jesus Christ.

7. Invite someone to read Judges 6:25-27. Ask: *How do you think Gideon knew that it was the Lord that spoke to him in the winepress?* Make the observation that apparently Gideon's father had taught him about the one true God. But in these difficult days, his father had built two idols near his home. Use the Study Guide section entitled "God Is God and There is No Other" to explain Baal and Asherah. Point out that Baal's name means "master." Ask: *Why would Gideon's father have these idols near his home?*

8. Write the word *compromise* on the board. Point out that there are two meanings to this word.

1) a way of reaching agreement in which each person gives up something that was wanted in order to end an argument

2) a change that makes something worse and that is not done for a good reason

Ask: *Had Gideon's father compromised with the people who lived in the city?* (Yes) *What did he give up?* (God's peace, power, and blessings) *Did this make his life better or worse? Was it done for a good reason?*

9. Read Matthew 6:24. Say: *It is impossible for us to compromise with the world. To worship anything but God is a dangerous sin.*

Matthew 6:24

No one can have two bosses. He will hate the one and love the other. Or he will listen to the one and work against the other. You cannot have both God and riches as your boss at the same time.

10. Ask someone to read Judges 6:25-27 again. Ask half the class to listen for details God knew. Ask the other half to listen for specific instructions God gave Gideon. After the reports, ask: *What does this tell you about God?* (He knows every detail of our lives. He wants us to do things in an orderly way.) Ask: *Why did Gideon take 10 men with him to do this at night?* (He was afraid, he didn't want to risk being caught, and it was a big job.)

11. Ask: *What do you think will happen when morning comes?* Ask someone to read Judges 6:28-32. Use the Study Guide section entitled "God Has Power to Change Us" to guide the discussion. Point out that it made no sense for the men to defend an idol that was powerless to protect itself. Ask: *Do you think the men of the city might have learned a little about God from what Gideon did?*

12. Invite a class member to read Judges 6:33-35. Ask: *What would have happened to Gideon and his family if he had not followed God's instructions? Would the men of the city have learned anything about God? Would the Spirit of God have come on Gideon? Would the people from four other tribes been willing to fight a much bigger army?*

Encourage Application

13. Read Luke 12:6-7. Say: *There is nothing in your life that God does not know. You cannot hide your sin behind pretending to worship Him as Joash did.* Read Matthew 28:18. *There is nothing in your life out of God's control. He is all powerful and has the right to rule all of heaven and earth. Nothing that happens in your life is out of God's notice or control.*

Luke 12:6-7

Are not five small birds sold for two small pieces of money? God does not forget even one of the birds. God knows how many hairs you have on your head. Do not be afraid. You are worth more than many small birds.

Matthew 28:18

Jesus came and said to them, "All power has been given to Me in heaven and on earth."

14. Pray that we will all follow God's commands carefully, yield everything in our lives to Him, and be bold witnesses in our homes and communities.

Extra Teaching Ideas

Guide the Study

♦ Explain the significance of Gideon giving God a name. The Jews held God in such high regard that they did not say His name aloud. We do not really know how to pronounce the name of God used in Hebrew. It is written YHWH. Some people think it is pronounced Jehovah, others say Yahweh. It is always translated as "The LORD." So Gideon gave God a name that described Him: "The Lord Is Peace." There are many other names that describe God. Ask class members to call out names for God they know. Use the list of names below to supplement the discussion.

Encourage Application

♦ Offer these Scripture passages as a home study activity for this week. Encourage learners to observe the context of each name and meditate on who God is and all He does for us.

Names for God

| | | |
|---------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| El Elyon | Most High God | Psalms 110:4 |
| El Shaddai | Lord God Almighty | Genesis 17:1 |
| El Olam | The Everlasting God | Exodus 15:18 |
| Yahweh Jireh | The Lord Will Provide | Genesis 22:14 |
| Yahweh Rapha | The Lord Who Heals You | Exodus 15:26 |
| Yahweh Nissi | The Lord Is My Banner | Exodus 17:15 |
| Yahweh Shalom | The Lord Is Peace | Judges 6:24 |
| Yahweh Raah | The Lord Is My Shepherd | Psalms 23:1 and Genesis 48:15 |

Teaching Guide

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

God Sends Help: A Study from Judges

Lesson 8: Gideon Questions God

Lesson Focus

To lead adults to learn that God wants us to live by faith, not requiring signs of His calling or presence before obeying. And when we do live by faith, we please Him.

Bible Text

Judges 6:36-40

Memory Verse

"I will show you and teach you in the way you should go. I will tell you what to do with My eye upon you." (Psalm 32:8)

Word List

flawed: having a mistake, a fault, or a weakness

gourd: any one of several types of fruits that have a hard shell and that are used for decoration and not for eating

sign: something (such as an action or event) which shows that God exists, is true, or will do what He says He will do

Prior Preparation

- ♦ For Connect with Life #1, prepare copies of the words to Bill Gaither's chorus, "Something Beautiful" and plan to sing it to begin class.
- ♦ For Connect with Life #2, search the internet for pictures of natural gourds and gourd art and bring them to class.
- ♦ For Encourage Application #13, prepare a poster or bookmarks of today's memory verse and Romans 11:33.
- ♦ If using Extra Teaching Ideas/Connect with Life, locate a fleece jacket and bring it to class.

Connect with Life

1. Begin class today by singing the chorus, "Something Beautiful." Say: *God understood Gideon better than Gideon understood himself. Today's lesson shows us how God uses our flaws to show His power, love, and mercy in our world today, too.*

Something Beautiful

Something beautiful, something good
All my confusion He understood
All I had to offer Him was brokenness and strife
But he made something beautiful of my life

2. Show pictures of natural gourds. Point out that they must be cleaned and emptied of the seeds and mold that has formed inside. Show pictures of art objects made from gourds. Point out that the artist may have cut away parts of the gourd to work around flaws. He or she uses the flawed gourds to make something beautiful, just as God uses flawed people to make something beautiful of our lives.

Guide the Study

3. Go over the Word List. Emphasize the meaning of a *sign*. Say: *Jesus is our most obvious sign that God exists, that His Word is true, and that He will do what He says He will do.*

4. Invite someone to read Judges 6:36-40. Ask: *How has God shown Himself to Gideon in the lessons we have been studying?* Make a list on the board of the six things God had already done to prove Himself to Gideon.

- An angel came to him.
- The Lord Himself came to Gideon.
- A gift to God was suddenly burned.
- Gideon saw his father's heart changed.
- The Spirit of God came upon him.
- Many men came to help him.

5. Ask: *In our lives today, how has God already shown Himself to us?* Make a list on the board of class responses such as the list below.

- This beautiful world is a sign of God the Creator.
- The Bible preserved over the ages is a sign of the Word of God.
- Jesus's life is a sign that God keeps His promises.
- Jesus's death and resurrection is a sign of eternal life.
- The Holy Spirit living in believers is a sign that God is Spirit.
- Many people around the world coming to faith in Christ is a sign of His Kingdom.

6. Say: *Gideon knew what God wanted him to do in verse 14 of this chapter. (Go, deliver Israel from Midian.) Ask: Why did Gideon ask for yet another sign? (He was trying to get out of doing what God had called him to do. Or He was delaying actually doing what God had already told him to do.)*

7. Ask: *What signs did Gideon ask God to perform? (make the fleece wet/dry) Would Gideon know more exactly what God wanted him to do from a wet or dry fleece? (No) Why would God be willing to do such a pointless thing? What might have been a better sign? Is asking for a sign a good way to relate to God?*

8. Invite someone to read Matthew 12:38-39 from the Scripture page of the Study Guide. Ask: *Why did Jesus refuse to perform some sign for the proud religious law keepers? How did He describe people who ask for signs?* (sinful)

Matthew 12:38-39

Then some of the teachers of the Law and the proud religious law-keepers said to Jesus, "Teacher, we would like to have you do something special for us to see." He said to them, "The sinful people of this day look for something special to see. There will be nothing special to see but the powerful works of the early preacher Jonah."

9. Read Deuteronomy 6:16 and Matthew 4:7. Point out that hundreds of years had passed between Moses and Jesus, but God's Word had not changed. Ask: *Should we ever ask God to prove Himself? Will God change His Word?*

Deuteronomy 6:16

"Do not test the Lord your God, as you put Him to the test at Massah."

Matthew 4:7

Jesus said to the devil, "It is written also, 'You must not tempt the Lord your God.'"

10. Read Hebrews 11:6. Ask: *How does God want us to live today?* (by faith) *What two things does this verse say we need to believe in order to come to God?* Write on the board:

- believe that He is
- know that God rewards those who seek Him

Ask: *How would believing these two things have changed Gideon's life?* (He would have trusted God and expected a blessing from doing what God asked him to do.)

Hebrews 11:6

A man cannot please God unless he has faith. Anyone who comes to God must believe that He is. That one must also know that God gives what is promised to the one who keeps on looking for Him.

11. Invite someone to read 2 Corinthians 5:7 and Romans 11:33. Ask: *How is asking for a sign an indication of a lack of faith?* (A sign is something we can see.) *Will we ever completely understand what God is doing?* (No, we will never understand God's ways.)

2 Corinthians 5:7

Our life is lived by faith. We do not live by what we see in front of us.

Romans 11:33

God's riches are so great! The things He knows and His wisdom are so deep! No one can understand His thoughts. No one can understand His ways.

12. Ask: *Why would God perform these two signs for Gideon?* Lead the discussion to consider God's amazing grace, mercy, patience, and love.

Encourage Application

13. Display the poster of today's memory verse. Or distribute the bookmarks you prepared. Say: *This is a promise of God. It has not changed since the day He gave it to David. God promises to show us and teach us how to live. He never takes His eye off of us. He guides us as we go through life.*

14. Ask: *How would depending upon signs make it harder for us to follow God?* (We would always be afraid of making God angry by asking for another sign. We would put our faith in the sign, not the Father.)

15. Ask: *How would truly believing God is guiding us change:*

- Our prayer life?
- Our awareness of God at all times?
- Our worship?
- Our obedience to God's call?

16. Say: *Gideon needed faith, not a fleece. When we pray, we must learn to hear the voice of God guiding us, trust that guidance, and obey. Asking for a sign is evidence of our lack of faith. Without faith it is impossible to please God.*

End in prayer for faith that will please Him and give us strength to live our lives in complete obedience.

Extra Teaching Ideas

Connect with Life

♦ If possible, bring in a fleece jacket. Demonstrate how Gideon laid it out and expected God to cause the dew to fall only on the fleece and then on only the ground.

Guide the Study

♦ Consider examining one of the seven signs of Jesus as recorded in the book of John. Use John 6:15-21 where Jesus shows He is master over nature. Contrast this sign with Gideon asking for a fleece to be wet or dry. Ask: *What did Gideon learn about God from the fleece? How would you compare the fleece to calming a storm?*

Teaching Guide

Adult Bible Study in Simplified English

God Sends Help: A Study from Judges

Lesson 9: God's Plan for Gideon

Lesson Focus

To lead adults to understand God's power rather than human strength or wisdom in the midst of earthly battles.

Bible Text

Judges 7:1-11

Memory Verse

"The Lord says to you, 'Do not be afraid or troubled because of these many men. For the battle is not yours but God's.'" (2 Chronicles 20:15)

Word List

casket: a box used to bury a dead person

revolve: to move around a center point in a circle; rotate

Prior Preparation

- ♦ For Connect with Life #1, locate some images of famous leaders.
- ♦ For Guide the Study #3, locate the suggested map.
- ♦ For Encourage Application #11, obtain the suggested video.
- ♦ For Extra Teaching Ideas/Guide the Study, locate a map of Texas and highlight the suggested cities.

Connect with Life

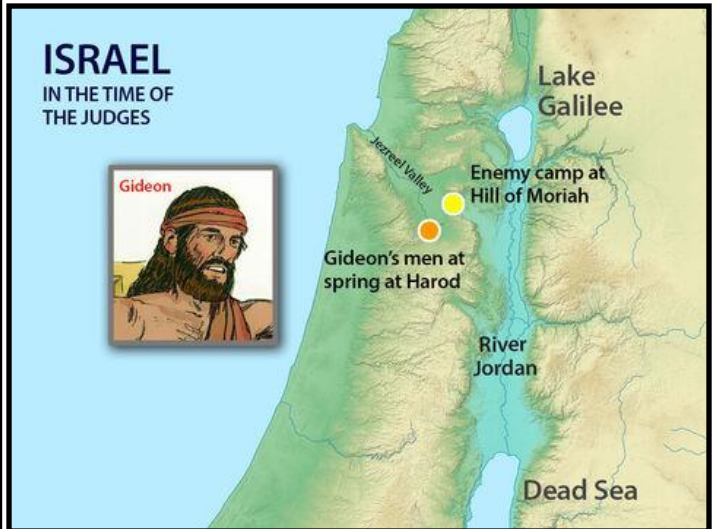
1. For class today, bring some images of famous leaders from world history such as Cleopatra, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Napoleon, Joan of Arc, Winston Churchill, Nelson Mandela, and others. Be sure to include a photo of King Louis XIV of France. Display these images for students to see as they come to class today. *(You might consider turning this activity into a short trivia game and offering small rewards to the winners.)*

Ask if anyone can identify the leaders in these images. Specifically ask if anyone can identify King Louis XIV. If no one can, be sure to point him out.

2. Next, read aloud or summarize the lesson introduction from today's lesson in the Study Guide. Then lead the class to consider and discuss Question #1 from Things to Think About in the Study Guide.

Guide the Study

3. Before reading the Bible text for today's lesson, share a map like the one here to help class members visualize the setting where these events occurred.



<https://freebibleimages.org/illustrations/gideon-midianites/>

4. Ask a class member to read Judges 7:1-3. Instruct class members to listen for words that show strong feeling. Guide the class to words like:

- Pride
- Power
- Afraid
- Shaking

5. Comment on these verses by drawing from the Study Guide section entitled "Too Many Men." Then read Question #2 from Things to Think About and ask a few class members to share their responses.

6. Ask another class member to read aloud Judges 7:4-8. After reading, ask a volunteer to summarize God's instructions to Gideon. Guide class members to recognize the following key instructions:

- Bring the men down to the water
- God will test the men
- Some men must go home
- God left Gideon 300 men
- God promised these men victory over the Midianites

7. Share comments or summarize from the Study Guide section entitled "Still Too Many Men." Discuss Question #3 from Things to Think About in the Study Guide.

8. Ask a class member to read aloud Judges 7:9-11. Read or

share comments from the Study Guide section entitled “Gideon Is Afraid.” Ask volunteers to respond to Question #4 from Things to Think About in the Study Guide.

Encourage Application

9. Read aloud or summarize the Study Guide section entitled Things to Remember. Consider and discuss Question #5 from Things to Think About.

10. After hearing responses from volunteers, encourage the class to practice this week’s Memory Verse out loud in small groups.

11. To close class, remind class members that in the middle of a battle, it is important to stay focused on God instead of on the battle. Present a music video of the contemporary praise song *Surrounded (Fight My Battles)*. A link to a suitable video is listed below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WpjZ6Jz950g>

Extra Teaching Ideas

Guide the Study

♦ Before reading the Bible text from today’s lesson, help class members understand the Midianites and their relationship with Israel. Begin by reading Judges 6:1-6.

Judges 6:1-6

1 Then the people of Israel sinned in the eyes of the Lord. And the Lord gave them into the hands of Midian for seven years.

2 Midian was stronger than Israel. Because of Midian the people of Israel made big caves in the sides of the mountains where they could live which were safe places for themselves.

3 For when Israel had planted seeds, the Midianites and Amalekites and the people of the east would come and fight against them.

4 They would set up their tents beside them and destroy the food of the field as far as Gaza. They would leave no food for Israel, and no sheep, cattle or donkeys.

5 They would come with their animals and their tents. They were like locusts, there were so many of them. There were too many of them and their camels to number. And they came into the land to destroy it.

6 So Israel became very poor because of Midian. The people of Israel cried to the Lord.

♦ Also consider sharing the following facts about the Midianites:

- **They were a group of nomads who lived in the area of northern Saudi Arabia.**
- **They descended from one of Abraham’s sons (Genesis 25:1).**
- **Joseph’s brothers sold him to Midianite slave-traders (Genesis 37:28).**
- **Moses fled to Midian after killing an Egyptian (Exodus 2).**
- **Moses married Zipporah, who was the wife of a Midianite priest (Exodus 2:21).**

♦ Read Judges 8:10 to show that there were approximately 135,000 Midianites in the battle. To help class members understand the size of the Midianite camp, show a map of Texas. Use post-it flags or push pins to tag cities like Midland, Denton, Waco, and Round Rock. These cities all have a similar population to the Midianites’ camp of 135,000.

♦ Enlist a couple of volunteers to help demonstrate what happens in Judges 7:4-8. Have one or more “drink the water as dogs drink with their tongues.” Have another one or more “drink from their hand, putting it to their mouth.”

Thank the volunteers. Then lead a discussion about *why* God would use this odd and arbitrary way of separating out soldiers. Note that through the ages, there have been interesting, practical theories. Another idea is that perhaps God just wanted it to be a non-sensical way of choosing people. After some discussion, stress that the real point was that God wanted to reduce the large number of men in order to prove that He alone was the reason for the upcoming victory over the Midianites. Re-read Judges 7:2.

Encourage Application

♦ Plan a field trip with your class. Brainstorm some locations where you believe many people are fighting physical and spiritual battles. This might be a hospital, a school, a neighborhood, your church’s sanctuary, or a city government office. Go as a group and pray for God’s victory in these situations. Pray that the people who are engaged in battle there will stay focused on God and not on the difficulty of the battle. After your prayer trip, have a meal or a time of fellowship together if you can do this in a safe way.

If it is not a good idea to get out and do these activities, consider just imagining them and praying together.

Teaching Guide

Adult Bible Study in Simplified English

God Sends Help: A Study from Judges

Lesson 10: Gideon's Courage to Fight

Lesson Focus

To lead adults to respond in obedience and faith like Gideon even when they are afraid.

Bible Text

Judges 7:12-22

Memory Verse

"Have I not told you? Be strong and have strength of heart! Do not be afraid or lose faith. For the Lord your God is with you anywhere you go." (Joshua 1:9)

Word List

example: a person or way of behaving that is seen as a model that should be followed

repentance: showing you are sorry for something you did wrong and that you are willing to do right

Prior Preparation

- ♦ For Connect with Life #1, arrange to play the praise music
- ♦ For Encourage Application #9, print out copies of a list of Bible verses.
- ♦ For Extra Teaching Ideas/Connect with Life, locate the suggested slide show
- ♦ For Extra Teaching Ideas/Encourage Application, obtain note cards and pens for each person

Connect With Life

1. As class begins today, have some contemporary worship music playing in the room. When all members have arrived, provide the lyrics for Sanctus Real's song entitled "Confidence." A link to a suitable music video is provided below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KA9kSBv1QrI>

2. Ask for volunteers to respond to Question #1 from Things to Think About in the Study Guide. Be prepared to

share your own response. Then read aloud the lesson introduction from the study.

Guide the Study

3. Ask a class member to read aloud Judges 7:12-14. Invite class members to listen for words or phrases that describe the Midianites and Amalekites. Guide members to recognize the following and list them on the marker board:

- Lying in the valley
- They were like locusts
- Their camels were too many to number
- They were like sand beside the sea

4. Discuss this imagery with class members. Point out that these descriptions are *similes*.

Say: *A simile is a kind of comparison that uses the words like, as, or than. We call this figurative language or a figure of speech. Figurative language is descriptive imagery that helps the reader picture something in their minds. Figurative language is not meant to be understood literally.*

Point out that Gideon would be rightly fearful of fighting such a group with only 300 men. Draw comments from the Study Guide section entitled "Gideon Needs Courage." Then guide the class to consider Question #2 from Things to Think About in the Study Guide.

5. Call on another class member to read aloud Judges 7:15-18. Instruct class members to listen carefully for the commands that Gideon gave to God's people. Guide members to the following commands and list them on the marker board:

- Watch me
- Do what I do
- Blow the horns all around the tents
- Say, For the Lord and for Gideon!

6. Read or summarize the Study Guide section entitled "God Is Patient." Then consider Question #3 from Things to Think About.

7. Read aloud Judges 7:19-22. Assign half the class to focus on the Israelites as you read. Assign the other half to focus on the Midianites as you read. When you are done, give class members small props like party horns, plastic bowls, and small flashlights. Lead the two groups to act out this scene. If there is time, allow the groups to switch roles and act it out again.

8. Draw comments from these verses from the Study Guide section entitled "Gideon Has Faith." The discuss Question #4 from Things to Think about in the Study Guide.

Encourage Application

9. Select several verses about faith to share with class members. Use the list below or make one of your own. Pass it out to class members. Give them time to review the list and ask them to consider which verses most remind

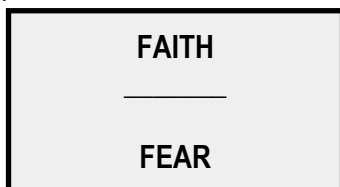
them of Gideon in today's Bible text and which are most meaningful to them. Invite volunteers to share their thoughts.

Bible Verses About Faith

- Hebrews 11:1—Now **faith** is being sure we will get what we hope for. It is being sure of what we cannot see.
- 2 Corinthians 5:7—Our life is lived by **faith**. We do not live by what we see in front of us.
- James 1:16—You must have **faith** as you ask Him. You must not doubt. Anyone who doubts is like a wave which is pushed around by the sea.
- Matthew 8:13—Jesus said to the captain, "Go your way. It is done for you even as you had **faith** to believe." The servant was healed at that time.
- Matthew 9:22—Then Jesus turned around. He saw her and said, "Daughter, take hope! Your **faith** has healed you." At once the woman was healed.
- Mark 4:40—He said to His followers, "Why are you so full of fear? Do you not have **faith**?"
- Mark 9:23—Jesus said to him, "Why do you ask Me that? The one who has **faith** can do all things."
- Mark 11:22—Jesus said to them, "Have **faith** in God.
- Luke 7:50—He said to the woman, "Your **faith** has saved you from the punishment of sin. Go in peace."
- Romans 1:17—The Good News tells us we are made right with God by **faith** in Him. Then, by **faith** we live that new life through Him. The Holy Writings say, "A man right with God lives by **faith**."
- Romans 10:17—So then, **faith** comes to us by hearing the Good News. And the Good News comes by someone preaching it.
- Galatians 5:22—But the fruit that comes from having the Holy Spirit in our lives is: love, joy, peace, not giving up, being kind, being good, having **faith**,
- James 2:17—A **faith** that does not do things is a dead **faith**.

10. Consider Question #5 from Things to Thing About in the Study Guide. Read or draw comments from the Study Guide section entitled "Things to Remember."

11. As class closes today, write the following on the marker board.



Encourage class members to take a photo of the board with their phone and maybe use it as their digital wallpaper.

Ask: *What does this arrangement of words mean to you?*

12. Close class in prayer that members will follow Gideon's example and choose faith over fear.

Extra Teaching Ideas

Connect With Life

♦ As it relates to today's introduction, summarize the story of Daniel by using the free slide show available from the *Free Bible Images* website.



<https://freebibleimages.org/illustrations/yo-daniel/>

Guide the Study

♦ After reading Judges 7:12-14, consider together five details which show that God is in control of every situation:

- **DIRECTION** - In a camp of 135,000 men, God led Gideon and Purah straight to the right tent for them to hear about the dream and its interpretation.
- **PROTECTION** - Gideon and Purah moved safely in enemy territory.
- **TIMING** - God led Gideon and Purah to be outside the right tent at exactly the precise moment they needed to be there in order to hear about the dream.
- **PEOPLE** - God supplied the dreamer and the interpreter.
- **WORDS** - The words that Gideon heard were the exact words he needed to give him the courage to act in faith.

♦ Lead a discussion with questions such as: *Why did God have Gideon's army use such odd tools instead of weapons? What are some possible reasons these worked? How is this similar to God's odd way of separating out Israelite soldiers in Judges 7:4-8?*

Encourage Application

♦ Distribute a note card and pen to each person. Ask: *What situations in your life make you fearful?* Have the class write it down on one side of the card. Then ask: *What are some ways you can exercise your faith in dealing with your fears?* Allow ample time for thought and writing. If you like, ask for volunteers to tell what they are thinking about.

Teaching Guide

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

God Sends Help: A Study from Judges

Lesson 11: Gideon Is a Strong Leader

Lesson Focus

To lead adults to follow Gideon's example of godly leadership.

Bible Text

Judges 7:23-25; 8:1-4

Memory Verse

"A gentle answer turns away anger, but a sharp word causes anger." (Proverbs 15:1)

Word List

criticized: expressed disapproval; talked about someone's faults or problems

influence: the power to change or affect someone or something

perseverance: the quality that allows a person to keep going when things are hard

Prior Preparation

- ♦ For Connect With Life #2, prepare a copy of the "Personal Board of Directors" image for each person.
- ♦ For Guide the Study #6, obtain the suggested slide show.

Connect With Life

1. Guide class members to discuss Question #1 from Things to Think About in the Study Guide at the beginning of class today.

2. Invite class members to create a board of directors for their own life by using a handout like the one here. Say: *Leadership is about influence. Think about the people who are the biggest influences in your life. They might be people from work or family or friends. They might be people you see every day or only once in a while; people from your past or from your present. Think of people whose voices and ideas you hear inside your own mind when you are making important decisions or facing difficult times.* If necessary, explain what a board of directors is.

3. Invite class members to break into small groups in order to share a little about the people they placed on their board of directors and why they selected each person.

4. Read or summarize the introduction from today's lesson in the Study Guide.

Guide the Study

5. Be sure to summarize last week's Bible text for any class members who were not here. Consider using the following free slide show that is available at the *Free Bible Images* website.

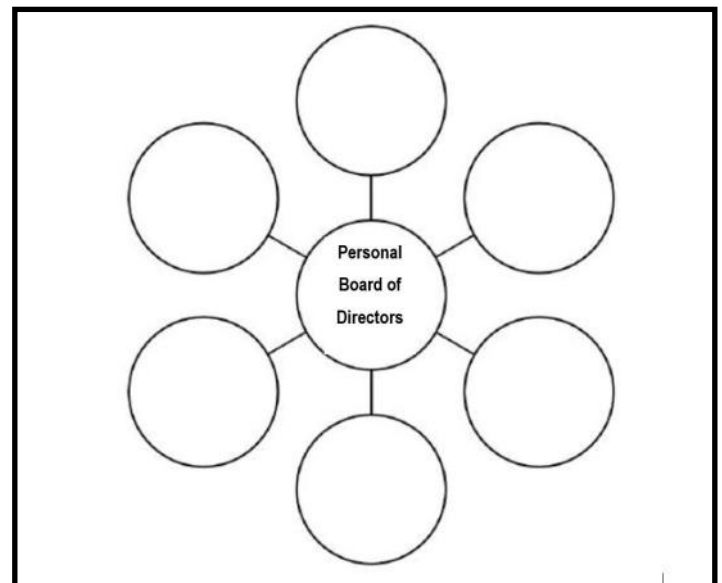


<https://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/moody-gideon-midianites/>

6. Ask a class member to read aloud Judges 7:23-25. Instruct half the class to listen for names of the tribes whom Gideon asked to help. Ask the other half to listen for the names of the Midianite leaders whom the Israelites captured. List these on the marker board.

- Naphtali, Asher, Manasseh, Ephraim
- Oreb and Zeeb

7. Next discuss Question #2 from Things to Think About in the Study Guide and draw comment on these verses from the section entitled "Gideon Asks for Help."



8. Ask another class member to read Judges 8:1-3. Instruct half the class to listen for the questions the Ephraimites asked Gideon. Instruct the other half of the class to listen for Gideon's answers to these questions. List these on the marker board. Note that the Abiezrites were Gideon's relatives. See Judges 6:11.

Ephraimites asked:

"What have you done to us?"
"Why did you not call us
when you went to fight?"

Gideon answered:

"What have I done to
compare with you?"
"Ephraim [is] better than all ...
of Abiezer."
"God has given the leaders
of Midian ... into your hands."
"What was I able to do to
compare with you?"

9. Draw comments on these verses from the Study Guide section entitled "Gideon Answers Softly." Then consider Question #3 from Things to Think About.

10. Practice the Memory Verse from today's lesson.

11. Lead a discussion with questions such as: *Why were the Ephraimites angry? Did they have any right to be angry? Why or why not? What do you think Gideon thought and felt? Why do you think Gideon responded the way he did? Do you think Gideon meant what he said? Why or why not?*

12. Review the terms from this lesson's Word List. Then ask a final class member to read aloud Judges 8:4. Say: *Listen carefully to see which term from the Word List is most closely related to the words in this verse.*

Guide members to the vocabulary word *perseverance*. Write this word on the marker board. Read or summarize the ideas from the Study Guide section entitled "Gideon Keeps Going." Then discuss Question #4 from Things to Think about in the Study Guide.

Encourage Application

13. Review the main points from Things to Remember in the Study Guide and discuss Question #5 from Things to Think About.

14. Remind class members that Gideon showed strong leadership in the middle of his conflict with the Midianites. Pass out a blank notecard to each class member. Ask each member to write down a conflict that he or she is facing right now. Assure members that no one else will be able to read this card. Give members time to think about the following questions: *Which leadership principle from today's lesson could help you in the middle of this conflict?*

12. Close class in prayer, asking God to help each member to show leadership even in the middle of difficult problems.

Extra Teaching Ideas

Connect With Life

♦ Before class today, gather recent newspapers and magazines. As class members arrive, distribute the sources you have gathered. Direct members to tear out articles and ads and photos that focus on conflicts of some sort. These could be between two people or two groups or even two nations. Allow time for members to explain their findings. Point out that conflict is part of our lives on this earth. Say: *As we learn more about Gideon in today's lesson, look for ways he responds to conflict as Israel's leader.*

Guide the Study

♦ Read Judges 8:1-3 aloud as the class follows along in the text. Ask for two volunteers to act out the roles of the spokesman for the Ephraimites (v. 1) and Gideon (v. 2-3). If you like, allow other pairs of volunteers to interpret the scene.

Encourage Application

♦ Before class today, arrange for a leader in your church or larger community to come and share some closing thoughts with the class. This could be a business leader, a civic leader, or a religious leader. Ask this person to share some practical advice about leadership based on the principles found in today's Bible Text. Invite him or her to give testimony or discuss examples of situations where strong leadership was needed. Ask this person to tell about a time he or she might have faced opposition like Gideon did. Make sure to give this person a copy of today's lesson ahead of time so that he or she can come prepared to present related ideas.

Teaching Guide

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

God Sends Help: A Study from Judges

Lesson 12: Gideon Falls

Lesson Focus

When people stop focusing on God, they can fall into sin and disgrace.

Bible Text

Judges 8:18-34

Memory Verse

"The Lord said, 'These people show respect to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.'" (Isaiah 29:13a)

Word List

effort: work done by the mind or body; energy used to do something

vengeful: feeling or showing a desire to harm someone who has harmed you

warrior: a person who fights in battles and is known for having courage and skill

Prior Preparation

- ♦ For Connect with Life #1, find a photo or video of a roller coaster.
- ♦ For Extra Teaching Ideas/Guide the Study, search for images and descriptions of an *ephod*.

Connect with Life

1. Begin class by showing a photo of a roller coaster or, even better, a video clip of a moving roller coaster. Invite the class to talk about the experiences of going up, pausing at the top, and descending. Ask: *Do you ever feel as if your life is like a roller coaster ride? What causes the ups and downs?* Allow a few minutes for responses, then say: *The life of Gideon was like a roller coaster—ups and downs. Today we will talk about his final fall away from God.*

Guide the Study

2. Ask the class to tell what they remember about the events in Gideon's life that were in the preceding lessons. If you like, write them on the marker board. Fill in any events the class does not mention.

Major Events in Gideon's Life

- Threshing wheat in a wine press
- Visited by an angel
- Tore down the altars to Baal and Asherah
- Visited by an angel again
- Two tests with wool
- Gathered an army
- Thinned out the army
- Overheard a Midianite's dream
- Led army to defeat Midianites with torches and horns

3. Ask: *What would you expect a good leader/soldier to do after completely defeating an enemy, especially if the leader was certain that God had ensured the victory?*

Accept various answers; suggest that the best thing to do would be to go back to normal and to worship God the way He had told them to.

4. Say: *Let's see what Gideon actually did.* Read or just summarize Judges 8:1–3. Stress that Gideon was skillful at calming the anger of the Israelites who felt left out of the action of battle.

5. Read or summarize Judges 8:4–7. Stress that God did not direct Gideon to cross the Jordan and pursue these other leaders of the Midianites. Point out that Gideon turned *vengeful*. Ask: *What do you think about Gideon trying to make his son cut off the heads of Zebah and Zalmunnah?*

6. Read Judges 8:22–23. Also read the two paragraphs from the Study Guide, under "Gideon Wants What God Wants?" Say: *The lesson writer suggests that we can admire Gideon for being humble. However, it is also possible that Gideon was not being honest, and that he was being hypocritical and only giving lip-service to God.* You may need to define "hypocritical" or "lip-service."

7. Read or summarize Judges 8:24–27. Lead a discussion with questions such as:

Why were the Israelites so willing to give up their gold? Why do you think Gideon asked them for the gold? What were some other things Gideon might have done with all that gold?

8. Say: *God had very clearly told His people that they must not have any gods before Him. The first part of the Ten Commandments is about false gods.* Read Exodus 20:1–6.

Recall from Lesson 7 that Gideon's first task of service for God was to tear down the worship objects for the false gods Baal and Asherah (Judges 7:25–27).

9 Ask: *What does it mean to be "vengeful"?* Direct the class to the word list definition and have them put it in their own words.

10. Ask: *Who should have received credit for the miraculous victory over the Midianites?* Ask volunteers to read Judges 7:2, 9, and 14-15. Ask: *Do you think Gideon said or did anything that showed he gave God the credit or honor for winning the battle?*

Encourage Application

11. Lead the class in discussion with questions such as:

- *What are some examples of items that people sometimes tend to worship?* (sports memorabilia, famous people, statues, expensive jewelry or paintings, etc.)
- *What are some examples of people who have gone astray by getting too big-headed?*
- *How do we keep ourselves from getting big-headed? from being vengeful?*

12. Lead the class to brainstorm reasons that cause people to lose their focus on God. Allow the class to think about whether any of these apply to their own lives.

Some Reasons that People Lose Their Focus on God

- Bad Things — Sickness
- Good Things — Getting a new job
- Getting too busy for church
-

Then lead the class to brainstorm practical ways they can avoid losing their focus on God. Challenge the class to concentrate on one or more ways of keeping their focus on God.

Some Ways that People Can Keep Their Focus on God

- Prayer
- Daily Bible reading
- Regular giving
-

Extra Teaching Ideas

Connect with Life

♦ Ask for a brave volunteer to help you. Explain that you want the volunteer to follow you as you move around. Have the volunteer do what you do, and if you have space, you can walk around. After a few moments of this, have the volunteer cover his/her eyes or put on blindfold. Then continue to move, speaking encouragement to the volunteer to follow you—which will not be possible. Thank the volunteer and explain that this was an illustration of what happens when we stop focusing our eyes on what we're following. Say: *In today's lesson, we will see what happened to Gideon when he lost his focus on God.*

Guide the Study

♦ Read Judges 8:22-23 and the Study Guide paragraphs under “Gideon Wants What God Wants?” Divide the class into two groups. Assign one group to argue that Gideon was speaking the truth about his feelings. Assign the other group to argue that Gideon was only giving lip-service to having God be the only ruler. Give groups about five minutes to work, then call for each to report their thinking. If you like, have a vote about which seems more likely: Gideon spoke sincerely or Gideon only gave lip-service to God.

♦ Present this information about the holy vest, also known as an *ephod*. The details about the construction of an ephod are in Exodus 28:6-14.

An ephod was a sleeveless garment. It was made from blue, purple and red yarn; linen fabric; and gold. These were the finest materials available and made the ephod beautiful and expensive. The ephod was only worn by the high priest in performing holy ministry.

Show an image of an ephod, such as the one below.



<https://twitter.com/JoshuaHWeiss/status/992486554605146119/photo/2>

Encourage Application

♦ Briefly retell the story of Gideon, concentrating on the last part from Lesson 12 about his failure. Stress that Gideon failed because he did not continue to focus on God but focused on himself. Ask: *What might Gideon's story have been like if he had kept his focus on God?* You can let the entire class brainstorm ideas. If you like, you can break into small groups and have them write a revised version of Judges 8:18-34.

♦ Read or summarize the story of Aaron and the golden calf, Exodus 32:1-24. Ask the class what parallels they see between the way the golden calf and Gideon's ephod became a trap to the people.

Teaching Guide

Adult Bible Study in Simplified English

God Sends Help: A Study from Judges

Lesson 13: Lessons from Judges and God Calls Samuel

Lesson Focus

We should learn from our mistakes and follow Samuel's example of being faithful to God.

Bible Text

Judges 2:18-19; 1 Samuel 3:1-11

Memory Verse

Then the Lord came and stood and called as He did the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for Your servant is listening." (1 Samuel 3:10)

Word List

avoid: to stay away from someone or something

empower: to give power to someone

select: to choose someone or something from a group

Prior Preparation

- ♦ For Extra Teaching Ideas/Encourage Application, prepare copies of Deuteronomy 30:15-19 for each person.
- ♦ For Extra Teaching Ideas/Encourage Application, gather pens and paper or an index card for each class member.

Connect with Life

1. Ask the class for some examples of "learning the hard way." Encourage them to think of their own experiences as well as those of others. You can retell the short-skirt incident in the introduction to the lesson, and be prepared to share some experiences of your own. As part of the discussion, ask: *What did you learn, and why did you remember this experience?*

Then say: *Today we will talk about the Israelites and what they learned the hard way.*

Guide the Study

2. Help the class briefly review the people studied in this unit of Judges. Focus on their successes and/or failures.

While reviewing each of the judges, recall how each was *selected* by God and how each was *empowered* by God. You can use a table such as this.

| JUDGE | SUCCESES | FAILURES |
|---------|----------|----------|
| Caleb | | |
| Othniel | | |
| Ehud | | |
| Shamgar | | |
| Deborah | | |
| Gideon | | |

3. Ask a volunteer to read aloud Judges 2:18-19 as the class follows along in the Study Guide. On the marker board, make two columns. Label one "What God Did" and the other "What the People Did." Invite the class to pull out words and phrases from the text to fill in the columns.

| <u>What God Did</u> | <u>What the People Did</u> |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gave special men • Was with the special men • Saved from enemies • Showed pity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turned again • Acted worse than their fathers • Followed other gods • Served other gods • Worshiped other gods • Continued sinful acts • Continued strong wills |

4. Ask: *Why did God keep helping the Israelites instead of just letting them be beaten up and harmed by their enemies?* (Because of His unending love and His covenant to care for and be with His people forever.)

5. Summarize 1 Samuel 1:1-28 to tell the story of how Samuel's mother, Hannah, dedicated him to God as a young boy. Then read aloud Samuel 3:1-11. Ask: *From what we see in this story, how would you describe the boy Samuel?* Concentrate on his obedience, but also that he was a "normal" person who was *selected* by God.

6. Explain that a mentor is someone who teaches or gives help and advice to a less experienced and often younger person. A mentor can be a parent, a pastor, a teacher, a friend, a boss, etc. Note that Eli was a *mentor* to Samuel. Ask: *In what ways was Eli a mentor to Samuel?*

Invite the class to think of at least one mentor they have had. Ask: *What did this person do in being a mentor to you?* Allow several people to answer briefly. If you like, you can jot words and phrases on the marker board.

7. Next, ask: *Who is someone that you can mentor?* Allow a few moments for thought, then ask: *What can you do to be a mentor to this person?* Call attention to the words/phrases already mentioned. Encourage the class to be active mentors, especially in matters of faith.

Encourage Application

8. Ask: *What do you think are the most important reasons that judges such as Gideon (or Samson, or Jephthah) were only briefly “successful” as strong people of God?* Allow several answers. Then ask: *What was different about Samuel, who was a strong leader for God throughout his life?* Lead the class to compare and contrast Samuel with other judges.

9. Say: *In Judges, we see leaders who were personal successes and/or failures. We also see the people of Israel turning back to their sinful ways over and over. Then ask: Who do you think is at fault when people continue their sinful ways? The individual people or their leaders?*

10. Close the class with prayer that each person may keep their focus on God. Also pray that each one may be empowered by God for the tasks before them of serving in His kingdom.

Extra Teaching Ideas

Connect with Life

♦ Begin with a discussion of rules that people are supposed to follow. Ask the class for examples, which could include organization rules such as school or work dress codes, traffic and pedestrian rules, masking, and quarantine rules from the COVID-19 pandemic, rules and laws about safety, and so on. Ask: *What happens when people do not follow the rules?*

Guide the Study

♦ Divide the class into teams of two people or more. Assign each team one or more of the judges studied in this unit. (Adjust the size of the teams and the number of judges assigned based on the number of people in the class.) For each of their assigned judges, ask the teams to prepare a short report answering the questions: *What were they doing when they were selected by God? What was their occupation? How did God let them know they were selected? How did God empower them?*

♦ Read 1 Samuel 1:1-28 or simply tell the story of Hannah praying for a child and God answering her prayer. Ask: *What are some points we see in this story about how parents can influence their children’s upbringing in faith?*

♦ Enlist volunteers to act out the scene of 1 Samuel 3:1-11 and also the scene in 1 Samuel 3:12-18, which has God’s instructions to Samuel that he was to give bad news to Eli and his family. Assign parts for Samuel,

Eli, and God’s voice. If time permits, allow additional groups of three to act out the drama. Lead a discussion with questions such as: *How do you think Samuel felt at each point? How do you think Eli felt about this young person?*

Encourage Application

♦ Explain to the class that before Moses died, God spoke through him to all the people and made His plans clear. Hand out copies of this text. Call attention to the chart from step #4 and ask the class to underline similar words and phrases in the Deuteronomy passage.

Deuteronomy 30:15-19 God Speaks Through Moses

“See, I have put in front of you today life and what is good, and death and what is bad. I tell you today to love the Lord your God. Walk in His ways. Keep all His Laws and all that He has decided. Then you will live and become many. And the Lord your God will bring good to you in the land you are going in to take. But if your heart turns away and you will not obey, but leave to worship other gods and serve them, I tell you today that you will die for sure. You will not live long in that land across the Jordan which you are about to take for your own. I call heaven and earth to speak against you today. I have put in front of you life and death, the good and the curse. So choose life so you and your children after you may live.”

♦ Say: *We have seen all these judges who were selected and empowered by God to serve Him. Ask: Do you think God only selects and empowers a few, very special people for great tasks? Or do you think God selects and empowers many different kinds of people for large and small tasks?*

Hand out an index card or piece of paper and a pen to each person. Direct their attention to Question 1 under Things to Think About, *What are some ways that you feel you have been selected, empowered and guided by God to serve Him?* Instruct the class to make some notes on one side of the paper or card to answer this question about themselves.

Next, direct the class to write notes on the opposite side of the paper or card to answer: *What are some tasks or ways to serve God that I see in front of me now?*

Allow several minutes for people to finish both questions. Optional: Call for volunteers to share their answers with the group.

Lead the class to discuss Question 2 of Things to Think About — *How can people keep their focus on God*. Include questions such as: *What does it mean to “focus on God”? What are some specific ways we can help ourselves to focus on God? What are some ways we can help others to focus on God? How would those ways of helping others focus on God be different for children, adults, family members, co-workers, church friends, etc.?*