

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

*God Sends Help:
A Study from Judges*

Lesson 13: Lessons from Judges and God Calls Samuel

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

When I was in high school back in the 1960s, it was against school rules for girls to wear skirts above their knees. I liked short skirts, and I thought I could get away with breaking the rule. One day, a teacher sent me to the principal's office and the principal sent me home to change. I felt terrible, and I never made that mistake again. I learned the hard way that rules are to be followed.

Most adults have learned many

important lessons in life the hard way. What is the hard way? It's when we make choices that lead to bad results. When we do learn from our mistakes, we must remember and not make the same mistakes again.

As we look at the book of Judges, we are amazed at the way the Israelites repeated the same mistakes over and over again.

Even though the point of the book of Judges is that God sent help to His people many times, the people did not learn from their mistakes.

The Lesson from Judges

(Judges 2:18-19)

18 When the Lord gave them special men to judge them, the Lord was with the judge. And He saved them from those who hated them. For the Lord showed them pity because of their pain when others made it hard for them and hurt them.

19 But when the judge died, they would turn again and act worse than their fathers. They would follow other gods and serve them and worship them. They would not give up their sinful acts or their strong wills.

The stories of the 12 judges give us lessons and examples to follow—or to **avoid**. In this study, we have looked at the examples

of six judges: Caleb, Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah and Gideon. The last part of the book of Judges includes six more people: Tola, Jair, Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon and Samuel.

Some of the stories of the 12 judges, such as Caleb or Deborah, only describe their faithful obedience to God. Some stories, such as Gideon and Samson, tell about their successes and also about their failures.

But each judge was **selected**, **empowered**, and guided by God to lead and rescue His people.

We have to remember, too, that the *people* of Israel were the ones who returned to their sinful ways over and over. Even though leaders are important in helping and guiding people, each person must choose to do what is right in God's eyes.

Samuel: The Last and Best Judge

Samson is the twelfth judge in the book of Judges. The final two chapters of Judges are a terrible story about how the Israelites completely turned away from God and lived in a wicked and dangerous time.

It is not clear how long the period of the judges went on, but there was one final judge, Samuel, and his story is in the two books, 1 and 2 Samuel.

Except for Samson, the Bible does not tell us about the early years of the 12 judges.

We do know about Samuel's early years.

Samuel's mother, Hannah, had not been blessed with children, so she prayed to God for a child. God answered her prayers, and when her son Samuel was still very young, she took him to the house of God and gave him to the Lord. (1 Samuel 1:24-28).

God Calls Samuel

(1 Samuel 3:1-11)

1 Now the boy Samuel was working for the Lord with Eli. There were few words from the Lord given in those days, and there were not many special dreams.

2 At that time Eli was lying down in his own place. His eyes had become weak and he could not see well.

3 The lamp of God had not gone out yet. And Samuel was lying down in the house of the Lord where the special box of God was.

4 Then the Lord called Samuel, and Samuel said, "Here I am."

5 He ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But Eli said, "I did not call you. Lie down again." So Samuel went and lay down.

6 The Lord called again, "Samuel!" So Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But Eli answered, "I did not call you, my son. Lie down again."

7 Now Samuel did not know the Lord yet. And

the Word of the Lord had not been made known to him.

8 The Lord called Samuel again for the third time. He got up and went to Eli, and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” Then Eli understood that the Lord was calling the boy.

9 Eli said to Samuel, “Go lie down. If He calls you, say, ‘Speak, Lord, for Your servant is listening.’” So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

10 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.”

11 The Lord said to Samuel, “See, I am about to do a thing in Israel which will make both ears of everyone who hears it feel strange.

We can learn a lot from this little story about young Samuel. First, we learn that his

mother prayed for him and made sure he was given to God. Everyone who has children in their life can pray for and help them be close to the Lord.

Second, we learn that Samuel was an obedient child. Of course, children and adults are not always as obedient as we should be. When we do trust and obey God, He can use us for His purposes.

Third, Samuel needed guidance in understanding what God wanted from him. His teacher, Eli, had to explain to Samuel that the voice he heard was from God. Sometimes we hear a word from God that is clear. But sometimes we need to ask for help to understand. We must pray to God to make the message more clear, and we can ask trusted Christians to help us, too.

Fourth, we learn that even though Samuel was a young boy, God chose him for a great work. As we saw with the adult judges in the book of Judges, God can and does use all kinds of people. He leads, guides, and empowers them.

Samuel lived to be an old man. He had many troubles with the people of Israel and with the two men he helped to become king, Saul and David. Samuel was faithful to God through his whole life. He never forgot that God appeared to him as a young boy. He never forgot that God was with him to lead and guide him through all his troubles.

Things to Think About

1. What are some ways that you feel you have been selected, empowered and guided by God to serve Him?
2. How can people keep their focus on God?
3. Do you think people learn more from their failures and mistakes than they do from their successes? Why?
4. Which of the six judges we studied do you remember the best? Why?

Things to Remember

Does God still select, empower, and lead people today? Does He do this with us? The answer is, yes, if we trust and obey God as we understand Him.

We may not be famous, and we may not feel like our work is noticeable or important, but we can be sure that we are pleasing God in our faithful service to Him.

We can also learn from the mistakes and failures of some of the judges. They failed when they changed their focus from God to focus on themselves.

It can take a lifetime of learning to keep our eyes on the Lord, to trust and obey Him through all times and places. We can expect mistakes and failures along the way.

Still, we have wonderful resources to help us learn. We have the Bible itself, and pastors and teachers to help us understand the teaching. We have our families and Christian friends that learn along with us. Most important, we have the teachings and example of our Savior, Jesus Christ as well as the Holy Spirit to guide us.

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