

Learning to Rely on God's Wisdom, Not Our Own

The book of Judges ends with a story of regret, rash decisions, and human attempts to fix a problem they created. It all started with a vow made in the heat of anger—a vow that had serious consequences.

After the battle against the tribe of Benjamin, the other Israelites realized something—they had nearly wiped out an entire tribe of their own people! Only 600 Benjamite men had survived, and because of their previous vow, the Israelites had sworn not to give their daughters in marriage to them. Without wives, the tribe of Benjamin would disappear.

They had acted out of passion, and now they were dealing with the consequences. So, instead of admitting their mistake and seeking God's wisdom, they came up with two plans—both of which were morally questionable.

Human Plans Instead of God's Guidance

First, they found a loophole. They realized that no one from the town of Jabesh-Gilead had joined them in battle. So they attacked that town, killed everyone except the unmarried women, and gave those women to the Benjamites as wives. But there still weren't enough women.

So they came up with a second plan. They told the remaining Benjamite men to hide in the vineyards near Shiloh, where young women would come out and dance during a festival. When the women appeared, the men were to snatch a wife and run! The other Israelites promised to cover for them, telling the girls' families not to worry.

The book of Judges ends with the same words that describe the whole time period:
"In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes." (Judges 21:25)

That's a sad conclusion. The Israelites thought they could fix their mistakes, but instead of seeking God, they used their own reasoning. This led to more sin, more pain, and more compromise.

Personal Application: Learning from Their Mistakes

1. Be Careful With Your Words

- The Israelites made a rash vow out of anger, and it had serious consequences. This reminds us to be careful about what we say.
- Have you ever made a promise in the heat of the moment that you later regretted? Maybe you told someone, *"I'll never talk to you again!"* or *"I promise I'll always do this."* But later, you realized it wasn't wise.
- Instead of making quick promises, we should slow down and seek God's wisdom. Jesus reminds us in Matthew 5:37, *"Let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.'"*

2. Don't Try to Fix Problems Without God

- The Israelites realized they had made a mistake, but instead of humbling themselves and asking God what to do, they came up with their own solutions.
- How often do we do the same thing? Maybe we make a bad choice, and instead of confessing it and asking for help, we try to cover it up. One bad decision leads to another, and soon we are in a bigger mess
- Instead of making things worse, we should stop and turn to God. When we repent, He offers us wisdom and a way forward (James 1:5).

3. When We Do What Is “Right in Our Own Eyes,” We Get Lost

- The Israelites kept following their own ideas instead of God’s commands, and it led to chaos. When we decide what is right based on our feelings instead of God’s truth, we can end up in trouble.
- Our culture tells us to “follow our hearts,” but the Bible warns that **“the heart is deceitful above all things”** (Jeremiah 17:9). Instead of trusting our own wisdom, we must trust in God’s.
- Proverbs 3:5-6 reminds us: **“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.”**

Conclusion: Submitting to God as King

The book of Judges ends with the people of Israel in confusion, all because they refused to let God rule over them. But we don’t have to live like that. We have a King—Jesus Christ—who leads us in truth and righteousness.

The question is: **Will we follow Him, or will we do what is right in our own eyes?**

Let’s commit to seeking God’s wisdom in every situation, trusting Him to guide us, and being careful with the decisions we make. When we submit to Him as King, our lives will be filled with peace and direction, rather than confusion and regret.