



**Reaching,
Restoring,
Raising Up**

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L.I.F.E. Group Questions—Matthew 5

Our L.I.F.E. Groups that meet in homes use the following questions from the sermon for discussion and application. To find a group pick up a L.I.F.E. Group brochure in the Welcome Center.

1. Share with the group
2. Talk about
3. Compare the way
4. What was your
5. Discuss how
6. Talk about anything else that impressed you from the message if you have time.

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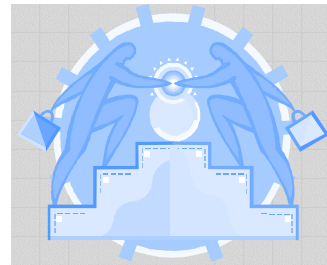
**You Can Join an ABF Anytime — Find
Yours Below and Join Us!**

Adult Bible Fellowships

Locations, Times, Descriptions

9:00

10:45



**ADULT BIBLE FELLOWSHIPS
- CONNECTING AROUND THE WORD -**

Rm104	30s-40s—Sims	Rm 104	Open—Bower-Chappell
Rm 112	30s-50s—Waller-Crary	Rm 112	Women—Byrum
Rm 201		Rm 201	Blessings in Disguise—Graham
Rm 202		Rm 202	
Rm 203	Young Singles —Franklin/Reynolds	Rm 203	30s—Tripp-Tripp
Rm 204		Rm 204	Singles—Bentzel
Rm 205	40s&Up—Christensen-Hasler	Rm 205	Open—Regis-Anderson
Rm 206		Rm 206	30s—Heritier-Sharp
Rm 207	Women—Knox-Anderson	Rm 207	20s—Alexy/Jones
Rm 208	40s-50s—McBrayer-Wicks	Rm 208	College—Ayres-Getchell
		Gym	Engaged/Young Married —Houston/Baker

January 23, 2005

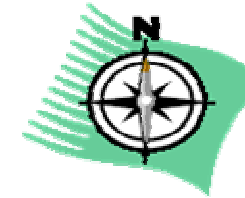
God's Super Heroes

Discover from Judges and Ruth how God uses everyday people to accomplish great things for Him.

Celebration Fellowship

Is It In You?

A preview of Judges 1-2



Volume 3, Issue 20
January 23, 2005

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In the well-known drink commercial, as sweat the color of the drink flows from the athlete's pores, the question is asked "is it in you?". The implication is that this sports drink enables these competitors to perform at a very high level. As the study in the book of Judges begins the same question arises for Israel's deliverers, called "judges" - "is it in you?". In other words, was there anyone in Israel who had what it took to rescue the people from their adversaries. The answer was that when everyday people allowed God to use them,

His power became the "it" they needed. "It" was in them. Judges 1-2 tells us how Israel found themselves in a situation where they needed deliverance. After Joshua, their leader, died, each of the tribes tried to take control of the land divinely allotted to them. They had only partial success, leaving some of the Canaanites in each territory. When Israel was faithful to God, these Canaanites would become their servants; but when the Israelite tribes began to follow the Canaanite gods, the Canaanites would defeat and enslave



When God uses us we become superheroes for Him!

them. Israel would then cry out to God, who would raise up a deliverer, or judge, to lead them to victory. These everyday people became God's super-heroes, all because God used them. The answer to the question, "is it in you?", for them was a resounding "yes", because "it" was God's power.

(Matthew 7)

Drilling Down

Rarely are the good minerals and ores at the surface of the earth; miners have to drill down deeply to extract the valuable materials they seek. In the same way God wants us to dig beneath the surface so that He can bring out that which is valuable in us. In the third chapter of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount He opens with the prohibition to not judge, so that we will not be judged. This does not mean we shouldn't evaluate others, as the rest of this chapter will reveal; but it does mean that we should not condemn others when we do, for that is God's prerogative. Because we feel inadequate we try to overcome this by putting others down. However, when we judge, we become accountable to the same standard by which we judge others. This is only fair since we believe it to be a good measure. Also, when we judge others, we assure that we, too, will be judged by God, for such condemnation is sin. Another problem

with judging others is that we are incapable of doing it correctly. Until we have dealt with our own issues, our judgment of others is clouded because it is emotionally biased. We want them to be wrong, in order for us to look better. When we work on our own struggles first, then we can clearly see how to help someone else with theirs—and we are able to have more compassion for their problem. A final reason to not condemn others before we deal with ourselves, is that when we continue to do the same thing we are living a lie. Having said this, Jesus then balanced it with the truth that we must evaluate others to determine with whom to share God's standards. He told the crowds to not give that which is holy to dogs, nor to throw their pearls before swine. That which is holy, or of great value, like pearls, refers to the things of God, to His standards, while dogs and swine were symbols of those opposed to God.

When we try to hold the unbelieving world to God's standards it will accomplish nothing good, and will often cause them to turn on us. The best thing to do is to offer them the gospel, and not attempt to hold them to God's biblical standards. After this warning Jesus then gave one solution to a judgmental attitude—prayer. When we turn to God with our inadequacies we no longer need to make ourselves look better by putting others down. However, the typical, superficial request is not what Jesus had in mind. His instruction to them had a continuous, progressive aspect to it. They were to keep on asking; then, having asked, they were to look and keep looking for the answer; finally, they were to keep knocking on doors until the answer revealed itself. Since even earthly fathers want to give good gifts to their children, it is even more sure that our heavenly Father will give good gifts to those who ask for them. This promise provides the basis for our requests, and

(Continued on page 2)

The 5 Purposes of the Purpose Driven Life

- Worship—You were planned for God's pleasure
- Fellowship—You were formed for God's family
- Discipleship—You were created to become like Christ
- Ministry—You were shaped for serving God
- Evangelism—You were made for a mission

Matthew 7 (continued from pg 1)

gives us an example to follow. Just as God treats us with love and respect, so we should treat others as we wish to be treated. We should not condemn them, but rather, after working on our issues, help them deal with their own. We shouldn't expect unbelievers to act like believers, but share with them what they need, which is the gospel. Instead of putting others down, we should ask God for what we need; when we do all these things, we will be able to treat others as we wish to be treated, thus fulfilling God's will. After these words Jesus gave guidance on how to find real life. Most are going down the broad road of feeding our natural desires, but that ultimately ends in destruction. To find real life one must enter through the narrow gate (Jesus), and remain on God's narrow road, referring His righteous way of living. Rather than doing what comes "naturally", we must surrender our desires to Him, and thus find the life we've always wanted. Unfortunately, as Jesus warns us, there are many false prophets who seek to lead us away from this. They look like us, but inside are more like ravenous wolves, dressed in sheep's wool. This allows them to infiltrate the flock and destroy the sheep. Their identity will be revealed by their actions, and by

the fruit that their actions bear. It is a universal principle that good trees bear good fruit, and bad trees bear bad fruit. Although some may look good for a while, if the tree is bad, eventually the fruit will be bad. Conversely, even though we all sin, the overall fruit of a good tree will be good fruit; and when one who is good tree does sin, it should disturb them. We must always evaluate our actions to see if they indicate a heart that has been renewed by Christ. In this sense, we should all be fruit inspectors and respond to what we find. As Jesus reveals, it is not those who perform supernatural acts, do sacrificial service, or make bold professions of faith that will enter into heaven, but those who actually do the will of the Father—so we must be sure that we are really "in the



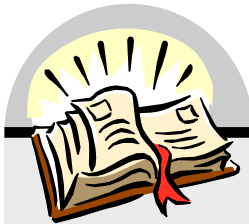
"The overall fruit of a good tree will be good fruit; and when one who is good tree does sin, it should disturb them."

faith" by looking at the fruit of our lives. This has benefit, not only for the life to come, but also for this present life. When we hear the words of Jesus and act on them (the key issue), we are like a person who builds their house on rock—able to stand firm as the storms of life come against us. On the other hand, those who don't do what they hear Jesus say are like houses built on sand that fall in times of adversity. Therefore, it makes sense to follow Jesus, not in word only, but with our heart and actions as well. This thought concluded Jesus' sermon, with the result that the crowds were amazed—not only over the truth He had revealed, but also because of the authority with which He presented them. Unlike the rabbis, whose authority was derived from their forefathers, Jesus, a mere Galilean peasant, unexpectedly stated the truth with His own ring of authority. In this chapter alone Jesus told them to not judge, but rather work on their own issues, ask the Father for their needs, and to treat others as they wished to be treated. When we bear fruit like this by acting on Jesus' words, we will find the life we want, not just in heaven, but even now on earth. However, this doesn't happen naturally; to get to the good stuff, we have to drill down deep.

Study Questions for Judges 1-2

At first Israel continues well after Joshua's death, but soon they abandon the Lord and experience His discipline.

1. Read Judges 1:1-7. What did Israel do right after Joshua died (v1, 3, 4), and what were the results (v5-7)? How was God's justice also accomplished in this event (v6-7), and what does this teach us?
2. From Judges 1:8-10 how did Judah provide a good example for the rest of the tribes to follow (v8, 9, 10)? After a good first victory (v1-7), what is our typical tendency? What should we do instead?
3. In Judges 1:11-15 how did Caleb (who was over 80 at the time), demonstrate good qualities of leadership, and of fatherhood? What does his daughter's request (v15) show about her relationship with him?



"We must surrender our desires to Him, and thus find the life we've always wanted."

4. Looking at 1:16-21 what positive things did Judah and Caleb do (v17, 18, 20), and what did both Judah and Benjamin fail to do that God desired (v19, 21)? What could they have done differently?

5. Using Judges 1:22-26 how did the house of Joseph (Manasseh and/or Ephraim) carry out the Lord's will to conquer Canaan (see Joshua 23:4-5)? How did they fail (v26) and to what did this lead (v26)?

6. According to Judges 1:27-36 what did the 1st 5 tribes mentioned have in common (v27, 29, 30, 31, 33), and how did they relate to the Canaanites (v28, 29, 30, 32, 33)? How was Dan different (v34)?

7. From Judges 2:1-5 what was the agreement between God and Israel (v1, 2), and how had each performed (v1-2)? What was God's response (v3), and how did the people react (v4)? What does this teach?

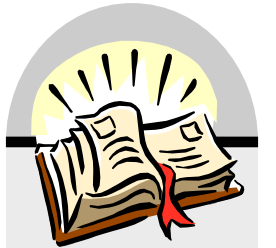
8. Read Judges 2:6-10. How did Joshua's generation relate to the Lord (v6-7)? After Joshua died what was the next generation's relationship with God (v10), and who was to blame? Apply this to our lives today.

9. In Judges 2:11-15 how did the next generation act (v11-12, 13), and how did this affect God (v12, 14)? What was the result (v14-15), and how did this affect Israel (v15)?

10. Using 2:16-18 what did God do to help Israel (v16), what was the result (v16), and how did the people respond (v17)? In light of this why did God help Israel (v18), and what can we learn from this?

11. From Judges 2:19-23 what progression is seen in the people (v19), and in God (v20-21)? Why did God respond this way (v22), and in what sense was this good for Israel? Apply this to your life.

12. Review Israel's cycle seen in Judges by using 2:11-23. Identify each stage (v11-13, 14-15, 15-16, 17, 19, 20-23) and write down what Israel should have done differently.



Memory Verse

**"Then the Lord raised up judges who delivered them from the hands of those who plundered them."
Judges 2:16**