



**Reaching,
Restoring,
Raising Up**

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L.I.F.E. Group Questions—Matthew 5:6

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.

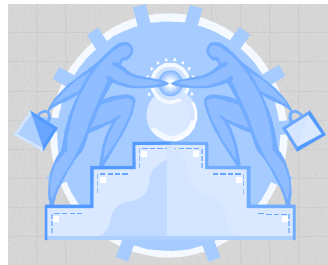
1. Share with the group about your relationship with your father growing up, and now. Why do you think we are so hungry for a good relationship with our father?
2. Talk about the things that bring you the most satisfaction in life, and why they do. How could you adjust your "eating habits" to take in the things of God that satisfy you most?
3. Compare the difference between *positional* righteousness and *practical* righteousness. How do they relate?
4. How would you rate yourself in terms of being a "snacker" on God's righteousness versus wanting "the whole thing"? What are the barriers to wanting "the whole thing"?
5. Discuss how each one in the group can begin to pursue all of God's righteousness.
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



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

	9:00	10:45
Rm104	30s-40s—Sims	Rm 104 Open—Bower-Chappell
Rm 112	30s-50s—Waller-Crary	Rm 112 Women—Byrum
Rm 201		Rm 201 Lay Pastor Training
Rm 202		Rm 202 Blessings in Disguise—Graham
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—Wicks	Rm 208 College—Ayres-Getchell
		Gym Engaged/Young Married —Houston/Baker

February 6, 2005

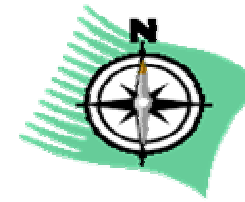
God's Super Heroes

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

Celebration Fellowship

The 'It' Factor

A preview of Judges 6-8



Volume 3, Issue 22
February 6, 2005

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In Bravo's critically acclaimed reality series a group of talented young actors try to prove they have "it", the certain, indefinable quality that transforms a mere mortal into a star. A similar thing occurs in Judges 6-8 this week; Gideon discovers that he has the "it" factor—he has what it takes to deliver Israel from the Midianites. This "it" is a person—the Holy Spirit—who took control of Gideon as he liberated Israel from Midian. He didn't view himself as a deliverer, but through the Spirit's power, that's what he became. The

"it" factor for every believer is the Holy Spirit, and when He is in control of our lives, we can do whatever He empowers us to do. By the Spirit, Gideon, who was afraid to even show his face, became so courageous that he destroyed the altar of Baal, summoned troops from four tribes in Israel, attacked and destroyed the camp of the Midianites that appeared as numerous as a plague of locusts, captured and killed their four leaders, and disciplined two towns in Israel for not giving his troops assistance. This was quite a



When God uses us we become superheroes for Him!

resume for the youngest of a little known family. However, once in power he allowed Israel to make an idol of his golden ephod, and after his death they returned to their former idolatry. This showed that the "it" factor for Gideon was not himself, but the Holy Spirit at work in him. The same is true for us.

Batting Clean-Up

Everyone who follows baseball understands the importance of the fourth spot in the batting order, known as "clean-up". Theoretically the bases will be full when he comes to the plate, and he will have an opportunity to drive all the runners home—thus becoming the hero, especially when this scenario develops in the last inning. Israel needed some clean-up hitters, called judges, to deliver them because of their disobedience to God. Since they insisted on worshipping the false gods of the Canaanites, God allowed these inhabitants to remain among Israel. He did this to teach the new generation about war—both the distastefulness of it, and the techniques necessary to successfully wage it. In doing this Israel would have their faithfulness tested, which was God's second purpose for leaving the inhabitants, and Israel, as they relied on God, would become stronger. All of the original nations would be left, along

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

with the Philistines. They would oppress Israel, whose idolatry had aroused God's anger, and after the severity of this oppression became unbearable, they would cry out to God for help. He would then raise up a judge to save them and the land would again enjoy peace for a period before the cycle resumed. The first cycle began with the Mesopotamian oppression, and when Israel turned to God, He provided Othniel to deliver them. The Spirit of God enabled him to do this, and forty years of peace followed before he died. At that time, though, Israel returned to false gods, and God allowed Moab, led by Eglon, and aided by the Ammonites and Amalekites, to defeat them near Jericho. This led to eighteen years of oppression before Israel finally cried out to God. As usual He responded to them by raising up a deliverer, Ehud, who was a left handed man from Benjamin. The text also reports that Eglon, Moab's king, was a

(Judges 3-5)

very fat man; and these details underscore the authenticity of the biblical account. They also factored into the first stage of the victory, during which Ehud entered the king's chamber with a private message. After everyone left he moved closely to the king to share the information with him, and drew his two-edged sword with the opposite hand from normal, thus utilizing the element of surprise to kill him. In addition, Eglon's obesity enabled the sword to be covered when his aides found him, allowing some extra time for Ehud's escape. This led to the next stage of victory, as Ehud blew the trumpet and gathered troops to defeat the Moabites. Having done this, they completed the victory by subduing all of the Moabites, and the land had peace for eighty years. During this time Shamgar killed 600 Philistines with an ox goad, an event connected with the next deliverance in Judges. Using a mere ox goad (cattle prod), he did what he could for God, he

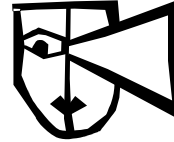
(Continued on page 2)

Judges 3-5 (continued from pg 1)

did it where he was, and it resulted in great things for God, a good example for us all. After Ehud's death Israel again turned away from God, so He allowed the Canaanites, with their nine hundred iron chariots, to oppress Israel severely for twenty years. When they cried out to God again, He directed Deborah, a prophetess and judge, to summon Barak to lead the charge. God wanted him to take ten thousand men from Naphtali and Zebulun to Mount Tabor, and after God drew the Canaanites out to them, He would allow Israel's troops to defeat them. Barak's response, however, was that he would only do it if Deborah went with him; she agreed, but informed him that this would result in the highest honor of killing the general, Sisera, going to a woman. Barak went forward with the plan, and when Sisera, thinking this was a prime opportunity to defeat Israel, gathered his troops to Mount Tabor, this confirmed for Deborah that God's plan was unfolding. These diverse perspectives show us that it takes eyes of faith to see God's work in our lives. At Deborah's command Barak's troops engaged the battle, and defeated the Canaanites with their chariots at the Kishon River. The victory was not complete, though, until Sisera was killed. He

had found refuge in the tent of Jael, who, by the providence of God, had recently relocated there. When he asked for water, she gave him instead heavy milk that would induce sleep; and when he fell asleep she drove a tent peg through his temple. Thus, the honor of killing him went to a woman. Therefore, God had done His part in the victory by providing the plan, by drawing out the Canaanites, and by placing Jael in the path of the fleeing Sisera. Israel had done their part by carrying out the plan, showing us that when, in God's strength, we actively carry out His purposes, His blessings will occur in our lives. In Deborah and Barak's victory song, God was praised for raising up leaders and volunteers, and for fighting miraculously for Israel. Before the

battle Israel's roads were empty due to fear of the Canaanites, and there were no weapons with which to fight them. Then, Israel turned from the "new" gods they had chosen, cried out to God, and He began to deliver. The tribes of Ephraim, Benjamin, Zebulun, Issachar, and part of Reuben, went down to the gates of the enemy, and He performed righteous acts on their behalf, including releasing torrents of water into the Kishon valley; this led to the immobilization of the chariots, and the defeat of Canaan. He was displeased, however, with the tribes from Dan and Gilead, and the other part of Reuben, who held back. Finally, the song ended by recounting the anxiety of Sisera's mother who wondered why her son was so long in returning. It is good to rejoice when God's enemies fall, although for us today, these are spiritual enemies. We should similarly treat them the same way, resisting and overcoming them in the strength of the Lord. When we don't, we fall prey to them, as Israel did, and follow their gods; we must then cry out to God, who will deliver us. He did it for Israel through judges, but He does it today through our deliverer, Jesus. When we stray, and then turn back to God, by God's grace Jesus will bat "clean up" for us.



"It takes eyes of faith to see God's work in our lives."

Study Questions for Judges 6-8

The pattern in Judges continues as Gideon leads Israel to victory over Midian, and then Israel returns to idolatry after his death.

1. Read Judges 6:1-14. How bad were conditions in Israel (v1, 2, 3-4, 5, 6), and what did they do (v6)? How did God respond initially (v7-10), but ultimately (v12-14)? Why do you think He did it like this?
2. From Judges 6:11-24 who was God's next deliverer (v11)? How did God view him (v12) and why (v14), and how did he view himself (v11, 13, 15)? How did God encourage him (v14, 16, 21, 23)? Apply this.
3. In Judges 6:25-32 what did God tell Gideon to do (v25-26) and why, and how did Gideon respond (v27)? What was the reaction (v28-30), and what does this show about Israel? How did his father react (v31-32)?



"When, in God's strength, we actively carry out His purposes, His blessings will occur in our lives."

4. Looking at Judges 6:33-40 what opportunity presented itself for Gideon (v33), how did he respond and why (v34)? How did Gideon get confirmation about God's will (v36-40), and why was this okay?

5. Using Judges 7:1-8 about what was God concerned (v2), and what did He do about it (v3, 4)? Who was eliminated (v3, 5-6), and how many were left (v7)? What can we learn from this part of the story?

6. In Judges 7:9-14 how did God continue to encourage Gideon (v9-10, 11), and what did he hear (v13-14)? How does this show how God deals with the enemy (v14) to give us victory?

7. From Judges 7:15-23 how did Gideon respond at first to what he heard (v15), and then ultimately (v15, 16-18, 19-21)? How are these two things connected, what was the result (v22-23), and why (v22)?

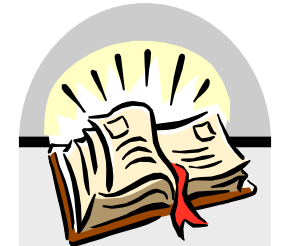
8. Read Judges 7:24-8:3. Who was summoned (v24), what did they do (v25), and how did they react later (8:1)? How did Gideon respond (v2-3), and what was the effect (v3)? How can we follow his example?

9. According to Judges 8:4-9, in Gideon's army's pursuit of the two kings, what kind of support did they receive (v5-6, 8), and how did he respond (v7, 9)?

10. Using Judges 8:13-21 what happened to the Midianite armies (v10-12) and kings (v12, 18-21)? How did he deal with Succoth (v14-16) and Penuel (v17)? Do you agree with his actions (see Judges 21:25)?

11. From Judges 8:22-35 what did Gideon do well (v22-23), and not so well (v24-27)? What was the immediate result (v27)? What had God done for Israel (v28), and how did they react (v33-35)?

12. What do these chapters reveal about God's patience with His people (6:7-10 vs 6:11-40; 8:27 vs 8:28) His power (7:1-23)? Why do you think God continued to help them, and continues to help us?



Memory Verse

"I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; the Lord shall rule over you."

Judges 8:23