



**Reaching,
Restoring,
Raising Up**

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L.I.F.E. Group Questions—Matthew 5

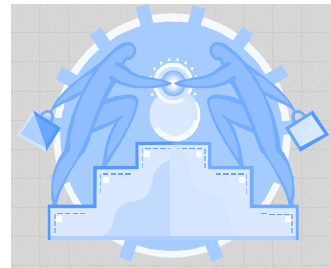
Our L.I.F.E. Groups that meet in homes use the following questions from the sermon for discussion and application. To find a group pick up a L.I.F.E. Group brochure in the Welcome Center.

1. Share with the group something specific that often catches your attention. How does this, along with what we think about, and talk about, help us evaluate the purity of our hearts?
2. Talk about how conscious you are of the presence of God in your daily activities. How conscious are you of his presence when you give, pray or give up something (such as food) for Him?
3. Compare how much receiving praise from God versus receiving approval from others motivates you. What does this reveal, and how can this change?
4. When you take a look at your checkbook and your calendar, what does it tell you about what matters to you? How can you intentionally invest more in service, study and community?
5. How much of a connection do you think there is between your ambition or goals in life, and your anxieties? What is the best way to deal with that?
6. Talk about anything else that impressed you from the message if you have time.

**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		Rm 207	20s—Alexy/Jones
Rm 208	40s-50s—Wicks	Rm 208	College—Ayres-Getchell
Gym 101	Women—Knox-Anderson	Gym	Engaged/Young Married —Houston/Baker

February 27, 2005

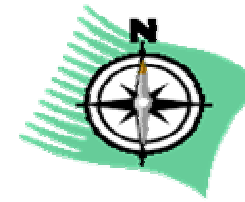
God's Super Heroes

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

Celebration Fellowship

Doing Their Own Thing

A preview of Judges 17-21



Volume 3, Issue 25
February 27, 2005

Inside this issue:

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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

Sometimes when people "do their own thing", it allows them to express their uniqueness and walk in a healthy freedom. However, when this idea is taken to mean that everyone is entitled to create and live by their own rules, chaos and abuse take over. This was the situation in Israel at the end of the book of Judges. The last verse summarizes the problem—"in those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes." With no king to maintain God's standard of justice, each person did whatever he or she

felt was right. Thus power ruled, and God's absolute values were rendered irrelevant. This was first illustrated in Judges 17-21 by Micah, an Ephraimite. He stole money from his mother, confessed it, and then turned the money into a graven image to represent God in worship. He then "hired" a Levitical priest; but this was short-lived, because the tribe of Dan abducted him to be their priest. Although he felt honored to have a larger group for which to perform his priestly duties, his appointment was contrary to God's



When God uses us we become superheroes for Him!

Law. Then, when another Levite's concubine was ravaged and killed by the tribe of Benjamin, the Levite literally cut her up and sent her body to all Israel as a call to battle against Benjamin. This episode was just one more illustration of the damage that can come from everyone "doing their own thing".

Saving the Best for Last

Often God saves His best work for the last of a person's life. Moses was not ready to be used of God until the last third of his life, and during the time of the Judges, Samson was a good example of this. He was born to be Israel's deliverer during the forty year oppression of Israel by the Philistines, a situation invoked by the evil that Israel had again committed before God. As in prior cases God was apparently moved to action by the misery of His people, and their deliverance this time began with a baby's birth. The angel of the Lord revealed to his barren mother that she would bear a child who was to be a Nazirite from his birth. This meant that no product of grapes could ever pass his lips, he could never touch anything dead, and his hair could never be cut. This vow would set him apart to God, and be the key to his ability to deliver Israel from the Philistines. When the mother reported the angelic appearance to her husband,

Manoah, he immediately asked God to send the angel back to let them know how to raise the child, and to let them know about the child's vocation. He only told them that they were to raise the child as a Nazirite, teaching us that God just reveals to us the part we need to know, and not all that we want to know. Manoah then asked the angel to stay while they prepared a meal for him and, although the angel refused to eat, he did allow them to turn the meal into a burnt offering. When the meat was placed on the altar he performed wonders, and then ascended in the flame of the offering. This angel, as Manoah concluded when this happened, was none other than God Himself. As in other places in the Old Testament, this "angel of the Lord" was God in the flesh, appearing so that He could clearly demonstrate His involvement with His people. Later, as promised, Samson was born, and grew up with the Lord's blessing; then,

(Judges 13-16)

as God's Spirit began to stir him, it was time for his work to begin. His first action was to request that his parents arrange for a Philistine woman from Timnah to become his wife. While marriage to a non-Israelite violated the Mosaic Law, God had allowed Samson this desire in order to challenge the Philistine domination of Israel. As Samson journeyed to Timnah for the wedding feast, he encountered a lion; but, empowered by the Spirit, he killed him, using only his hands. This first miracle provided an opportunity to defeat the Philistines; as he returned later to attend to his fiancé, bees had made honey in the lion's carcass. Contrary to his Nazirite vow, he scraped honey from the dead animal, but nevertheless used the incident to create a riddle for the Philistines. If they could solve the riddle of how something sweet to eat came out of the strong eater, he would give them thirty linens and changes of clothes, but if not, they would owe the same to him.

(Continued on page 2)

Judges 13-16 (continued from pg 1)

When they finally got his fiancé to get the secret from him, and solved the riddle, he angrily went to another Philistine town and killed thirty men for their clothes. Later, as he went for his wife and found that she had been given to another, he played another trick on the Philistines. During the wheat harvest he tied three hundred foxes together by their tails, put a torch between each of them, and turned them loose in the fields. When the Philistines discovered that their harvest had been incinerated, they burned down the house of Samson's wife and father-in-law, killing them in the process. This so angered Samson that he inflicted a great slaughter on them, leading the men of Judah to try to capture him and turn him over to the Philistines, who had come up against them. Samson agreed to be bound over to them, as long as they wouldn't kill him; and when the transfer was made Samson, empowered by the Spirit, snapped the cords, grabbed the jawbone of an ass, and killed a thousand Philistines with it. Thus, this first incident had led to the death of thirty, and then a thousand, Philistines, as well as the destruction of their wheat. After this, however, Samson became so thirsty that he questioned God's purpose. God re-

sponded by miraculously splitting the rock so that water came out, quenching Samson's thirst. Samson then visited a Philistine prostitute, and was trapped in the city; but God powerfully enabled him to carry the city gates to the top of the hill so he could escape. Both of these incidents showed the weakness of Samson's faith, and his dependence on God; but, conversely, they showed that God is faithful and strong even when we doubt Him. After this Samson became involved with another Philistine woman, Delilah, who enticed him to reveal the secret of his strength. He misled her three times, saying that if he were bound by new wet ropes, or just new ropes, or if his hair were braided, then his strength would be ordinary. None of these worked, but when



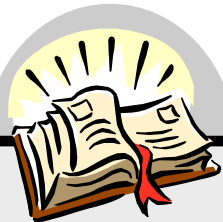
"God's purpose for our lives may not be fulfilled until we die—and He may save the best for last."

he finally gave in to her nagging to please her, and told her that his hair was the key, after he fell asleep she cut off his hair. When the Philistines came upon him, he tried to resist, but, since his vow to God had been broken, he was unable. They bound him, gouged out his eyes, imprisoned him, and put him to work at the mill. This story teaches us that when we violate our commitment to God in order to please others, the consequences for us will be disastrous. However, the story was not over; significantly, Samson's hair began to grow, and when they brought him out during their pagan worship celebration, he had one last chance to defeat them. As he stood between the support pillars while the Philistines ridiculed him, he prayed for God to remember him so that he could be avenged for his loss of eyesight. His dying act was to push the pillars apart, killing all three thousand of the elite Philistines. In spite of Samson's weaknesses, God had worked through him to deliver Israel from the enemy once again. This shows that when God is on our side, even our inadequacies will be overcome as He carries out His will. It also shows that God's purpose for our lives may not be fulfilled until we die—and He may save the best for last.

Study Questions for Judges 17-21

Things disintegrate drastically as everyone in Israel begins to do what is right in their own eyes.

1. Read Judges 17:1-13. What did Micah do that was bad (v2, 3, 5, 10), and why was each bad? How did those around him respond (v2, 4, 10-12)? Why was everyone's thinking confused (v6)? Apply to today.
2. In Judges 18:1-13 what was the tribe of Dan looking for (v1), and how did they approach it (v3-5)? What did they decide on (v7) and why (v7, 9-10)? Do you think what they did was good or bad?
3. From Judges 18:14-31 what did the Danites do (v18-19) and what was their enticement (v19-20)? What did they do to Laish before (v27-28), and after (v28-31)? Evaluate everyone's spiritual condition.



"God is faithful and strong even when we doubt Him."

4. Using Judges 19:1-15 retell the story of the Levite and his concubine (v1-9), and what it says about the Levite. What happened to them when they left (v10-15)?

5. In Judges 19:16-30 how did the men of Gibeah treat their guests (v22-26), and how did the Levite respond (v27-29)? How bad was this event (v30), and what action was called for (v30)? Apply to today.

6. Looking at Judges 20:1-18 what was the response of the rest of Israel to this (v1-2, 8-11)? How did they try to handle it (v12-13), but what was the ultimate resolution (v14)?

7. From Judges 20:19-35 what were the first two results of the civil war (v21, 25), and Israel's reactions (v22-23, 26-28)? What was the third result (v35), and how did Israel accomplish it (v29-34)?

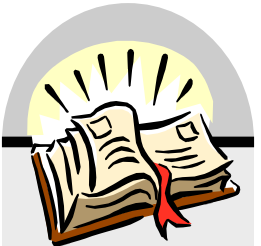
8. Read Judges 20:36-48. What did the other men of Israel do to Gibeah (v36-37), and what was the final result (v48)?

9. According to Judges 21:1-15 what dilemma did Israel face after this battle (v1-3), and how did they deal with it (v3-4, 8-12, 13-15)? How would you evaluate their solution?

10. Using Judges 21:16-23 what else did Israel do to perpetuate the tribe of Benjamin (v19-23)?

11. From Judges 21:24-25 what was the ruling idea of that day (v25)? As you look back over these chapters, identify some of the trouble to which this idea had led. How do we do this today?

12. Looking back over Judges, what is the most important lesson you have learned?



Memory Verse

"The Lord said, 'Go up, for tomorrow I will deliver them into your hand.'"
Judges 20:28