

## **ReGroups 8/4/24**

### **Loose Connection - Judges 1**

The only thing worse than no connection, is a loose one. If something has no power at all, we quickly face reality. However, when there is a loose or a faulty connection, the issues usually take longer to resolve.

There's a temptation to ignore connection issues when things work some of the time. If you've ever had a problem with your car or any device in your home, you've probably talked yourself out of replacing it or seeking repair- because it works *most* of the time, right? Then when we find ourselves stranded because the problem became worse and worse, we wonder why we let things go on so long.

We've all sat in church or an auditorium and heard a sound system make unbearable screeching noises. While sometimes this is just a random glitch, it *can be* from bigger problems within the cables and wiring. When dealing with a larger network of cables, loose connections can be hard to pin down. It's tempting to just *hope* things get better, but the reality is that things usually only get worse.

**Have you ever put off fixing something that had long demanded attention? Why do you suppose we are prone to delay addressing these kinds of problems, even and especially when it comes to things that are not right within us?**

The nation of Israel was forged in the fires the Exodus, witnessing God's delivering power up against Egypt's tireless oppression. From the plagues to the Passover, to the Red Sea and trials at Marah - Israel certainly wasn't coddled into believing. No, the Hebrews faced unprecedented turmoil and uncertainty in order a strong foundation of faith to be built beneath them. Read **Psalm 78:12-16, 51-55** and **discuss** how formative this experience must have been for their faith.

There was nothing loose about Israel's connection to God. Israel should have had a textbook relationship with God, after all that they had seen and all that He continued to do for them. Yet, from the onset they rebelled and tried to wrestle out from under His care; see **Psalm 78:40-42, 56-58**. **Why do you think they were so quick to rebel and wander from God? After all they had seen, how could they forget?**

While God had shown a clear desire and willingness to keep Israel close to Him, generation after generation continually fought against His perfect will. Clearly, this wasn't a condition exclusive to the Hebrews - the entire human race has this same loose connection, a heart that naturally turns away from God. There are no shortage of passages detailing our sinful condition- check out these for a quick summary: **Isaiah 53:6 and Romans 3:9-12, 23**

### ***The Judges Cycle***

**\* SIN -> CONSEQUENCES -> SORROW -> DELIVERANCE -> REST \***

**What stands out about this cycle? What is surprising?**

It's highly likely that we can all personally relate to this. We stumble again and again, which leads to unwelcomed consequences and leaves us broken. This is what sin has done and always will do. We could all share stories of the damage that sin has done in our own lives. We've all watched it leave destruction in its wake. It's obvious that no one ever ends up in a better place after following after our fallen nature.

Yet, this is the way of all humanity. However, because of God the cycle is more than just these three stages. The Spirit of God convicts us of sin and compels us to seek after a better life. We don't always heed His guidance, but we have all felt it. **Describe what it's like to experience God's conviction. How does this reflect God's grace more so than His anger?**

Read **Psalm 51:3-6** and **2 Corinthians 7:9** and **discuss** our sinful natures and the hope of conviction.

### ***His Mercy Endures Forever***

The book of Judges is really a microcosm of human history. On that same note, Israel's behavior and journey in this book reflects one that all of us have been on. The saving grace for Israel is that God observes them in their sorrow and raises up a Deliverer every time. Ultimately each Deliverer, *or Judge*, is a picture of Jesus.

For as many bad things that could be said about the Judges Generation and even humanity in general (see **Genesis 6:5**), the Bible tells story that contrasts our sin with God's grace. God's nature is described all across the Bible, but perhaps no two verses put it better than **Psalm 100:5** and **Timothy 2:13**.

**Describe God's faithfulness in your own words. How humbling is it to know that He is endlessly faithful to us?**

In closing, read **Judges 2:11-19** to get an idea of what the entire book is going to be like. **What about this account relates to your own struggles with sin and experience with God? How has God continually bailed you out, like He did Israel?**

**How might we pattern our days so that we do not turn away from the Lord and find ourselves in the same type of trouble?**