

Small Group Discussion Questions

Series: When We Decide

Message: The Extinguisher

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ENGAGE THE SCRIPTURES

Memory Verse: Judges 2:16-17 NIV

Then the Lord raised up judges, who saved them out of the hands of these raiders. Yet they would not listen to their judges but prostituted themselves to other gods and worshiped them. They quickly turned from the ways of their ancestors, who had been obedient to the Lord's commands.

The goal of these questions is to foster meaningful discussion and to encourage participants to reflect on God's Word and lead to heart transformation. Feel free to modify or expand upon these questions based on the dynamics and needs of your Small Group.

Big Idea: Don't toy with sin. Sin will lure you in and destroy you.

Read Judges 15

1. When Samson's father-in-law gives his wife to another man, he retaliates by burning the Philistines' crops (vv 1-5). How do you typically respond when someone wrongs you? What is the overall testimony of Scripture about how we should respond when we feel betrayed or that someone has sinned against us?
2. After his violent acts, Samson retreats and isolates himself by staying in a cave in the rock of Etam (v 8). Have you ever withdrawn after conflict, pain, or sin? What are healthy ways we can process failure or pain instead of isolating?
3. Samson has not been a good Judge since he has not turned the people back to God nor has he removed the burden of Philistine rule over Israel. Instead he is making excuses to his own people about his behavior (v 11). Have you ever found yourself making excuses for your actions or inaction, similar to Samson? What motivates us to make excuses instead of taking responsibility?



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How can focusing on "what others did to me" prevent us from fulfilling our own callings or responsibilities in our personal, professional or spiritual lives?

4. Though Samson's victory comes through the Spirit of the Lord, he boasts in himself, saying "I" instead of giving credit to God (vv 14–16). In what ways can success or gifting tempt us to forget the source of our strength? What are some practical ways to stay grounded in gratitude and dependence on God? How does a self-focused mindset affect your witness to others? How can humility open doors for others to see God more clearly through your life?
5. Because he was desperately thirsty he cries out to God and recognizes God's role in the victory (v 18). Why do you think it often takes a moment of need or crisis for us to recognize our dependence on God? How might self-sufficiency or comfort keep us from regularly seeking God?

Read Judges 16

6. Samson is continuing to make decisions based on what he wants, not what is prescribed by God (v 1, 4). What practices help you walk in the light instead of being led by impulse or desire? How do the things you fixate on—whether good or not—shed light on what you're truly seeking or hoping to satisfy?
7. Even when it is clear why Delilah was asking for the secret to Samson's strength, he eventually shares it with her (vv 8-21). Sin is persistent and even when we know the consequences of our sin, we will still do it. How does Samson sharing the source of his strength illustrate the powerful pull of persistent temptation and the way sin can wear down our resistance?
8. As a result of Samson's continued engagement in sinful activity, the Lord leaves him, his eyes are gouged out and he becomes a prisoner (vv 20-21). How does sin, especially persistent or unconfessed sin, dull our spiritual senses and blind us to God's presence or absence in our lives? How does this verse reflect the spiritual truth that sin often blinds and binds us?



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