

# Small Group Discussion Questions

Series: When We Decide

Message: Heed God's Barriers

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Date: 07/27/2025



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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:** God provides barriers to keep His people from destructive lies and lust of the flesh.

## Read Judges 13

1. The phrase "the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the Lord" (v 1) is a painful refrain in Judges. What recurring patterns or struggles do you see in your own life? How can recognizing the internal root of sin help us in addressing our own recurring struggles, rather than focusing solely on external circumstances?
2. Part of the Angel of the Lord's declaration is that Samson is to be a Nazarite from the womb (v 5). That is, someone who is set apart. What does it look like today to be "set apart" as a follower of Jesus? Are there any aspects of contemporary culture (e.g., entertainment, social media, consumerism, etc) that might make it particularly challenging to live a "set apart" life today?
3. God's personal involvement in Samson's life before his birth leads Manoah to ask a thoughtful question about purpose and calling (v 12). What we often



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don't see or acknowledge is God's personal involvement in our own lives. How would having greater awareness of God's personal involvement in our lives influence our questions about purpose, calling, and how we live? How can we help one another recognize and respond to God's calling rather than defaulting to cultural expectations or personal comfort?

4. Instead of an expression of doubt, Manoah seems convinced that what the "Angel" has said will happen (v 12). Similarly, passages like James 1:6-8 emphasize the importance of having a firm conviction. What gives you steadfastness in your faith? What wisdom would you provide to those who may struggle in this area?
5. It is clear that the Angel of the Lord is a manifestation of God (v 22). What does this reveal about God and His involvement in our lives and His overarching story of redemption? Do you ever struggle to see God at work in your life? What are some modern examples of how God is still active in our world today?

## Read Judges 14

6. Despite knowing God's boundaries, Samson is driven by what looks good to him (v 2). What "looks good" to us is not always what is good for us. What are some contemporary examples of things that "look good" or "feel right" in our culture but are contrary to God's design or principles for our lives? When are you most tempted to prioritize what "feels right" over what is right? How can we lean on our spiritual discernment and the Holy Spirit to help us choose what is right, even when it is not appealing in the moment?
7. His parents caution Samson against marrying a Philistine, but he insists on getting what he wants (v 3). When you are set on something, do you remain open to thoughtfully considering counsel that opposes your direction? What are the common reasons we tend to shut down or resist advice that challenges our desires or plans? Who are the "godly voices" or "people who know truth" in your life? How intentionally do you seek their input, especially when making significant decisions?



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8. Rather than repenting of his sin when breaking the Nazarite vow, Samson laughs about his sin and turns it into a riddle (vv 12-14). Samson is treating sin lightly. How have you seen people (including yourself) downplay sin or treat it humorously? Why is sin a big deal? Why do you think we minimize the seriousness of sin? What would it look like to take sin more seriously, not in fear or shame, but in holy reverence?



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