

# Small Group Discussion Questions

Series: When We Decide

Speaker: Jay Haugh

Message: Shadow of the One to Come

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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:** There's deliverance and life to both Jew and Gentile when you trust Jesus, our redeemer and sovereign.

## Read Judges 11

1. Jephthah, the son of a prostitute, is driven away from his family lands by his half-brothers (vv 1-2). Have you ever been judged or rejected because of your background or past? How does it impact you to know God does not define us by where we come from, but by how we walk with Him?
2. Since Jephthah is a mighty warrior, they ask for his leadership in defeating the Ammonites (vv 5-11). How do you handle situations where people who've hurt you come back asking for your help? What factors influenced your decision to help or not to help (e.g., forgiveness, a sense of duty, self-preservation, continued bitterness, desire for reconciliation)? What are the potential benefits or drawbacks of helping someone who has hurt you? How do we balance grace and personal well-being in such complex relationships?



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3. Jephthah sends a diplomatic message before engaging in war (v 12–27). How do you tend to respond to conflict (do you escalate or seek peace first)? How can God be honored in the way we handle confrontation?
4. Despite Jephthah's well-reasoned argument, the king of Ammon refuses to listen (v 28). What does this suggest about the nature of the conflict and the Ammonites' intentions? When discussion and dialogue seem to be hitting a wall, what is your response? Does knowing that God will ultimately settle all wrongs give you any peace in the present?
5. The Israelite culture at the time was predominantly agrarian and even non-farmers typically lived in close proximity to livestock. Homes often had lower-level spaces or courtyards where animals were kept, particularly at night. It would not have been unusual for an animal, such as a goat, sheep, or even a calf, to come out to meet someone returning home. While Jephthah's vow led to deep personal grief (v 35), he remained steadfast in its fulfillment. Have you ever said, "Lord, if you will \_\_\_\_\_, I will \_\_\_\_\_" or something like that? What motivated you to do that? How did it turn out?
6. Despite the tragic nature of the vow, Jephthah's daughter responds with remarkable submission and dignity (v 36). What does her response reveal about her character, her understanding of her father's vow, and perhaps her faith?

## Read Judges 12

7. The Ephraimites accused Jephthah of excluding them from the battle, even though he did call on them and they didn't respond (vv 1-2). What role does pride or jealousy often play in our conflicts with others? Have you ever felt overlooked or undervalued? How did you handle it?
8. Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon are briefly mentioned as judges who led Israel, yet their stories are mostly unknown (vv 8-15). What do these short accounts tell us about God using ordinary or uncelebrated people for His purposes? Are you comfortable serving in obscurity or without recognition? Why or why not? How can we better celebrate the faithfulness of those who serve quietly?



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