

Small Group Discussion Questions

Series: When We Decide

Speaker: Chad Johnson

Message: A Crown Without a Calling

Date: 07/13/2025



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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: Seek God's calling, not a crown.

Read Judges 8

1. How does Gideon's story show the slow drift from reliance on God to reliance on self? What are some modern ways Christians might start with humble dependence on God but end up pursuing personal agendas? When have you had an "I can do it...without God" approach?
2. When Gideon's demands for provisions are not met, he lashes out and promises retribution (vv 5-9). What do Gideon's reactions reveal about his heart at this point? When have you been tempted to retaliate against others for not supporting you? How can we respond to opposition in a way that reflects Christ?
3. Gideon says, "The Lord will rule over you," but his actions contradict that statement. He takes tribute, lives luxuriously, and names his son "Abimelech," meaning "my father is king" (vv 22-23). Where are you tempted to say the right thing outwardly but live differently inwardly? How can we align our



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hearts with our words in everyday life?

4. Though God used Gideon powerfully to deliver Israel, he did not finish well. After his victory, Gideon created an unauthorized ephod that became a snare that led Israel into idolatry (v 27). Have you ever seen someone you respected in the faith fall into pride, compromise, or sin? How did that impact you? In what ways do you find yourself tempted to rely on past victories rather than present obedience?

Read Judges 9

5. Rather than being called by God, Abimelech schemes to gain control for himself (vv 1-6). Have you ever experienced or witnessed someone gaining influence through manipulation or self-promotion? What were the results? How can we discern whether we are pursuing something from a place of calling or ambition?
6. The trees go looking for something they shouldn't be looking for and end up with the worst choice (vv 7-15). Why do you think the trees (representing the people) were so eager to appoint a king, even when it wasn't God's plan? How can impatience or fear drive us to settle for poor substitutes rather than waiting on God's best? What are some modern-day "brambles" we might be tempted to crown (things that seem promising but ultimately harm us)?
7. Jotham shares a warning with the people of Shechem then flees (vv 16-21). Why is it sometimes hard to speak truth when you know it won't be received well? Fleeing after sharing truth is not a strategy for today. How can we engage people with truth knowing it will likely require endurance? Who do you turn to for encouragement and accountability when you feel isolated?
8. No one in Judges 9 seeks the Lord. The people and leaders act entirely based on ambition, fear, or pragmatism. Never prayer. What does it reveal about a person or a community when they stop seeking God's direction? In what ways do you see our culture mirroring the spiritual neglect shown in this chapter, and how should we respond?



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