

Men Without Chests

Day 1: The Danger of Idolatry

Reading: Exodus 20:1-6, Judges 17:1-6

Devotional: In today's reading, we see the stark contrast between God's commandment against idolatry and the actions of Micah and his mother. It's easy to judge their blatant disregard for God's law, but we must examine our own hearts. What "idols" have we set up in our lives? These may not be physical statues, but could be anything we prioritize above God - career, relationships, possessions, or even our own desires.

Reflect on areas where you might be compromising your faith or creating a "customized" version of God that fits your preferences. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any idols in your life and pray for the strength to put God first in all things.

Day 2: True Faith vs. False Religion

Reading: James 1:22-27, Judges 17:7-13

Devotional: The story of Micah and the Levite illustrates a dangerous form of religiosity - one that seeks to control God rather than submit to Him. Micah believed having a Levite as his personal priest would guarantee God's blessing. How often do we fall into similar thinking, believing our religious activities will manipulate God into giving us what we want?

James reminds us that true religion is about living out our faith through obedience and compassion. Today, examine your motivations in worship and service. Are you seeking to please God or to get something from Him? Ask God to purify your heart and help you cultivate a faith that surrenders fully to His will.

Day 3: The Peril of Self-Centered Leadership

Reading: 1 Peter 5:1-4, Judges 18:11-20

Devotional: The Levite in our story exemplifies self-serving leadership, easily swayed by the promise of greater status and influence. In contrast, Peter calls spiritual leaders to shepherd God's flock with selfless devotion, following the example of Christ.

Whether or not you hold an official leadership position, we all influence others in some capacity. Reflect on how you use your influence. Are you motivated by personal gain or by a genuine desire to serve others and glorify God? Pray for a humble heart that seeks to lift others up rather than promote yourself.

Day 4: God's Sovereignty in Dark Times

Reading: Romans 8:28-39, Judges 18:27-31

Devotional: The closing of Judges 18 paints a bleak picture - idolatry has spread, and even Moses' descendants have turned from true worship. Yet, as we learned, God was still working behind the scenes, preparing to raise up King David and ultimately bring about the Messiah.

When the world seems dark and God feels distant, remember that He is always at work, even if we can't see it. Romans 8 assures us that nothing can separate us from God's love, and He works all things for the good of those who love Him. In what areas of your life do you need to trust God's sovereign plan? Bring these concerns to Him in prayer, reaffirming your faith in His goodness and wisdom.

Day 5: The Need for the True King

Reading: John 18:33-37, Judges 21:25

Devotional: The book of Judges ends with the sobering refrain, "In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes." This sets the stage for Israel's desire for a king, ultimately pointing to humanity's need for a perfect ruler - Jesus Christ.

When Pilate questioned Jesus about His kingship, Jesus affirmed that His kingdom is not of this world. As followers of Christ, we pledge allegiance to a King whose rule transcends earthly powers. How does acknowledging Jesus as your King impact your daily decisions and priorities? Spend time in prayer, surrendering every area of your life to Christ's lordship and asking for His guidance in living as a citizen of His kingdom.