



Faith Community Church
Jephthah's Vow
(Judges, Part 6)

Faith Group Questions
& Discussion Guide



Host/Facilitator Note: This study wrestles with a shocking narrative. The goal is to move past Jephthah's rash decision to examine our own hearts and words.

Opening Prayer: Ask God to help us guard our tongues and walk in faithfulness.

Icebreaker: How fast do "Jeopardy" contestants have to answer? Could you compete?

Key Points

1. The Cycle of Grace and God's Heart (Judges 10). After 45 years of peace, Israel defaults right back into idolatry, consequences, oppression, and repentance. Even though their pain was entirely self-inflicted, God's motivation to rescue them was pure compassion, not their perfect behavior. When we create our own mess, God is not standing over us saying "I told you so." His mercies remain new every morning.
2. An Unlikely Hero's Identity (Judges 11:1-3) Jephthah had a rough lineage and family life. But God called him a "mighty warrior." We don't get to choose our background or family. But in Christ, it doesn't matter where you come from—but where you're going.
3. Transactional Mindset (Judges 11:29-31) The Spirit of the Lord was already upon Jephthah (v. 29). But Jephthah tried to strike an "if/then" deal with God. We sometimes treat God like a business partner rather than Lord of our lives. God desires obedience, not negotiations.
4. Words Matter to God (Judges 11:34-40) Jephthah's rash vow backfired horribly. Believers are called to let their "Yes be Yes" and "No be No." However, two wrongs don't make a right. If we make a rash promise that is unbiblical, unethical, or illegal, the remedy is immediate repentance and humility—not doubling down on the sin.

Discussion Questions

1. Our Misery. In Judges 10:16, we see that God's heart was grieved by Israel's self-inflicted misery. When you experience the painful consequences of your own poor choices, is your natural reaction to run to God or to hide from Him? Why? (Psalm 51)

2. Overcoming the Past: Jephthah was defined by his family background and the rejection of his brothers, yet God used him anyway. How have you seen God use someone's painful past or dysfunctional upbringing to display His power? (Luke 19:1-10)
3. Resting in the Spirit: The Spirit of the Lord was already on Jephthah before he made his vow, so he already had what he needed. Why do you think we struggle so much to trust that God has already equipped us for the battles we are facing? (Eph 1:3-6, 2:10)
4. Bargaining: What does a "conditional deal" with God look like in your life? Have you ever tried to negotiate an "if/then" contract with God during a crisis? (1 Sam 15:22)
5. The Value of Integrity: Psalm 15 says God draws into His presence those who keep their promises "even when it hurts." Why has our culture become so casual about breaking commitments, and what does it cost our witness when Christians do so?
6. The Ultimate Example: Our God is a God who always keeps His word perfectly. How does reflecting on God's absolute faithfulness help you become a more reliable person to the people in your life? (Psalm 145)

Practical Applications

1. Practice the "Pause" Prior to Promising: This week, fight the urge of impulsive decision-making. If you feel external pressure to say "yes," practice using the phrases: "Let me think about that," or "Let me pray about that before I give you an answer." Give yourself at least 24 hours to ensure your words are few, thoughtful, and intentional.
2. Audit an Inconvenient Commitment: Identify one promise, boundary, or commitment you have made that has recently become inconvenient, exhausting, or costly. Intentionally choose to fulfill it with a cheerful heart this week.
3. Surrender Your "If/Then" Prayers: Spend time in prayer identifying any area where you are holding back obedience until God performs a specific action. Write down any conditional terms you've placed on God (e.g., "I'll surrender this area once You fix my circumstances"). Intentionally cross out the "If" and replace it with a prayer of simple, unconditional obedience.

Closing Prayer: Father, we ask for help being slow to speak, and being faithful to our promises. Help us to be more like You in wisdom and faithfulness. In Jesus' name.