

Small Group Questions

1. What pattern do we see repeated again and again in Israel throughout the book of Judges? Why do you think people (including us) tend to return to old sins even after God delivers us?
2. Jephthah was an outcast who became Israel's leader out of desperation. What does his story show us about Israel's spiritual condition at this point in history?
3. The people wanted Jephthah to save them rather than seeking God. What are some "modern Jephthahs" we turn to when we want quick relief instead of true repentance?
4. Why do you think Jephthah made such a rash vow to God? How do we sometimes try to "bargain" with God—promising things to earn His favor or blessing?
5. What's the difference between trying to please God through religious effort and walking in a real relationship with Him? How can we drift into "religion without relationship"?
6. Jephthah treated God like a pagan deity who demanded human sacrifice. What does this reveal about his understanding of God's grace and nature?
7. What does Jephthah's vow teach us about the danger of zeal without knowledge or worship without truth? (Read Micah 6:6–8 and Romans 10:2.)
8. Compare Jephthah's sacrifice to Abraham's in Genesis 22. What key difference reveals the heart of God and points us to the gospel?
9. How does Jesus' sacrifice on the cross reverse the tragedy of Jephthah's story? What does His death and resurrection tell us about the kind of God we serve?
10. What are some ways you've tried to earn God's favor or prove your worth? How would it change your daily walk if you truly rested in the finished work of Christ?