

Applying It In My LifeGroup time - 25 minutes

1. In the continual cycle that occurred in the time of the Judges, God's people were caught up in the idolatry of those who lived in the land before Israel conquered it. In what ways do Christians today embrace the sin, practices and culture of our day? What are the strongest temptations you face? What do you need to do today to follow through on your desire to follow God in obedience?
2. One of the recurring themes of Judges is that a new generation rose up who did not know God and did not know the miracles He had done for His people in the past. Why is it important for each of us to pass on our faith to the next generation? What practical things can we do in our homes and in the church to help the next generation to know God and remember what He has done in the past?
3. Why do we continually repeat the same sin patterns even when we know the outcome will not be good? Where would you be today if God did not discipline you to wake you up to the reality of sin and drive you back to Him in repentance? In what ways have you seen God freely offer deliverance and salvation to you?

Prayer TimeGroup time - 15 minutes

Praise God that when His people repent and cry out for help, He responds with deliverance and salvation. Thank God that He sent Jesus to provide salvation for all those who turn to Him. Confess where you struggle with sin, temptation and idolatry. Tell God you are ready to follow Him and seek to do His will, even when you feel inadequate for the task.

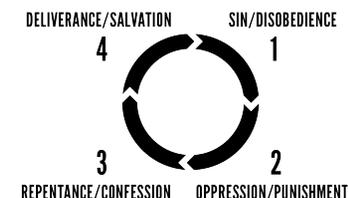
Finish your prayer time by praying for the needs of those in your *Growth Group*. Take a few minutes to share prayer requests. Ask someone in the group to record your prayers so you can see in future weeks where God is answering your prayers. Share where God has answered any previous prayer requests.

THE STORY Flawed People, Gracious God

A Pattern of Sin

Judges 1-2

- Israel REPEATEDLY went through a fourfold pattern of sin.



- The Israelites FAILED to drive out the Canaanites and this led to the sin of idolatry.
- The Israelites did not TEACH their children about God and His great acts of deliverance.

Deborah – A Respected Woman

Judges 4-5

- God DELIVERED Israel from their oppressors through the most unlikely of people.

Gideon – An Uncertain Leader

Judges 6-8

- Gideon exchanged his WEAKNESS for God's strength.

Samson – A Flawed Character

Judges 13-16

- Samson was a man of great potential who lacked STABILITY of character.
- Out of our broken heart of repentance, God will DELIVER us.

GROWTH GROUP HOMEWORK

Week of November 4 - 10, 2013

Getting Started.....Group time - 15 minutes

1. Have you ever been rescued from a dangerous or difficult situation? What happened? Were there any warning signs leading up to this situation? Has this lesson stayed with you or was it quickly forgotten?

FOR GROWTH GROUP TIME

Getting Into God's WordGroup time - 35 minutes

Read *The Story*, Chapter 8 (In preparation to answer questions)

1. Read Judges 2:10-16. What examples do you see in this chapter of the Israelites fourfold pattern of sin? (Sin, Oppression, Repentance, Deliverance) What reasons can you give for why the Israelites kept repeating this downward cycle of sin? Where do you see God's grace in this midst of this tragic pattern of sin amongst His people?

2. Throughout *The Story*, we discover that God uses surprising people to accomplish His will. As you read about Deborah, Gideon and Samson in this chapter, how is each of them a surprising choice to be the leader of God's people? What do we learn from each of their stories?

3. Read Judges 6:11-16. Contrast how God saw Gideon with how Gideon saw himself? How is Gideon an example of how God can take someone who is weak and make Him strong? How does Gideon's faith change over the course of his time as judge in Israel?



4. In what ways was Samson a faithful man of God? In what ways was he not faithful? What was Samson's true weakness? How could Samson have dealt with his weaknesses so that they did not become the source of his downfall?
5. Read 1 John 1:5-9. The pattern of sin we see so clearly in the nation of Israel is repeated in our lives. What do we learn from this passage about our personal pattern of sin and denial? How has God made provision for us to be cleansed from whatever sin would otherwise damage our fellowship with Him or each other?