

Series Title: “Judges: Will You Choose to Walk with God?”

Message Title: This is a Test

Message Text: Judges 3

The prophet Hosea summarizes Israel’s story in the land of promise as recorded in Judges with these words: “When I (God) fed them, they were satisfied, they became proud; then they forgot me” (Hosea 13:6). This sets up the cycle that repeats throughout the book, a reminder of mankind’s (our) sinful nature and God’s grace.

I. The DEPARTURE from God.

- A. The FREEDOM God allows, Judges 2:20-3:4.
--“This is a test”
- B. The TEST RESULTS, Judges 1-3.
- C. The principle behind INCREASING departure, Judges 2:19.
--Disobedience leads to greater DISOBEDIENCE,
Judges 1:21-2:3; 2:19; 3:5-7.

II. The DISTRESS of godless life, Judges 2:15-18; 3:8; 12-14.

- A. Freedom from God leads to OPPRESSIVE BONDAGE, 2:17-18; 3:8; 12-14.
- B. Those in bondage CRY OUT, 2:18; 3:9; 3:15.

III. The DELIVERANCE from the God of grace.

- A. Deliverance is initiated through LEADERSHIP, 2:16; 3:9; 3:15; 3:31.
- B. Deliverance is carried out through COOPERATION, 3:10; 26-30; 31.
- C. Deliverance is TEMPORARY, 3:12-14 (2:17-19).
--True salvation requires a changed heart!



Parents, consider carefully the principle implied in Judges 2:19. Your “little” departure from God or His righteous ways will most likely be expanded and exaggerated in the lives of your children. Use the example of Judges 1-3 to talk to your children about the blessing God intended for His obedient children (you might refer back to Deuteronomy 6), and their loss of that blessing

through disobedience. Emphasize that God gives each of us that freedom to choose our path, and remind them of Joshua’s statement of commitment in Joshua 24:14-15, *and* carefully consider the choices you are making, because your kids *are* learning!

For Further Study, Thought, and Discussion:

1. There are actually two purposes God intended in allowing the unrighteous nations to remain in the land, co-mingling with His people. One was to test His people regarding obedience, the other was to train them to do battle (2:20-3:4).
 - How might the presence of the unrighteous in our present culture have similar purposes?
 - Do you think the Church (the larger body of professing believers in general) is doing well in obedience or doing battle against unrighteousness?
 - As a local church, what are some specific ways we can and should be encouraging one another in these areas?
2. It has been said that a leader isn’t a leader if there are no followers.
 - Based on Judges 2:16-17, do you think that is true?
 - What makes a leader even when there are no followers?
 - Are you a leader in certain contexts? Are there other contexts or places where God is calling you to lead?
 - Are you a follower? What are the requirements of a good follower?
3. List some of the positive qualities of the three judges who act in Judges 3. Are there ways you can grow stronger in these positive qualities? Ways we can encourage one another in these? Is there anyone you might encourage by affirming that you see these good qualities in them? *Why don’t you do that?*

NEXT WEEK: “When Leaders Lead...” Judges 4-5

