

This calendar is meant to help you set time aside with Jesus. Decide on where you'll meet Him, and choose a time when you won't fall asleep or be distracted. You can tear out this page and keep it in your Bible. Remember James 4:8, "Come close to God, and God will come close to you."

AUGUST



By Justin & Courtney Rose

Age 30 & 28 | Mayfair Community Church | Metropolitan Division



Sometimes God asks us to do specific things in our lives. Maybe it's taking a different job, befriending someone new, weeding out toxic people, or working on our character. It's up to us to choose how we'll respond by acting in obedience or following our own desires. What's God asking of you? What tasks are you avoiding? **1**

In Judges, the Israelites are supposed to clear Canaan of all people who don't worship God. They start but fail to complete the task, which leads to problems including unfaithfulness. What areas of your life are not clear of sin? What part of your life needs to be readdressed or refocused so that you're able to get back on track with God? **2**

Leaders have big impacts on our lives. Specifically, spiritual leaders help set the tone for how we interact with God and other people. Joshua was a well-respected leader to the Israelites, but when he died everything fell apart. Think of 5 leaders in your life and how they affect your life spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, and physically. **3**

Watch *The Bible Project's* video on Judges by searching "Read Scripture: Judges" on YouTube. Note how the book starts in one place, but spirals out of control, ultimately ending in destruction. **4**

There is an old saying that "Christianity is one generation away from extinction." **Judges 2:10** speaks to this sad reality. In what ways are you learning from the generations before you? In what ways are you teaching the generation of people younger than yourself? **5**

Read **Judges 3:7-11**, which is about the Judge Othniel. Othniel was God's answer to the people crying out for help after their unfaithfulness had led them to oppression. The goal of Othniel's leadership was to bring peace to the land. Pray that the leaders in your life have the goal of bringing peace to the world. **6**

Read **Judges 3:12-30** about the Judge Ehud. The hallmark of Ehud's leadership is that God could use someone unlikely (someone left-handed) with gifts that are often overlooked to accomplish what needed to be done. Examine yourself. What are some unique attributes you have that God could use to accomplish the goals of the Kingdom? **7**

Deborah was seen as an unlikely judge because she was a woman. In a time when women were overlooked or not held as authoritative as a man, she breaks stereotypes with her prophetic faithfulness. Pray for more female leaders in structures where it is unlikely to see women. Pray for the female leaders in your life that they'd be encouraged. **8**

Read the story of Deborah and Jael (**Judges 4-5**). List all the ways they break the mold for how women are "supposed" to act in a culture dominated by men. Spend some time in prayer thanking God for women who break the mold to be faithful to the Kingdom. Ask God to help you to be a mold breaker in terms of obedience and vision. **9**

Throughout the book of Judges, we see the faithfulness of God to work through the lives and service of many flawed people. In their moments of faithfulness, God is truly glorified and the people of Israel are rescued time and time again. Think about some instances in which the faithfulness of God has been seen through your faithfulness to Him. Why does God desire our faithfulness? **10**

In The Salvation Army we often like to say, "God does not call the equipped, He equips the called." Gideon is a character who was in no way equipped to do the things God asked him to do. Read **Judges 6:11-27** and note the ways Gideon was unequipped to be a Judge. **11**

Just because God is able to call and equip anyone does not mean that we don't need to work on equipping ourselves to be ready to do the work of the Kingdom. Commit to memory the Beatitudes (**Matthew 5:2-12**) so that you are prepared to identify the Kingdom of God at work in the world. **12**

Gideon's name can be translated as "cut down." This is fitting because he is supposed to "cut down" the idols of Baal and Asherah throughout the land. Later, he is named Jerub-Baal, meaning, "one who contends with Baal." What does your name mean? How can you live into the meaning of your name, or redeem the meaning of your name for the sake of the Kingdom? **13**

Read **Judges 8:22-28**. Gideon was an effective leader of Israel for a time, but eventually made grave mistakes. He began cutting down idols, but in the end, made an idol that all of Israel worshipped instead of God. Pray for your leaders, that they would remain focused on God. Ask God to help them get rid of any idols that might get in the way of worshipping God. **14**

Judges 11 introduces us to a leader who probably shouldn't have been in power. At this point in Israel's downward spiral there is no one fit to be Judge. The great Judges like Othniel, Ehud, and Deborah who had great character and knew God are gone. Read **Judges 11:1-28** and note how different Jephthah's character and leadership are in comparison to those who came before him. **15**



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Judges 11:30 shows the leader of the Israelites, Jephthah, making a rash vow that was unnecessary, ungodly, and led to great sin: child sacrifice. Pray that you'd become a leader in your community who knows God, Scripture, and avoids sinful decisions due to ignorance of what God asks of His people. **16**

During Samson's leadership, the Philistines are oppressing the Israelites. Instead of saving his people and separating himself from those who are hurting the Israelites, Samson marries a Philistine woman. A life of holiness often means cutting ourselves off from sinful, attractive things. Pray that you would remain separate from sin rather than "marrying" yourself to it. **19**

Samson ends his life with a final act of attempting to be faithful to God. He gives a "death bed prayer," asking for strength to kill the Philistines who gouged out his eyes. At the end of Samson's life he was considered a faithful servant of God, but he lived a life of foolishness and destruction. What destructive things do you participate in? How can you avoid a life of foolishness? **22**

The Judges were national, political figures and were the leaders of the entire nation. As Christians, it's important that we continuously pray for our politicians and national leadership. Pray for our government officials that they would love justice, seek mercy, and walk humbly before God. **25**

Sin begets sin. By the end of the book of Judges, the Israelites are so enraged at the injustice the Benjaminites caused that the nation goes up against the entire tribe of Benjamin. Some scholars call the war in chapter 20 a "genocide." Check out genocidewatch.net/alerts-2/new-alerts/ and pray for countries and victims of genocide. **28**

There are Judges who have detailed stories, and some we don't know much about. Shamgar, Tola, Jair, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon only have a couple verses and might be overlooked. However, God uses all leaders in powerful ways. Identify lesser-known leaders in your communities, and thank them for their leadership and service. **17**

Judges 16 gives the famous story of Samson and the prostitute Delilah. These two characters are toxic for one another. Samson's name means, "sunshine," while Delilah's name means, "of the night." Pray for yourself that as a child of God—a child of light—you would not be drawn into temptation or participate in anything "of the night." **20**

Throughout Scripture, up to the book of Judges, God had established that there is order and a right and proper way to do things. Specifically, God gives a lot of instructions on the priesthood and worship. **Judges 17** shows the breakdown of the priesthood and the moral fiber of the entire nation. Pray that you would stand firm on the Scripture and that you would have a passion to study God's Word. **23**

Judges 19 should sound familiar if you've read the book of Genesis. Here, the story mimics the story of Sodom and Gomorroah. Read **Genesis 19:1-22** to see the similarities. What do you think the author of Judges is trying to say about the state of Israel through these similarities? **26**

Women and children are often the greatest victims of injustice. Read **Judges 21**. Notice the young women who were kidnapped and forced to become the wives of the Benjaminites. Pray today for child brides and victims of human trafficking. Pray for newly returned kidnapping victims of Boko Haram, and for those who are still missing. **29**

Samson is a character who is often mistakenly celebrated. Scripture sets up Samson to be an important and prophetic figure, yet Samson fails to live up to what he is called to do. Read **Judges 13:1-25** and note the things God specifically tells Samson's parents that he is not to do. **18**

Samson's downfall comes from trusting someone he shouldn't after several warning signs. Read **Judges 16** to get the full story. Spend some time in reflection today thinking about relationships or situations where you've seen several "warning signs" of foolishness. Ask God for the strength to walk away and move forward in Wisdom. **21**

Read **Judges 19**. While it is a horrifying story of rape, abuse, and injustice, it plays an important role in the broader story of Judges. Pray that as Christians we would never overlook the injustice of rape or abuse. Pray for our nation that rape and assault victims would receive swift justice and healing. Pray for the prevention of these actions. **24**

Judges 20 shows the Israelites' outrage over what happened in the tribe of Benjamin. They say, "Tell us, how did this evil happen?" The irony is that the Israelites have been slowly becoming a morally corrupt nation with each Judge. Pray that our Church and country would not suddenly ask, "How did this evil happen?," but that our quest for holiness would be so vigilant that we constantly address the sin in our lives. **27**

Check out an image of the book of Judges by artist Joseph Novak: www.minumbible.com/old-testament.html. Draw your own representation of how you view the book of Judges. **30**

We've reflected on both good and bad leadership throughout the book of Judges. What leadership role is God calling you to? Which leaders is He calling you to pray for and/or support? **31**