

{un}faithful - 7
Week of March 19, 2017
Bay Park Life Groups –Participant’s Guide

When we first started the Judges study we talked about how this book can sometimes read like the script to a Hollywood movie with themes of sex, deception, violence, and the supernatural. The story of Samson, who is arguably the most recognized judge of all, sets us up to see Israel at an all-time low. At initial glance it feels like we’re being set up for the greatest deliverance the Israelites have ever seen, a real chance to become the great nation they used to be. Instead, Tim Keller writes, “we get deep insight into the most flawed character in the book of Judges: a violent, impulsive, sexually addicted, emotionally immature, and selfish man. What we will discover that is even more bizarre, is how the Spirit uses those deep character flaws to fulfill the cycle.”

Read Judges 13:1-25

1. The infamous Judges cycle begins: Israel does evil, then they’re handed over. What should happen next but doesn’t? What does this tell us about Israel’s spiritual state at this time?

Read Judges 14:1-16:3

2. We’re told three times that Samson enjoyed Spirit-given strength (14:6, 14:19, 15:14-15). What does he use that strength for each time?
3. We continue to see the Spirit helping Samson but why don’t we see any growth in holiness? How can he be so empowered by the Spirit and yet show no patience, humility, or self-control?
 - a. Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-7 and 13:1-3. What does Paul say here that the Spirit gives? What do they need to be accompanied by to stop them from being useless?
 - b. Read Galatians 5:19-25. What does Paul say here that the Spirit gives? Which work of the Spirit does Samson have? Which doesn’t he have? Which is the sign of true spiritual growth? What happens if we forget this?

Read Judges 16:4-31

4. How do we see both Samson’s priorities and his weaknesses in this section? In verses 19-20, what was the key to Samson’s strength?

At this point in the story, it’s fairly clear that the Israelites have allowed their beliefs and actions to reflect the surrounding culture, rather than what God had intended for them. We could draw a parallel between the Israelites then and the modern church today.

5. Why is the church adopting the values and beliefs of the world more dangerous than the world oppressing and persecuting the church? Do you see this happening in our culture?
6. How do you feel the pressure to fit in with the surrounding culture in your own life?