

# Foundations Devotional

• FOR THE WEEK OF NOV 1 - NOV 7 •

## MONDAY // JUDGES 6-7

After 40 years of peace, the Israelites again fell into idol worship, and God allowed them to suffer oppression for seven years. When they cried out for help, God called a young farmer named Gideon to deliver them. The first thing revealed about Gideon was his fear, something that would plague him throughout his leadership. In fear, Gideon requested two signs of assurance that he truly was speaking with God, which God supplied. The great test of Gideon's leadership came when God called him into battle against the Midianites, then reduced the army to just a few hundred men. As God had done in the battle of Jericho, He reminded the people that His presence was all they needed. We do not need signs from God to know that He continues to faithfully deliver His people from sin. God made His role as Deliverer clear when He sent His own Son to the cross to deliver His people from sin and death once and for all.

## TUESDAY // JUDGES 13-14

Another spiritual regression by the Israelites brought yet another judge onto the scene—Samson. To set Samson apart for God's work, he was bound by the Nazirite vow even before his birth, which meant he couldn't cut his hair, touch a corpse or carcass of a dead animal, or consume alcohol. Furthermore, the Spirit of God gave Samson extraordinary strength. Unfortunately, as chapter 14 reveals, Samson failed to remember and keep God's commands; instead, he gave in to the passions and lusts of the world and married a Philistine woman, something specifically outlawed by God. Early on, we see hints that pride and self-indulgence would be Samson's downfalls. Samson's story reminds us that humility is one of the most important virtues in the kingdom of God. With a healthy, balanced view of ourselves in relation to God, we put ourselves in a position to be used by God and to reflect His humility and love to the world.

## WEDNESDAY // JUDGES 15-16

During a time of separation from his wife, Samson discovered that her father had given her in marriage to another man. Exacting revenge, Samson killed 1,000 Philistine men with the jawbone of a donkey. Later, Samson fell in love with a woman named Delilah whom Philistine leaders bribed to uncover the secret of Samson's strength so they could capture, humiliate, and kill him. When Delilah shaved off Samson's braids, the Spirit left him and he lost the true source of his strength—God Himself. Samson was then captured and blinded by the Philistines. Still hoping to conquer the Philistines, Samson prayed to the Lord for strength, and his prayer was answered. While God was dishonored by Samson's sinful behavior, God nevertheless honored the calling He had given Samson. God is always faithful to the calling and gifts with which He equips us to serve Him. He responds faithfully to our faith, however weak and confused we may be: "If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself" (2 Tim. 2:13).

## THURSDAY // RUTH 1-2

During the time of the judges, a severe famine broke out in Israel, so an Israelite man named Elimelech moved with his wife, Naomi, and two sons from Bethlehem in Judah to the land of Moab. While there, Elimelech died, both sons married Moabite women, and then both sons also died. Naomi decided to return to her home in Judah, and her daughter-in-law Ruth chose to go with her, a choice that revealed her love, her loyalty, and her undying commitment to Naomi. Ruth even went so far as to pledge allegiance to Naomi's God. Once in Bethlehem, Ruth took the initiative to help provide for Naomi by gleaning in the nearby grain fields. In the process, Ruth was noticed and befriended by a man named Boaz, one of Naomi's relatives who provided the two widows with grain and protection in a generous display of kindness. The story of Ruth is the story of God's providential love on display—a love that extends to all people who have faith in Him.

## FRIDAY // RUTH 3-4

Boaz's commitment to Ruth and Naomi unfolds in Ruth 3-4. With Naomi's guidance, Ruth approached Boaz and asked him to be her family redeemer—a relative who took on the responsibility of caring for a woman after her husband died. Without a redeemer, the widow would be left destitute in a society that did not make it easy on widows to prosper. In response to Ruth's request, Boaz followed the process for becoming her redeemer, and the two eventually married. By giving Ruth a husband and a son, the Lord graciously redeemed Ruth's seemingly hopeless situation. The story of Ruth and Boaz reminds us of the gospel, when Jesus Christ came to earth to be our Redeemer. We were born into the hopelessness of sin, but through the death and resurrection of Jesus, God redeems us, He buys us back into His family, and He secures our eternal future with Him.

## WEEKEND // FINISH UP ANY YOU DIDN'T DO