



THE DANGER OF **COMPROMISE**

One Step Away
From Chaos

Dr. Rob Godard

In my life there have always been those around me who have pushed me to follow God, and called me to impact without compromise. I have appreciated each elders board I have had the privilege of serving with, and at each stage God has blessed me with many who have led me to follow Him. Here are four that I am deeply thankful for who can serve as a small representation of so many who have poured into my life.

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Lee Wiebe. Ministry is not always easy, and the elders at Cloverdale have consistently supported and encouraged us to not compromise or give up. Through valleys and peaks your constant desire is God's best, and your challenge was always to do what God would want, regardless of outside pressures from ministry and people. Thank you, to you and Donna for your challenges and calling us to, "stand firm, let nothing move us, and always give ourselves fully to the work of God". We praise God for all we have served with at Cloverdale Baptist Church, and, in our world of compromise, are so thankful for your call to stand firm and to love.

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I love Jesus' church and am honored to serve her!

Introduction to Judges

There is one book in the Bible that displays the dangers of the culture invading the church better than any other. It is the book of Judges.

The book begins with so much hope, a nation who had followed Moses out of Egypt, Joshua into the promised land, now inquiring of the LORD for their future. A generation which had seen so many die (all but two) because of disobedience, now had arrived where God had promised He would take them. This hope is very quickly lost as the cycle of the book is introduced to us, (2:11-23; 3:7-12) — a cycle that follows a fairly consistent pattern throughout the book:

1. Relationship with God good: Focus Of Life
2. Forsake God: Invite other gods in
3. God responds by bringing/allowing chaos
4. People cry out for help (usually includes repentance)
5. God raises a Judge to save them, and bring them back to Himself
6. Restored peace with God and freedom

This sad cycle ends with the people of Israel literally being like Sodom and Gomorrah (same Hebrew phraseology), they have, through constant compromise, become like the worst of those around them. Why? The book answers this beautifully with the last words it gives, *“In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”*

Israel rejected God as KING, and in that proclaimed self-rule, and through self-rule landed in chaos. This is a lesson we desperately need to hear again as a church family. When the church becomes like the world in her worship and life, the church is the world. There must be a distinction in who we are and what we do as we remain loyal to God and follow Him exclusively.

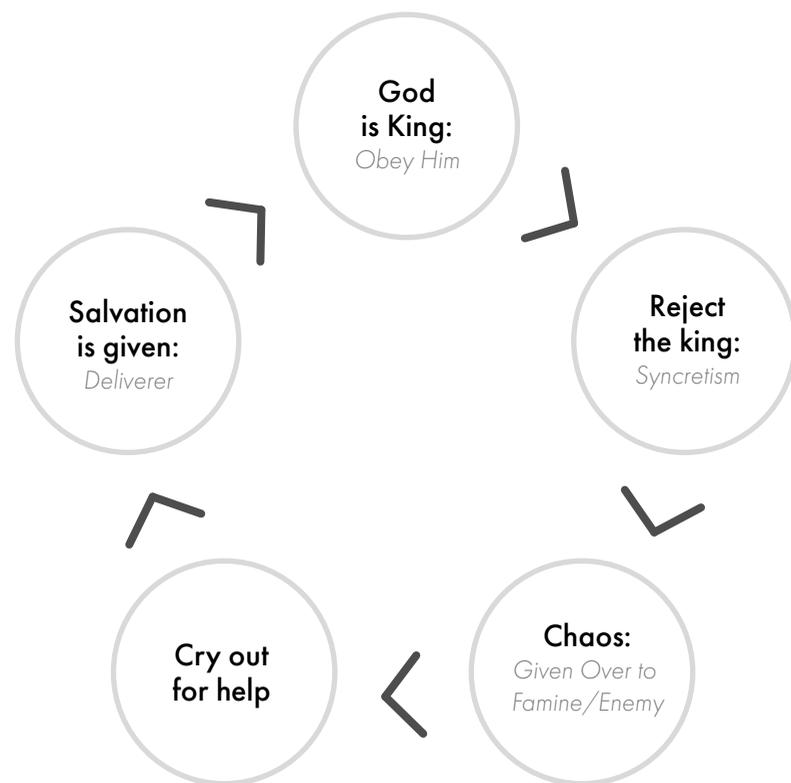
James 4:4 *“You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”*

Perhaps we did not know before our study of Judges, but now we know and we must do something about it.

1 John 2: 15 *“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. ¹⁷And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.”*

This book is a call to holiness for maximum impact. This book is a warning to the Canadian church to stay loyal to God and remain Word saturated. It is worth our time and our effort to understand and apply or we will end up following the same pattern we find in this book.

At Cloverdale Baptist Church we have a KING, and He has revealed to us who He is and what He wants in His Word. So we will choose to follow Him, no matter what the cost, and seek to be like Him in all we say and do!



The Importance of Prayer

As you use this booklet to further your growth, prayer is key! Please make sure that you pray before you meet, and ask God to open your eyes, and also pray after you meet for the many requests we have as a congregation.

- » Psalm 127:1
- » Exodus 17:10-12
- » 1 Thessalonians 5:18
- » Ephesians 6:18
- » Acts 6:4
- » Matthew 6:3-15

Four requests that help me stay focused as I pray for our church family are:

L Love Relationship with God...Core of who we are: Mark 12:28-31

That we would be a church that is relational, and has an experience of God's love, that makes that relationship drive and define everything else! That we would love God first, and that this love would overflow into all other relationships!

O One Heart & Mind: Romans 15:5-6; Philippians 1:2

That Cloverdale Baptist Church would display the love we have for God, by our love for one another and unity in our pursuit of God's glory. That we would be a church that prefers one another (Romans 12:10), and this preference in humility would yield Biblical unity!

V Vision: That we would know God's preferred future for our church and pursue it!

- » Philippians 1:21
- » Galatians 2:20
- » 1 Peter 1:16
- » John 17:17
- » 2 Timothy 3:16-17
- » Matthew 28:16-20
- » Ephesians 3:14-21
- » 1 Peter 4:8
- » HTML: Holiness, Truth, Mission, Love.

E Eager Servants: That we would be a great church fueled by Spirit filled eager servants. Ephesians 4:11-16; John 13:1-14

Pray for God to bless us with a church full of people who are full of God.

Spend time praising God, and thanking Him for His work to this point and pleading with Him to shape our lives and the lives of those around us whom we love! God will use our prayers to shape our pursuit of Him successfully together. Hebrews 4:16, "Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

Another Helpful Pattern:

CAST all your cares on Him for He cares for you

> **Confession:** Ask God to search you, and bring before Him any known sin, agreeing with Him about that sin, and turning your back on it. Be sure to accept His forgiveness. Alone.

1 John 1:9

> **Adoration:** Focus on the attributes of God, praising Him for who He is. Brainstorm together on who God is, and then spend time praising Him for these attributes:

Psalms 96:4

> **Supplication:** Your requests:

Philippians 4:4-6

> **Thanksgiving:** This can mainly focus on the cross, but should also include every good and perfect gift.

1 Thessalonians 5:17-18

You will find these helpful patterns in the prayer time of each section, with our hope that you will use them to guide and guard your personal and corporate prayers.

Growth Groups

There are three reasons for making the development of these study books a priority at Cloverdale Baptist Church:

1. We want to prioritize the hearing and applying of God's Word.

This is essential for the authentication of who God's people are (Matthew 7:21-28); and our growth into being who God wants us to be (Psalm 138:2; James 1:22-25). It is our prayer and desire that this book helps you to focus on what God's Word is saying, and that it helps to lead you into applying His Word to everyday life.

2. We value small group ministry.

It is our belief that small group ministry can produce passion in God's people (Hebrews 10:25), and serve as a protection for God's people (Hebrews 3:12-14). Sin can be deceitful, and hardened hearts can lead to despair. Small group ministry protects us from sin, and engages our hearts for devotion. We would love for all of our people to be engaged in small group ministry and in that, growing to love one another, and God, more and more.

3. We are looking for long term change.

It is our hope, as we interact with God's Word together, that these books will help you remember what you are learning and longing to apply. It is our desire that they become for you a tool to look back at, and grow with in the coming years as you continue to progress in conformity to the image of our Lord Jesus (Galatians 4:19). We believe that God's Word is powerful and will not return void (Isaiah 55:11), and it is helpful for His people to have reminders of where He has equipped them for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

If you are not in a small group we encourage you to join one, and until you do, to use the questions part of this notebook not only for reflection, but to interact with your family and/or friends in a way that is actively seeking to apply the Bible to your life (Deuteronomy 6:1-9).

May our God use this book through the power of His Spirit to bring change in His people for His glory.

Becoming A Connecting Church

A key issue in our pursuit of being a healthy church is love. In fact our love for one another is what Jesus wants us to be known for (John 13:34-35). In our world where disconnection is rampant, we want to be a connecting church so that we can effectively minister to one another.

This will take each of us understanding our role and pursuing it with the Holy Spirit's help. To be a connecting church, each one needs to be a connecting person. Don't ask if someone has connected well with you, rather look actively for people you can connect with. What does it mean to be committed to helping us to be a connecting church? This commitment means that you are willing to be a connecting person in three specific areas:

1. Personal Life

God has placed you where you are to make an impact for Him (Ephesians 2:10). This means actively looking for opportunities to connect with people in your personal life. This can be as simple as a phone call, or a hello as you walk your dog, or as strategic as bringing your Bible to the same Starbucks week after week looking for people with whom to share your love for Jesus.

If we want to be a connecting church we must learn to see every area of our lives as an opportunity to connect with people, and connect them with other believers. Invest in the lives of people around you, and when you have the opportunity, invite them to church, or a church related activity so that we, together, can connect with them.

2. Together Life

Introduce those you are connecting with, to others in our congregation. This can be over coffee, at the hockey rink, or a club. Take the opportunity to expand your connection with others. Look for opportunities to find new people in the church, or perhaps better in a church our size, someone you don't know.

Take advantage of ministries and Connection Café and actively look for those you can help to feel welcome. Find a place to serve. One of the best ways to connect yourself and be an avenue of connection with others is to serve with them. Find a place to serve, and share your life with those you are serving with.

3. Small Groups

Ultimately we want to grow our church beyond the personal connections of friends, and the corporate connections Sunday mornings to a more intimate setting where you can share your true wants and desires. Our small groups are essential to the health of our church, and we would encourage you to engage in small group ministry. Find people that you can grow closer to, so that together you can experience community and in that community pursue godliness! The key to Biblical community is a love for one another around our love for God. Small groups allow us to support one another and grow in effective and specific prayer.

These also help us to encourage and grow together. We want to be a connecting church, and that means you need to be a connecting person if you call this church home. As we work through this series on Judges, discuss what you learn with others, find new people to express God's love to, and help us to be more and more healthy in our pursuit of being who God wants us to be!

SERMON 1

Worldly Wanderers

JUDGES 1:1–3:6

Judges is a very sad book that shows us what happens when the culture invades God's people. What starts so strong, in terms of choosing to serve the Lord at the end of Joshua, turns into generational chaos in Israel. It is heart breaking to see Israel become more and more like the culture around them, and yet so hopeful to see God's gracious love on display in His sending Judges to save His people.

The summary statement at the end of the book gives us the reason why they were in such chaos, Judges 21:25, *"In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes"*. When there is no authority in our lives, we will do as we please, and when we do as we please destruction is the outcome.

As a church, it is our longing not only to know God, but to follow Him, to submit to Him fully as our King. As we begin this journey through Judges, our goal will be to see the need we have as followers of God to give our lives completely to Him in *radical surrender*. May our God use His Word to perfect His people! May our lives reflect that; in these days Jesus is King at Cloverdale. Everyone seeks to do what is right in His eyes.

EXTRA NOTES

Growth Group Questions

JUDGES 1:1-3:6

- What are our expectations for our study of the book of Judges?

- What do you think the book of Judges is in the Bible for?

» Discuss the cycle that we find repeated in the book of Judges.

» Why is this cycle helpful for us to be aware of?

Why do you think that becoming like the world around us is so dangerous?

» 1 John 2:15-17 » Romans 12:1-2
 » Joshua 24:14-24 » James 4:4

- God hates worldliness: Discuss this, as you look at the Scriptures, and define what this means for us at Cloverdale Baptist Church.

» Titus 2:11-13: How is the Grace of God tied to this?

- What does it mean that God is a jealous God?

» Exodus 34:14 » 1 Kings 18:21
 » Hebrews 12:28-29

- How does knowing this name of God help us to know what He expects of us?

- Why is keeping the grace of God central in our thinking important, especially as we discuss His jealousy?

» Exodus 33:19; 34:6 » Romans 5:6-11
 » Ephesians 2:8-10

- Interact on how you can apply the **implications to your life**:

» **Reminder:** God desires and demands our full devotion.

» **Radical Devotion:** What does this look like in your everyday life?

EXTRA NOTES

PRAYER

- L** Love Relationship With God:
- O** One Heart & Mind: Unity
- V** Vision
God's preferred future would be known by our leadership team & pursued by our people.
- E** Eager Servants
That each of our people would be using their gifts to build the body of Jesus and help us find unity!

Please pray for all of these in your prayer time together, but focus on our churches (and your groups, and your own) pursuit of an all defining first love relationship with Jesus.

> The focus today will be on **L**. That we would be a first **love** devoted people.

As you pray, meditate on:

» Matthew 22:36-40

» Revelation 2:4-5

- Pray that we would love Jesus first and most, and that this would drive and define everything else about us.
- Pray that we would be a Gospel centred people, who don't lose sight of His love (2 Corinthians 5:14).
- Pray that we would experience His love and be changed (Ephesians 3:14-21)
- Pray that we would overflow this love in love for one another (Ephesians 5:1-2)
- Pray that we would be known as a church that loves God, and because of that, loves one another (John 13:34-35; 1 Peter 4:8).

> Other prayer requests:



MEMORIZE & MEDITATE

And He said to all,
"If anyone would come
after me, let him deny
himself and take up his
cross daily and
follow me."

LUKE 9:23

SERMON 2

One Generation Away From Extinction

JUDGES 1-3

One of the ways that we believe that God has called us to be unique as a church is in pursuing multi-generational ministry. This is not easy in a world that defines the “pursuit of happiness” as a right that excludes others.

We define multi-gen ministry as the *opportunity to prefer someone else* (Romans 12:10), *for the glory of God and the good of this church family*. We know this is difficult in the face of the flesh, the world and the demonic realm. We know we live in a world where taste has become conviction, and conviction taste and we want to fight against this with love for God and one another.

Deuteronomy 6 is the key core passage of the Old Testament, and one that we should know well. It gives us a pathway to healthy multi-generational ministry a way to avoid the horrifying cycle of Judges, and replaces that with a growing love for God.

May God use this message to help us live out Romans 12:10, and to value Him and His Word enough to pursue Him exclusively in a multi-gen way (Psalm 138:2).

JUDGES 1-3

👑 One Generation Away From Extinction

➤ Introduction

» Psalm 145:4

"In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes."

➤ To protect the next generation

1. We must know the God of the Bible personally

» Deuteronomy 6:1-9

2. We must be intentionally multi-generational

» Deuteronomy 6:10-19

» Deuteronomy 4:9

"One generation grew up, who knew neither the LORD nor what He had done for Israel"

» Romans 12:10

3. We must be in the world, but not of the world

✔ Implications

- Love God in an all consuming relationship

- Grow to know & love Him more

- Prioritize passing it on

In these days Jesus is King at Cloverdale. Everyone seeks to do what is right in His eyes.

EXTRA NOTES

Growth Group Questions

JUDGES 1-3

- Read Deuteronomy 6:1-9
- What do you see from this passage as the priorities of God's people?
- How can you live this out in our community of faith?
- Why is it important to be intentionally multi-generational?
- Why do you think that this is so difficult?

» Deuteronomy 4:9

- Interact on Romans 12:10, and discuss what this means in terms of sacrificing our own tastes for the good of others?

» Think of two or three people that you can apply Romans 12:10 to in the upcoming week.

» How can we as a church be more and more intentional about multi-gen ministry?

- How can we be those who are in the world, but not of the world?

» Romans 12:1-2

» Isaiah 66:2

- What are steps you can take personally to respond to Pastor Rob's implications:

» Love God in an all-consuming relationship

» Grow to know and love Him more

» Prioritize Passing It On

EXTRA NOTES

PRAYER

- L** Love Relationship With God:
- O** One Heart & Mind: Unity
- V** Vision
God's preferred future would be known by our leadership team & pursued by our people.
- E** Eager Servants
That each of our people would be using their gifts to build the body of Jesus and help us find unity!

Please pray for all of these in your prayer time together, but focus on our churches (and your groups, and your own) pursuit of a unity in our church as we seek the mind of Christ.

The focus today will be on **O**. That we would have one heart and mind: **unity**.

• As you pray, meditate on:

» Philippians 2:1-11
» Romans 15:5-6

» Romans 12:10

- God hates division (Proverbs 6:16-19; Titus 3:10), and so it is one of the key areas that the demonic realm will attack in our church, and in our own hearts if we are walking in the flesh.
- Confess any divisive attitudes or actions you have had, and pray that your heart would choose the unity that God wants us to have!

> Other prayer requests:



MEMORIZE & MEDITATE

One generation
shall commend your
works to another,
and shall declare
your mighty acts.

PSALM 145:4

SERMON 3

Cry Out to God

JUDGES 3:7-31

God wants us to learn to cry out to Him first. There are many stories in the Bible that display that He is our rock and our refuge, an ever present help in trouble (Psalm 46). Maybe the clearest is in the negative when Asa relied on the King of Aram, and God responded with punishment because he did not first go to Him (2 Chronicles 16:9 *“For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him. You have done foolishly in this, for from now on you will have wars.”*).

Judges constantly displays the willingness of God to help His wayward people when they cry out to Him. He is eager to help those He loves. This should teach His followers to cry out to Him, and when they do, He is faithful! He is a Jealous God who wants exclusive devotion and a gracious God who offers salvation.

In life we will find that repeatedly we have to devote ourselves exclusively to God, to submit to His Lordship. In this journey we will struggle in pain and we must in this cry out to God and trust His eager response in our lives.

JUDGES 3:7-31

 **Cry Out to God** **Introduction** **God's mercy through Othniel** **God's mercy through Ehud** **God's mercy through Shamgar** **Implications**

• God is Jealous

- » Romans 8:28-29
- » Hebrews 12:5-14

- » Exodus 34:14
- » Exodus 20:4

• God is responsive

• God is gracious

• Jonah 4:2

- » Devote yourself to God exclusively

- » Cry out to God

- » Trust in God's grace & mercy

EXTRA NOTES

EXTRA NOTES

PRAYER

- L** Love Relationship With God:
- O** One Heart & Mind: Unity
- V** Vision
God's preferred future would be known by our leadership team & pursued by our people.
- E** Eager Servants
That each of our people would be using their gifts to build the body of Jesus and help us find unity!

Please pray for all of these in your prayer time together, but focus on our churches (and your groups, and your own) pursuit of a unity in our church as we seek the mind of Christ.

The focus today will be on **V**, that we would know and pursue God's preferred **vision** for our church family.

This is always as an overflow of relationship with Jesus, so this vision is relational before it is vision caring. We want our preferred future to come from God, and to be focused on loving Him and carrying out His mission!

- As you pray, meditate on:

» Matthew 22:36-40

Revelation 2:4-5

- Pray that we would love Jesus first and most, and that this would drive and define everything else about us.
- Pray that we would be a Gospel centred people, who don't lose sight of His love (2 Corinthians 5:14).
- Pray that we would experience His love so we are changed (Ephesians 3:14-21)
- Pray that we would overflow this love so that we love one another (Ephesians 5:1-2)
- Pray that we would be known as a church that loves God, and because of that loves one another (John 13:34-35; 1 Peter 4:8).

> Other prayer requests:



MEMORIZE & MEDITATE

For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him. You have done foolishly in this, for from now on you will have wars.

2 CHRONICLES 16:9

SERMON 4

Surprised by God

JUDGES 4

I am not a big fan of surprises, I like to know what is coming. I read the spoiler alerts, often make sure everything is okay in intense books by reading the end, and love the book of Revelation. Lori has surprised me a number of times, but perhaps her best was when we first got to Cloverdale, I was all alone fitting into a wonderful new church while my family was in Sandy Hook, waiting for our housing situation to work itself out. One day as I was working on a sermon, around the corner came the most beautiful woman in the world to surprise me...and that was *amazing!*

There are times in life when God surprises us in His story. Judges 4 is one of those chapters in the Bible that is full of surprises as God chooses to rescue His people through a woman, but not the one we would expect. It is a great story of salvation through the power of God as He uses people to accomplish His tender care for His people.

God is *all powerful*, and *arranges* all of life in a way that allows us to trust in Him and astonishes us. Read and re-read God's Word and never cease to be *amazed* as He surprises you with His story.

JUDGES 4

Surprised by God

Introduction

God is able

» Psalm 20:7

God is the arranger

God astonishes

God always wants the admiration

» Isaiah 48:11

» 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

“God’s battles are not fought with human weapons nor for the sake of human glory. The honor of Yahweh’s name is the primary concern.” **Daniel Block**

Implications

- Trust God
- Look for God’s plan
- Always give glory to God

EXTRA NOTES

Growth Group Questions

JUDGES 4

- Have you ever been really surprised by someone else?

- Have you ever been surprised by God?

- Read Judges 4

- What about this story surprises you?

- Why is it important that we see that God is *able*?

» Psalm 118:6

» Psalm 20:7

- How can we live our lives in light of the power of God?

- What does it mean that God is the arranger?

- How have you seen His arrangement of things in your life?

- What does it mean that God always wants the glory?

» Isaiah 48:11

» 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

- How can we live in such a way that God gets the glory?

» 1 Corinthians 10:31

- Why should this desire of God give us confidence in our weaknesses?

- Interact with Pastor Rob's interactions, seeking to talk about how to apply them to real life situations.

» Trust God

» Look for God's Plan

» Always give God glory

EXTRA NOTES

PRAYER

- L** Love Relationship With God:
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God's preferred future would be known by our leadership team & pursued by our people.
- E** Eager Servants
That each of our people would be using their gifts to build the body of Jesus and help us find unity!

Please pray for all of these in your prayer time together, but focus on our churches (and your groups, and your own) pursuit of a unity in our church as we seek the mind of Christ.

The focus today will be on **V**, vision, that we would know and pursue God's preferred future for our church family.

This is always a deeper more vibrant relationship with Jesus. Pray that all we do would be an overflow of our relationship with Jesus.

- HTML: Holiness, Truth, Mission, Love
- Holiness: Pray that we as a church would be holy as God is holy!

» 1 Peter 1:16-17

- Take the time to *repent* of all known sin.
- Take the time to choose obedience in every area of your life.
- Meditate and pray for our church. Matthew 7:21-27; Matthew 6:9
- Pray that you would personally be holy, not legalistic, and that it would show that you are set apart for Him.

> Other prayer requests:



MEMORIZE & MEDITATE

Everyone who is
called by my name,
whom I created
for my glory, whom
I formed and made.

ISAIAH 43:7

SERMON 5

A Doubting Warrior with a Great God

JUDGES 6

Gideon is a name that is spoken with respect in most Christian circles, and yet the story of Gideon is a story about God using a weak warrior, not a mighty man of valour. God works in this story through a doubting weak man, and a very small military force to accomplish His salvation for His people.

This is a great lesson for us. In the flesh, often we want to be great, and yet the cry of those who are truly great is, "He must grow greater, and I must grow less". May we see this passage afresh, and as we do experience the hope and power that is ours in Christ and His strength!

Be strong in the LORD! Boast in your weakness! Choose obedience in the midst of doubt, and as a weak warrior you will glorify God with your life!

JUDGES 6

👑 A Doubting Warrior with a Great God

➤ Introduction

➤ In doubt don't feel disqualified

➤ In doubt choose obedience

➤ In doubt find his strength

» Zechariah 4:6

» Psalm 20:7

✔ Implications

- Deal with doubt in a healthy way
 - » Take your eyes off of yourself and your situation.
 - » Fix your eyes on Jesus.
 - » Obey, even in doubt. In small and great things!
 - » Obey even when it doesn't make sense
 - » Remember the truth that God plus 1 is a majority, even when it doesn't feel like it, choose to trust Him and His ways!
 - Be aware of weak warriors
- "All God's giants have been weak men who did great things for God because they reckoned on God being with them." **James Hudson Taylor**
- Give God the Glory

EXTRA NOTES

Growth Group Questions

JUDGES 6

- Read Judges 6
- What stands out to you as you read this chapter of Scripture?
- Why do you think so many avoid the weaknesses in Gideon, and focus on his strengths?
- How do you deal with doubt in your own life?
- Why is God's grace to Gideon in his doubt helpful to us as we struggle sometimes in ours?
- How can you make sure that you are always choosing obedience, even if you struggle with doubt?
- Why is finding our strength in God important to God?
- Why is finding our strength in God important to us?
- How can you help others around you deal with doubt in healthy ways (you can use Pastor Rob's 5 keys if this is helpful to the discussion)?
- How can you be strong in God?
- How does 2 Corinthians 12:1-10 help us to, "boast in our weaknesses"?
- What does it mean to give God glory?
- How does the story of Gideon show us how God pursues His own glory through people like Gideon and us?

EXTRA NOTES

PRAYER

- L** Love Relationship With God:
- O** One Heart & Mind: Unity
- V** Vision
God's preferred future would be known by our leadership team & pursued by our people.
- E** Eager Servants
That each of our people would be using their gifts to build the body of Jesus and help us find unity!

Please pray for all of these in your prayer time together, but focus on our churches (and your groups, and your own) pursuit of a unity in our church as we seek the mind of Christ.

The focus today will be on **V**, vision, that we would know and pursue God's preferred future for our church family.

This is always as an overflow of relationship with Jesus, so this vision is relational before it is vision caring. We want our preferred future to come from God, and to be focused on loving Him and carrying out His mission!

- Pray that we would be HOLY. (Holiness, Truth, Mission, Love).
- Focus today is on Truth. Pray that we would be loyal to God's Word, and practice it (John 17:17).
- Pray for Pastor Rob as he prepares and delivers sermons.
- Pray for other ministry people as we seek to be loyal to God's Truth.
- Pray that we would be filled with the Holy Spirit and live our lives in loyalty to God.

> Other prayer requests:



MEMORIZE & MEDITATE

The righteous who
walks in his integrity
—blessed are His
children after Him!

PROVERBS 20:7

SERMON 6

A Model of a Mess: Persevere

JUDGES 7-9

Have you ever wished that the Bible stopped a story before it actually does? I feel that way about the story of Gideon, his life, so much potential in the strength of God, so damaging in the flesh.

Gideon does not finish well, in fact he shows us how not to finish well! His legacy shifts from a man greatly used by God, to a man who leads his family and God's people into sin. He turns from humility to selfishness and finds destruction.

I long for us to be a church filled with mighty doubting Warriors who *finish well!* Gideon teaches us from his failures and weaknesses many positive and negative lessons, and these chapters should cause us to learn how not to finish, or fail in our successes.

JUDGES 7-9

A Model of a Mess: Persevere

➤ *Introduction*

➤ *Give God the glory: practice selflessness*

➤ *Give others grace: practice humility*

➤ *Give absolute loyalty to God in every area of your life: practice lordship*

➤ *Think straight: practice repentance*

✔ *Implications*

- The lesson of humility

- The lesson of loyalty

- The lesson of grace

EXTRA NOTES

Growth Group Questions

JUDGES 7-9

- Read Judges 7-9
 - What stands out to you as a group as you read through these verses?
 - Why do you think that Gideon was such a failure after such great success?
 - How can you make sure that you don't forget about God in everyday life?
- » Psalm 16:8 » Deuteronomy 8:1-14
- Why do you think we are selfish and proud, even though we know what God has done for us and how weak we are?
 - Why do you think that Gideon was so hard on those who did not join him in the battle?

- How could Gideon have used his own doubt and failings to be more humble and gracious?
- Read Matthew 18:21-25
- Why is it so hard to practice absolute loyalty to God in the midst of the good times?
- What does the word repentance mean?
- Why did the legacy of Gideon suffer so much in Scripture?
- What are some ways we can practice as lessons from this passage:
 - » Humility
 - » Loyalty
 - » Grace

EXTRA NOTES

PRAYER

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- O** One Heart & Mind: Unity
- V** Vision
God's preferred future would be known by our leadership team & pursued by our people.
- E** Eager Servants
That each of our people would be using their gifts to build the body of Jesus and help us find unity!

Please pray for all of these in your prayer time together, but focus on our churches (and your groups, and your own) pursuit of a unity in our church as we seek the mind of Christ.

The focus today will be on **V**, vision, that we would know and pursue God's preferred future for our church family.

This is always as an overflow of relationship with Jesus, so this vision is relational before it is vision caring. We want our preferred future to come from God, and to be focused on loving Him and carrying out His mission!

- Pray that we would be *Holy, Truth Loyal*.
- Pray that we would be Missional. We want to be a place where *each one reaches one*.
- Pray that the LORD of the harvest would send out people to the harvest (Matthew 9:38).
- Pray that we would represent Him well (2 Corinthians 5:11-21).
- Pray that new believers would be disciples effectively (Matthew 28:16-20).
- Pray for non-church: family, friends, neighbours, work relationships.
- Pray for *open door, open hearts & open mouth*.

> Other prayer requests:



MEMORIZE & MEDITATE

Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:58

SERMON 7

An Empty Victory

JUDGES 10-11

Judges is getting more and more sad in the apparent depravity of Israel becoming like the world around it. This is perhaps a great reminder for us, in our culture, of the danger of the church becoming like the world. To fight this we, as God's people, must become Gospel oriented, and saturated with the Word. The only way to know the true God of the Bible is through His self-revelation, illuminated by the Spirit of God. The only way to know what He wants is through His Word.

Our longing as a church family is to be Biblical, to experience the joy of following God in the midst of a world that ignores God. To become like the world to win the world is to win the world for Satan. We must become like God, and represent Him faithfully in our pursuit of His glory together as a church family! May Jephthah teach us to be faithful to God in spiritual battle, and in worship!

JUDGES 10-11

An Empty Victory

➤ Introduction

» James 4:4

“It would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.”

C.S. Lewis

➤ *Cultural creep is a real danger!*

➤ *God has revealed himself in His Word*

➤ *God wants obedience not worldly worship*

➤ *Cultural creep leads to crisis*

✓ *Implications*

- Don't serve God with traditions or culture dominating

» James 4:4

» Matthew 15:1-7

- Worship God His way always

EXTRA NOTES

Growth Group Questions

JUDGES 10-11

- Read through Judges 10–11
- This is such a sad story!
- Read Judges 4:4
- How are you sometimes a friend of the world?
- Read 1 John 2:15
- What does it mean to love the world?
- How does the world's way of thinking (worldview) creep into your life?
- How does it creep into a church?

- Why is being Word saturated so important to pleasing God?

» Romans 12:1-2

» Colossians 3:16-17

- How can we know God better from a Biblical perspective?
- Why is seeking to worship and obey God in a cultural way so dangerous?
 - » How does Deuteronomy 12:1-7 help inform this?
- How can we make sure we avoid traditions as absolutes in our worship of God?
- How can we avoid the latest fads in our worship of God?

EXTRA NOTES

PRAYER

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The focus today will be on **V**, vision, that we would know and pursue God's preferred future for our church family.

This is always as an overflow of relationship with Jesus, so this vision is relational before it is vision caring. We want our preferred future to come from God, and to be focused on loving Him and carrying out His mission!

- *Holiness; Truth Loyal; Missional*
- Pray that we would be a church that is *loving* to one another, and known for our love. (John 13:34-35; 1 Peter 4:8)
- Pray that we would experience God's love so richly that it overflows (Ephesians 3:14-21).
- Pray that your heart would be so overwhelmed with God's love that Sunday mornings you come ready to love those God places in your path!

> Other prayer requests:



MEMORIZE & MEDITATE

Do not love the world or
the things in the world.
If anyone loves the
world, the love of
the Father is not in him.

1 JOHN 2:15

SERMON 8

Compromise Leads to Catastrophe

JUDGES 13

The story of Samson is a story of grace. God's people do not repent, so the cycle is getting worse and worse, but God sees His people in distress and sends them a Judge. This Judge is supposed to be set apart, yet even his own life is filled with compromise and impurity! The very name of Samson is tied to the solar cult of the day — mixed worship that led to chaos. God's grace and graciousness is all over this story.

We find in the story of Samson, not only the deadly nature of compromise and the horror of mixed worship, we also find that the God of the Bible is "gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love."

👑 Compromise Leads to Catastrophe

➤ Introduction

➤ God's grace is grace

➤ Compromise covers our ears

➤ Compromise leads to pain

➤ *Compromise coasts downhill*

✔ Implications

The pathway to killing compromise

- Deal with sin decisively

"Sin is always a serious matter to the children of God. If we do not deal decisively with sin in our lives, we will never experience the fullness of God's blessing. There can be no compromise, no peaceful coexistence with sin." **Gary Inrig**

"The place for the ship is in the sea, but God help the ship if the sea gets into it." **D.L. Moody**

- Delight in God's Word dominantly

EXTRA NOTES

Growth Group Questions

JUDGES 13

- Read Judges 13

 - Discuss together God's grace. Define it. Describe it.
- » Ephesians 2:1-10
» Romans 5:6-11
- Why is it so important that we understand and experience God's grace as God's people?

 - What does this story teach us about the grace of God?

 - What does Samson's name mean?
 - » Why is it significant in this story?

 - » Why do you think his parents did not give him a better name?

 - » How do we sometimes get into worldview trouble so we compromise?

- Sin leads to pain. Why is this important to understand?

- How can we train our own hearts in this?

- How can we train others hearts in this?

- Discuss how the path of compromise is a downhill path.

- Pastor Rob said to kill compromise we must deal with sin decisively and delight in God's Word dominantly...
 - » How can you specifically do this in your own life?

 - » Why do you think it is hard to do?

- How can the church in Canada (Cloverdale Baptist Church) be contextually missional and free from compromise?

EXTRA NOTES

PRAYER

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That each of our people would be using their gifts to build the body of Jesus and help us find unity!

Please pray for all of these in your prayer time together, but focus on our churches (and your groups, and your own) pursuit of a unity in our church as we seek the mind of Christ.

The focus today will be on **E**, eager servants in God's church.

- Pray that God's people at Cloverdale would see their value (Ephesians 2:10; 4:16); and choose to serve Him with joy together for the good of the family.
- Pray that you would know your spiritual gifts.
- Pray that you would choose to serve Him.
- Pray that you would enjoy the unity that comes from serving together!
- Pray that our leadership team would understand how best to equip, enable and unleash God's people in our midst.

> Other prayer requests:



MEMORIZE & MEDITATE

For if you live
according to the flesh
you will die, but if
by the Spirit you put
to death the deeds of
the body, you will live.

ROMANS 8:13

SERMON 9

What Could Have Been

JUDGES 14

Samson is not a hero of the faith. Samson's story is a heartbreaking story of what could have been, followed by his suicidal prayer to God that is used by God to bring about the death of Israel's enemies. Samson's rejection of authority, his self-centred fascination, and his unwillingness to be ruled by anything other than his flesh led to his demise. He shows us the end of walking in the flesh, and it is blinding and brutal.

This is a reminder to us to rejoice in that strength that God provides, and to walk in the Spirit He has given. When we get to the end of our lives, may it be said of us, *"well done my good and faithful servant"*, not, if only he/she had lived differently.

JUDGES 14

What Could Have Been

Introduction

Resources: God's Man

» Colossians 2:9-10

» 2 Corinthians 9:8

Revolting: A Man's Man

» Reject authority

» Ruled by the flesh

» Riveted with self

Implications

You have enough resources to do anything that God has called you to do, or will call you to do.

Pathway to strength

- Submit to authority

- Slay sin in your life

- Slaughter self-centeredness

EXTRA NOTES

Growth Group Questions

JUDGES 14

- Read Judges 14
- Why is it so important for us to realize that in Israel there was no King, and that is why everyone did what was fit in their own eyes?
- How can we be sure that Jesus is our King in all we say and do?
- What stands out to you about this story in general?
- How can we grow to be confident in the resources that God provides those whom He has called to do His work?
- How does Samson show us how to lose our impact and its joy, even if we have God's strength?

- Why is rejecting authority a huge issue to God?

- How can we be sure we are obeying the authorities He has placed in our lives, government, church, home, office, school, in a way that displays our submission to God's authority in our lives?

- What does it look like in modern culture to battle with being ruled by the flesh?

- Why is it so important to God that His followers die to self?

» Luke 9:23

- How can we learn to be God centered (1 Corinthians 10:31); and others centered (Romans 12:10) in every area of our lives?

- How can you more and more grow to say, in my life there is a King, and I will do what He says?

EXTRA NOTES

CAST

Cast all your cares on Him for He cares for you.

It is important to us that we are more and more a praying church. Patterns help us to be sure that we are entering into the throne room with boldness and the appropriate reverence.

> **Confession:** Ask God to search you, and bring before Him any known sin, agreeing with Him about that sin, and turning your back on it. Be sure to accept His forgiveness. Alone.

1 John 1:9

> **Adoration:** Focus on the attributes of God, praising Him for who He is. Brainstorm together on who God is, and then spend time praising Him for these attributes:

Psalms 96:4

> **Supplication:** Your requests:

Philippians 4:4-6

> **Thanksgiving:** This can mainly focus on the cross, but should also include every good and perfect gift.

1 Thessalonians 5:17-18



MEMORIZE & MEDITATE

For the sake of Christ,
then, I am content with
weaknesses, insults,
hardships, persecutions,
and calamities.
For when I am weak,
then I am strong.

2 CORINTHIANS 12:10

SERMON 10

The End of Compromise

JUDGES 16

Here ends the story of Samson, and yet its lessons live on. We live at a time when compromise in the church is ramping up, and serving God in a way that is biblical is shrinking. How do we respond to this? There is a danger among those who are evangelicals to swing the pendulum back too far, and to exchange compromise for customs.

To become older, but not wiser in our practice, and to long for the days when churches did things differently without addressing the true root of the problem, a worldliness. Samson displays for us the destruction of worldly living, and calls us to know God's Word and follow Him. May this story give us hope, and cause us to cling to God's Word, and obey it at all cost.

EXTRA NOTES

Growth Group Questions

JUDGES 16

- Read Judges 16
- Why do you think that the Bible spends so much time on the character of Samson?
- Why do you think that Samson could not resist temptation?
- What made Samson so stupid that he willingly gave himself up to Delilah so horrifically?
- Why is sin so dangerous to us, in a quicksand way?
- How can we learn to see things from a Biblical perspective (Biblical Worldview)?
- What happens when we trust our senses, rather than God's Word?
- » Genesis 3:6
- » Joshua 7:20-21
- How can we become more and more aware of the dangers of sin, and the destruction that it brings even as it promises selfish satisfaction?
- If you have compromised in your life, what are the steps to getting right with God?
- How can we warn one another (and others) of the danger of compromise?
- What can we do in terms of speaking the truth in love when we see compromise all around us?
- What steps can we take as individuals and as a church to turn our backs on compromise and towards the grace of God in holiness?

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MEMORIZE & MEDITATE

And Elijah came near to all the people and said, "How long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." And the people did not answer him a word.

1 KINGS 18:21

SERMON 11

Lessons from Judges: The End Pt. 1

JUDGES 17-18

As we finish our study of the book of Judges, the people of God have now lost sight of who God is. Even as they claim to worship Him and want priests that are from the tribe of Levi, they have lost Him completely.

The demonic realm will attack our view of God, and seek to get us to love the world. Judges serves as a warning to us, and as it ends, the alarm bells are ringing loudly. If you are religious, but your view of God is unbiblical, you are no longer worshiping God. In fact as we will see while the book of Judges closes, the people have become more like Sodom and Gomorrah than like Jesus.

May God use this book to cause us to long to live our lives to the praise of His glorious grace!

JUDGES 17-18

Lessons from Judges: The End Pt. 1

Introduction

“What you believe about God is the most important thing about you.” Tozer

Mistake #1: Culturalize God

Mistake #2: Control God

» Proverbs 3:5-7

» Romans 12:1-3

Mistake #3: Cover God

» Psalm 16:8

» Psalm 14:1

Implications

- Realize how important our view of God is

» Psalm 138:1-2

- Rest in the Gospel

- Rejoice in His word

» Colossians 3:16

» Deuteronomy 4:1-2

EXTRA NOTES

Growth Group Questions

JUDGES 17-18

- Read Judges 17-18
- What are some things that show you that these people are spiritually in *deep trouble*?

- Why was it so difficult for these people to have a Biblical view of God?

» Why is it so difficult for us?

- Discuss this quote from A.W. Tozer

“What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us. The history of mankind will probably show that no people has ever risen above its religion, and man’s spiritual history will positively demonstrate that no religion has ever been greater than its idea of God. Worship is pure or base as the worshiper entertains high or low thoughts of God. For this reason the gravest question before the Church is always God Himself, and the most portentous fact about any man is not what he at a given time may say or do, but what he in his deep heart conceives God to be like. We tend by a secret law of the soul to move toward our mental image of God. This is true not only of the individual Christian, but of the company of Christians that composes the Church. Always the most revealing thing about the Church is her idea of God.” A. W. Tozer

- In what ways do you think we have adjusted a Biblical view of God by our cultural context?

- How can we make sure that our view of God is constantly being tested by the Bible?

- Why is it dangerous to try to control God?

» In what ways do we do this?

- How do we sometimes live like there is no God?

» Psalm 14:1

- What are some ways that we can be conscious of God’s presence in our lives?

» Psalm 16:8

- How can you grow in your view of God?

» Psalm 138:1-2

- What does it mean to rest in the Gospel?

» Why is this so important as we sharpen our view of who God is?

- What does it mean to *rejoice in His word*?

- What are some ways you can do this?

- Why do you think this long story is in the book of Judges?

- Why do you think it is in the Bible?

EXTRA NOTES

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1 Thessalonians 5:17-18



MEMORIZE & MEDITATE

Their idols are
silver and gold,
the work of
human hands.

PSALM 115:4

SERMON 12

The End: Not Our End

JUDGES 19–21

This is the end of the story, and it is the end of all who become like the world, even as they claim to follow God. A story that shows us that those who are saying they want to be followers of God are actually like the world's worst pagans is shocking, and meant to awaken in us a desire to never have that happen to us!

This story shows us what happens when we don't know or follow the God of the Bible no matter what we claim with our words. This story is very much like the church in North America, where everyone is doing what is right in their eyes. May this awaken in us a deep desire to be those who know the God of the Bible, and obey Him in every area of our lives all of the time.

Judges is over, and yet the battle continues. May we be found *faithful!*

JUDGES 19-21

👑 The End: Not Our End

➤ Introduction

» Psalm 103:34-47

"I fear we are in bondage to our culture." John Piper

"In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes."

➤ Know God through his gospel: dependence

» Titus 2:11-14

» Ephesians 2:1-10

➤ Know God through growth: discipline

» 1 Corinthians 9:24-27

➤ Know God through focus: delight

» Romans 12:1-2

» Hebrews 12:1-3

➤ Know God through gap: discern

» 1 John 2:15-17

» John 15:12-17

» James 4:4

In Cloverdale we have a King and we will seek to do what is right in His eyes.

EXTRA NOTES

Growth Group Questions

JUDGES 19-21

- Read Judges 19-21
- What stands out to you about this story?
- Read Psalms 106:34-47
- How does this help us to see God's view of what was happening?
- How does this story remind you of Sodom and Gomorrah?
- Why do you think that Judges ends this way?
- How does the rape and destruction of 1 woman lead to the rape of so many more? Why does God tell us this story, it is so sad?

- Why is knowing the Gospel essential to our proper response to this book?

- How can we discipline our lives so that we are growing in our Biblical knowledge and application?

» 1 Corinthians 9:24-27

- What are you doing in your life right now to be sure that you are growing in your relationship with God?

- Have you offered your body to Him as a living sacrifice? Why or why not?

» Romans 12:1-2

- What does this practically mean?

- What are some ways we individually and corporately can avoid becoming like the culture around us?

» 1 John 2:15-17

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EXTRA NOTES

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1 Thessalonians 5:17-18

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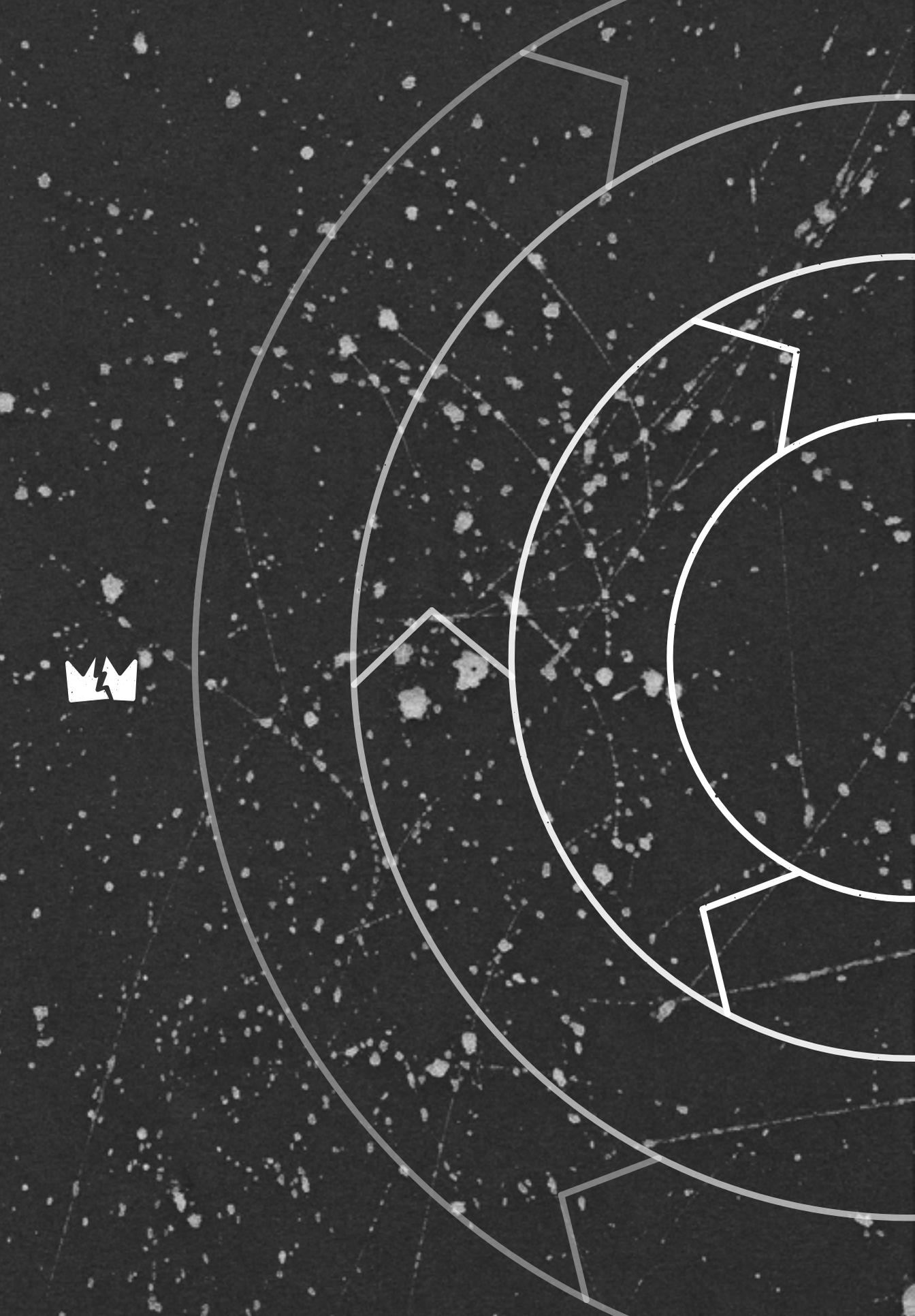
MEMORIZE & MEDITATE

In those days there
was no king in Israel.
Everyone did
what was right in
his own eyes.

JUDGES 21:25

But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness.¹² Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.¹³ I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession,¹⁴ to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ,¹⁵ which he will display at the proper time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

1 TIMOTHY 6:11–15



Additional Articles

The Danger of Age Segregation

It seems obvious that to best serve someone you should find out what they like and give it to them. It seems obvious that if people like different things (and they do) that you should find ways to make sure that everyone is happy, and if some like Tim Hortons over Starbucks, or vice versa, why not have both and segregate. In fact in our world of choice, one of the choices that we are rarely asked to make is the choice of unity over preference. Or, non-segregation, over taste preference. In the modern world it is getting harder and harder to find a community or family that chooses love over self. Because of this, It is hard to find a place outside of the home (and sadly inside of most homes) where generations mix, and prefer one another. Instead of joining together around a unified decision, we find our way even if it means leaving those with other tastes or traditions behind.

In the church, most church growth experts would say to pick a demographic and grow around it, rejecting those who are not who you want to be. This might be a good way to grow quickly, but I wonder about the depth of commitment this will bring when the next, better for them, ministry springs up across the street.

“This segregation of ages and traditions, even in singular churches has led to a lack of the mixing of generations.”

This has led to a pendulum swing back from the segregation to another unbalanced and unbiblical extreme that can be seen in movements like the Family Integrated Church that have sought to remove all (or most) segregated ministries. This movement has been sidelined through scandal, but its remnants remain, and what it was responding to still needs to be addressed. Have we come to the place where selfishness is so rampant that we can't worship together? I hope and pray not! One of the great ministries of the Holy Spirit is to help us die to self, and unite with others who are not exactly like us for the glory of our God.

At Cloverdale Baptist Church we are seeking to live out the value of being a multi-generational church that meets and worships together, even as we scatter and minister to specific ages and needs. We see our Sunday morning gathering time as one that seeks to glorify God and minister effectively to all ages.

We define multi-gen ministry as, seeking to offer an opportunity for each generation (taste/tradition) to value someone outside their comfort zone more than they value themselves. This is not easy when many see church existing to serve them. Children are given the opportunity to grow in their own, 'language', on Sunday mornings, as we long for a place where their parents and grandparents flourish together in right relationship with God! Why are we willing

to fly in the face of cultural, and even church tradition and wisdom? Four reasons:

> We believe:

1. The Bible calls us to multi-generational ministry

Psalm 145:4, “One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts.”

God has called us to live together in a way that displays the beauty of His Gospel to one another across generational divides. We want to be a church where this occurs in song, story and surrender. Each generation can actually help the other in pursuing God.

Often the younger generation can be helpful to all in surrender and in breaking traditions (or at least asking the multiple whys that can be very helpful!). The older generation can offer maturity, stories and helpful guidance through life's journey. We need one another, and God has so ordained it to be that we would share the walk we are on for His glory together!

It is also commanded for women (Titus 2:3-5), and men (2 Timothy 2:2). These ministries are possible in segregated, or targeted age group churches, but much more difficult. We believe that to best accomplish this we should meet together for worship even as we offer many opportunities for specific needs being met in other areas.

The Bible commands a ministry that is inter-generational!

> We believe:

2. The Bible calls us to prefer one another.

Romans 12:10 “Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.”

If we segregate by age, and choose only to worship with those who agree with us (for the most part) we will not be forced to love one another in an honoring way. We want to be a church that joins the competition of honor, and chooses to out honor one another. This can be shown in many ways, but one of the best is when we join together in worship and rejoice when other styles and tastes are given preference to our own.

This will always mean full devotion to God first (Romans 12:1-2), but the overflow of this is a preference for one another.

> We believe

3. The next generation is in trouble if we don't do this:

There is a danger of not passing on our walk with God to the next generation. Certainly this can be seen in individuals lives, from Eli to David and beyond, but perhaps most profoundly is when it is seen on a national level. The book of Judges is the cycle of sin, that has a sad

phrase repeated, Judges 2:10, ¹⁰“And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers. And there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD or the work that he had done for Israel.”

May we work together, one generation rejoicing in God, and shouting that out to the next, and back. If we teach the younger generation that Christianity is all about them, there is a good chance that the Christianity they create will not include God. The danger of segregation is that the next generation will find a cultural god, but miss on the richness of what the LORD has done for us, and who He is with us. This is why family ministry is so important, and this is why inter-generational ministry is essential.

Deuteronomy 6, “Now this is the commandment—the statutes and the rules — that the LORD your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over, to possess it, ² that you may fear the LORD your God, you and your son and your son’s son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long.³ Hear therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do them, that it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly, as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey.

⁴ “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. ⁵ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶ And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. ⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

Family that is blood, and family that is spiritual are both called to live together in a multi-generational way! Live together in community! Serve Jesus together, and talk about Him everywhere so that the next generation will know Him. We do not serve our next generation best by giving them what they want, rather we serve them best by displaying self-sacrificial love to them, and showing them the beauty and majesty of God and His love. We serve them best by modeling and teaching, in a way that they get what God wants for them.

> We believe

4. Multi-generational ministry is a great opportunity to love:

John 13:34-35, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. ³⁵ By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Augustine has pointed out that the one thing that hypocrites can’t do is love. I think this is

correct, (would add authentic humility to this), and this is actually what Jesus has made the defining mark of His followers. We prove our authenticity in our love, and this must go way beyond our traditions and our age.

We love because He first loved us (1 John 4:19), and we are called to be imitators of God in our lives by walking in love as He loved us (Ephesians 5:1-2). This means sacrificing ourselves (and what we like and don’t like) for the benefit of those around us. It means choosing a life of service, where we count others as better than ourselves (Philippians 2:3) and above all pursue this kind of living (1 Peter 4:8).

The reason that many churches are moving away from worshiping together is that we value our own tastes, feelings, and desires above others. This might be okay for immature believers, but those who know and love God will choose His way, which includes a death to self, and a service of others. In fact the Great Command would call us to be driven and defined by our love for God, so much so that we love others as we love ourselves.

“The reason that many churches are moving away from worshiping together is that we value our own tastes, feelings, and desires above others.”

This is a pattern we are to follow, and it best displays itself in maturity when there is an opportunity to choose the best of others through self-sacrifice in a church family.

So What?

Choose this with us

Be willing to adjust your tastes and traditions, your view of what is best, and treasure others. Be willing to worship in a way where one of your great delights is seeing those who view style and sound differently than you are entering the presence of God with great joy! Choose to take advantage of opportunities to get to know those of different tastes and ages, choose to love lavishly and sacrificially when you don’t get your way. Choose this with us, for only as we choose this together in the fullness of the Holy Spirit will it be possible.

Next steps

Pray for the Spirit to fill you, and to overflow the fruit of the Spirit. Pray for opportunities to win the competition of honor (Romans 12:10). Pray for humility and love, that will prove your authenticity and facilitate our health as a congregation!

Pursue relationships with others outside of your comfort zone. Find people older and younger and get to know them, and their heart for God. Go out of your way to build relationships with those you would not naturally seek.

Pursue an attitude on Sunday mornings, especially in our song portion of the service that is God centered and overflows with a servant heart to others.

Pursue being the most mature person in the room. The one who first gives of your own tastes and traditions to value others. If each of us chooses to pursue this attitude, we will have very few problems, *“one generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts.”* (Psalm 145:4).

Pursue multi-generational ministry with us.

The Danger of Devaluing Women

One of the most heartbreaking portions of Scripture for me is in Judges 19 where the Levite and his host sent out his concubine to be raped and abused (offers his virgin daughter as well). This is an, “outrageous” thing, and should cause us to weep and shout never here! It is horrifying in this story in God’s Word, that they were so far away from God that this part of the story is not even mentioned in the brutal retelling of the horror of the canaanization of Israel.

When in human cultures there is no king, and everyone does what is right in his own eyes, often the vulnerable are most abused. In our culture this includes women and children, although perhaps as we shift more and more away from a biblical worldview this will also include the aged and those who are special needs.

“When in human cultures there is no king, and everyone does what is right in his own eyes, often the vulnerable are most abused.”

In our church, where the LORD is our King we want to be sure to obey His Word and be those who go out of our way to protect those who are, or could be perceived to be most vulnerable. This means that the opposite of what happened in Judges 19 should have occurred. God’s people should have gone out of their way to protect this woman (and the daughter), even at the risk of their own lives.

In our church, where the LORD is our King, we want to be a place that goes out of our way to value and protect women, even as our culture moves further and further away from this in the #metoo era. I am saddened by the news of all of the exploitation of women in our culture, but not surprised as in North America, there is no king and everyone is doing what is right in their own eyes.

At Cloverdale Baptist Church we want to provide women with a safe place to pursue God and to serve as co-labourers in God’s Kingdom. We want to go out of our way to protect women (and all who could feel vulnerable) with love and tenderness. This is a family where we would like to make sure that no woman (or child, senior, or man) ever feels threatened physically, sexually, or emotionally, and where we all together glorify God.

Cloverdale Baptist Church is a place where we serve the King, and so we will seek to do what is right in His eyes! We will seek to be a people who live together in grace and love, and provide protection, peace and prioritize care even at personal cost to those who have been

or could be exploited. May all who lay eyes on us see that we have learned from the lesson of Judges 19, that we follow God's standards for purity and care, and that those who walk through our doors will be treated with respect and dignity.

In the era of *#metoo*, where women are consistently reporting abuse and fear, we are glad that this is coming to light so that it can stop. The abuse and fear does not surprise us, in a world where our morality seems to be based on what we want, or others allow, and yet the hurt of others hurts us.

In horror we reject a world where everyone does what is right in his own eyes, and we submit ourselves fully to the King of kings and Lord of lords and will care for people His way (Ephesians 5:1-2). Judges 19 is a reminder of the end of worldliness, and for those who serve Jesus as King, a wake-up call to care for those around us who may need it. *#metoo* is a reminder that we are to be those who value and protect women (and others who are vulnerable) and where we use our influence to provide safety and an environment where all people can flourish.

The Danger of the Coming Suffering

When people suffer, their response can be more tragic than the suffering. We as God's people are called to live in such a way that even in our suffering we glorify His name.

If we are to be a people who stand firm on God's Word in a generation that is moving further and further away from a Biblical understanding of life, we will suffer. The foundations of Canada are shifting, and we are moving from a generally accepted Judeo Christian norm, to a new morality where choice and freedom reign. These days, there is no king in Canada. Everyone is doing what is right in their own eyes. This will lead to a church that must be equipped to suffer in a way that glorifies God.

If we live a life of *no compromise* and *love*, we will quickly discover that the world is not our friend. In fact, for those who have sought to live their lives for Jesus in history, it can be a very very unfriendly place! So how can we prepare for what may be coming our way as those longing to be faithful to God and His Word, who desire to be those who live in the world, but not of the world (John 17:14-15)?

Here are five steps that can help us to be ready to suffer in a way that glorifies God (2 Corinthians 4:16-18), and builds His church:

1. Recognize that this is not surprising

Suffering is something that we are promised in God's Word (2 Timothy 3:12). We should never pursue suffering, but we should be prepared for it to come.

Most people in the New Testament who sought to live all out devoted lives for Jesus died for their faith. Jesus Himself has prepared us for this, as we follow Him by clearly saying it is a part of what we get in His service (Matthew 13:44; Luke 14:33). Suffering is something that we know God's greatest servants have followed Him in (Job 1:21-22), and when we recognize that this is something to expect, we can prepare our hearts to glorify God in the midst of it.

2. Relish in the reality that God uses our suffering to grow us

Our God is sovereign, and does not waste our suffering. In fact we are told to count it all joy when we meet trials of various kinds because through them we will develop our godliness so we are lacking in nothing (James 1:2-4).

The authentic believer can have full confidence in God that whatever they are suffering is a part of God's good plan for them, to perfect them and glorify Jesus (Romans 8:28-29). When suffering, we should rejoice that God has allowed us to experience things that will make us

more who He wants us to be, and use our sufferings to impact eternity.

For those of us who trust in Him, there is no wasted suffering! More important than how we feel, is who we are, and God cares enough about our holiness to allow us to go through trials that will produce this (Romans 5:3-5)!

Tozer has said, "It is doubtful whether God can bless a man greatly until he has hurt him deeply." God actually rises up storms of conflict in relationships at times in order to accomplish that deeper work in our character. We cannot love our enemies in our own strength. This is graduate-level grace. Are you willing to enter this school? Are you willing to take the test? If you pass, you can expect to be elevated to a new level in the Kingdom. For He brings us through these tests as preparation for greater use in the Kingdom. You must pass the test first."

When Paul was struggling with his "thorn in the flesh", he learned not only to plead with God for release, but also to boast in his weaknesses so that the power of Christ could rest on him.

God uses suffering to grow us!

3. Release earthly rubbish for heavenly treasure

Suffering helps us to realize that our home is in glory! In fact it is a growth cycle, the more we realize where our treasure is, the more we will see earthly suffering for what it is and long for our heavenly dwelling.

Paul suffered immensely, and yet was able to say in 2 Corinthians 4:17-18, "*For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison,*¹⁸ *as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.*"

Paul's troubles in comparison with our own are anything but light or momentary, and yet when His eyes are in the right place He values these afflictions because they are preparing him for glory. As we learn to see things in light of eternity, we will find ourselves not only longing for home, but using things in life that prepare us for glory to maximum benefit.

4. Rejoice that we are counted worthy

There is a strange mark of the early church. They rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for Jesus (Acts 5:41). In other words, their lives were so consumed with their mission, that anything and everything that helped accomplish that, including suffering was something that they rejoiced in.

Peter later shared that this suffering for Jesus (in the time of Nero) was a blessing and one that should lead to great joy and courage (1 Peter 4:12-19) no matter how fiery the ordeal is.

It is a massive worldview shift where apathy and entitlement are replaced with joy and His courage. God is Sovereign, and in plan and power He has called us to suffer in a way that displays the beauty of His love for us, His Gospel.

Suffering for Him is a badge of honour (Matthew 5:10), that should help us to experience His blessing, His approval on us as His children!

5. Rest in him & care for one another

Suffering can help us to experience the tender care of our King, even as we offer this tender care to others (2 Corinthians 1:4). We rest in Him, and cry out to Him first, and then in that experience of refuge, we seek to love those around us that God has placed on our path. (Psalm 91:4).

"The Christian church can be a place of refuge for those who are hurting if each of us will experience God's care, and offer that to one another."

The name of the LORD is a strong tower, and the righteous run into it and are saved (Proverbs 18:10). God's people become to one another a safe place of care and refuge (Romans 12:15), and real body life occurs as we follow Jesus no matter what the cost. In Him we find rest, and through our relationship with Him we choose love (1 Peter 4:8).

In Canada we are moving away from God's Word, and those who seek to stick to it will discover that the world is an unsafe place. May we find the courage to stand firm, and the grace to love those who persecute us (Luke 6:27-36). For those who grew up in this great Nation, we are no longer in that Canada, and for us who live now, may we submit fully to our KING, may we follow Him no matter what the cost, and may we grow in our preparation for the suffering that is promised.

For these realities to be lived out, they must be known. Take the time to go back through these five steps, and look up the Scriptures and meditate on them. You are noticed by God, and loved by Him. We live in a broken and groaning world, and we belong to the KING! As you groan, cling with hope, and rejoice in intimacy with the One who loves you, and has entrusted to you this privilege (1 Peter 2:11-12).

The Danger of Compromise

It is sad to see institutions who have started with a purpose, through compromise, not only lose their purpose, but fight against it. Harvard was started as an institution that had central mission of glorifying God in loyalty to His Word. Only 18 years after the Pilgrims landed in the New World, Harvard College was founded, the first of the famed Ivy League Schools. Its core mandate was to educate pastors and raise up an academic institution that would train Christians to advance their faith in the world. The founders, in their own words, stated, *"after God had carried us safely to New England and we had built our houses, provided necessaries for our livelihood, reared convenient places for God's worship, and settled the civil government; one of the next things we longed for, and looked after was to advance learning, and perpetuate it to posterity; dreading to leave an illiterate ministry to the churches, when our present ministers shall lie in the dust."*

Sadly, this is no longer the purpose of Harvard. In fact, through compromise and neglect of mission, they have just recently told a Christian group (Harvard College Faith and Action) that they are on probation because of their stand on Christian marriage and purity (removed a homosexual from their leadership team).

What has happened to Harvard?

The Anglican church used to boast loyalty to God and His Word, now studies show that a full two percent of Anglican priests don't even believe in God, let alone hold His Word as authoritative (in Canada I am thankful for ANIC, and their loyalty to His Word). One third of the clergy don't believe in the resurrection of Jesus and half are reported to no longer believe that Jesus is the only way to heaven (<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1403106/One-third-of-clergy-do-not-believe-in-the-Resurrection.html>).

What has happened to the Anglican church? *Compromise*

The family integrated church movement started as a movement to value the family, and avoid apathy that from their perspective (and mine) has crept into many churches. Wanting to address the fragmentation of the family and the churches' role in that, they created a philosophy of ministry that was to fix this. Sadly, this movement has threatened many local churches with division, by seeking to create a movement that is more faithful to God's Word they have added to God's Word (<http://www.parkingspace23.com/the-bad-fruit-of-the-fic-movement/#.WpXBkRPwbUI>).

This movement does not have the same impact it used to, as some of its key leaders have been caught in sin, and some of the division they have created has been seen for what it is, however what began as a quality idea has slipped into a destructive force.

What happened to the FIC movement? *Compromise*

Please do not hear this as a hit on Harvard, the Anglican Church, or the FIC movement, rather hear this as a cry out against *compromise*! Certainly there are godly people in each of these movements, the bigger picture however is a little scary.

"It is sad to see individuals who started with a purpose to please God, and through compromise now live in chaos and pain."

Sadly, compromise doesn't just impact larger organizations, it also impacts individuals. I have seen so many choose disobedience to God in compromise through pursuit of their own pleasure (or avoidance of pain), and in adding to God's Word and seeking to hold others to their additions. Every Christian is tempted to compromise, tempted to add to God's Word for religious safety, tempted to take from God's Word in pursuit of fleshly pleasure, or tempted to devalue the God of the Bible with cultural replacements. Some even use a false understanding of love and tolerance to excuse their compromise.

Compromise for us as followers of Jesus, occurs when we add to the Word of God, or take away from it (usually with good motives), and call others to do the same with conviction (Romans 1:32). Compromise usually starts out very small, but it is quick to gain speed and use damning rhetoric when it is released on unsuspecting sheep with reckless abandon leaving destruction, division and demonic joy.

God has revealed to us who He is, and what He wants from us and His revelation is complete and sufficient (2 Timothy 3:16-17). We not only believe that this revelation is from Him, and thus inerrant (without error in its original manuscripts), we also believe that it is sufficient (all we need for salvation and obedience). Compromise is not new, nor has its threat ever been far from followers of God. The most damaging compromise that has every occurred in the history of mankind was the first (Genesis 3). Eve doubted the revelation of who God was (*His goodness*), she added to God's revelation to Adam and through Adam to her (*you must not even touch it*), and she then took away from God's Word in believing Satan's lie (*you will not surely die*). This is a pattern of compromise that is well worth our noting, and fighting in our own lives and sphere of influence.

Compromise will almost always follow the pathway of least resistance: 1. Doubt God's Character As Revealed In His Word; 2. Add To God's Word; 3. Take Away From God's Word. In fact, sadly, compromise will often start with one of these three and then include the others as it grows away from who God has called His children to be. Compromise leads to further compromise.

So how do we fight this danger in our own lives and church?

Four essentials that we should be constantly growing in, and all are important and feed each other so that we can contend for the faith (Jude 3) in victory in our own lives and churches.

Essential #1

1. Readiness

By this we mean being aware of the battle that we are in. All Christians are in this spiritual battle (Ephesians 6:10-20). We are not unaware of the Devil's schemes (2 Kings 2:11), and one of these (perhaps a main one, Numbers 22-24) is to get Christians to compromise. To add to God's Word, take away from God's Word, or have an unbiblical view of who He is.

Because we are not unaware, we must be ready to fight this in our own lives, especially where it will attack us. Sadly often those who are compromising actually are accusing others of compromise. So this first essential makes us aware that we are all in this battle, and compromise can come to any of us at any time. In humility we want to fight compromise in our own lives and plead with those around us to fight this as well!

Jeremiah 17:9 tells us that we all struggle with deceitful hearts, and therefore we must never be arrogant in the battle against compromise.

So this readiness will always be with humility (Matthew 5:3), an awareness of our own struggle with this issue, and a longing to be absolutely obedient!

Those who are ready will be constantly growing in the next three essentials:

Essential #2

2. Radical relationship

By this we mean being fully devoted to God in relationship, and allowing that relationship to drive and define everything else! Authentic Christians long to be those who are in a first love relationship with Him that makes all other relationships pale in comparison (Revelation 2:4; Luke 14:25-33).

Authentic Christianity is relational, we know God, through the Gospel as He has revealed Himself to us in His Word. He calls us to love Him, and walk in relationship with Him, and this relationship is to *drive and define* everything about His followers.

Authentic Christians are called to *love Him* (Matthew 22:36-40) and love Him with all that they are and all that we have. To love Him this way we must know Him as he has revealed Himself to us, and we must live our lives to seek to please Him (2 Corinthians 5:9).

As we begin the journey to *no compromise* we must commit ourselves to *radical relationship*, meaning know Him as He has revealed Himself to us, and choosing in that relationship to

obey Him no matter what the cost. We not only need a right view of the importance of this relationship, but also in this relationship to know Him as He has revealed Himself to us.

As Tozer has so aptly stated, *"what comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us. The history of mankind will probably show that no people has ever risen above its religion, and man's spiritual history will positively demonstrate that no religion has ever been greater than its idea of God. Worship is pure or base as the worshiper entertains high or low thoughts of God. For this reason the gravest question before the Church is always God Himself, and the most portentous fact about any man is not what he at a given time may say or do, but what he in his deep heart conceives God to be like. We tend by a secret law of the soul to move toward our mental image of God. This is true not only of the individual Christian, but of the company of Christians that composes the Church. Always the most revealing thing about the Church is her idea of God."* A.W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy* (New York: HarperCollins, 1978),

This leads us to the third essential to a life that avoids compromise. How do we have the right view of God, the gospel and going hard after Him as central to how we think?

Essential #3

3. Renewing the mind

Romans 12:1-2 states, *"I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ²Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."*

When we see who God is, we offer our lives to Him as living sacrifices, who then are careful to constantly be renewing our minds so that we think as God wants us to think. We put on Biblical glasses so that we can see His view on all of life. If we are not choosing this renewal of our minds we will think from a worldly perspective and as such will choose to compromise by adding to God's Word, taking away from God's Word, or not having a Biblical view of who God is. This is a call to *word saturation*!

Colossians 3:16-17, *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."*

This is the awareness that how we think falls short of how God wants us to think, and so in striving to take captive every thought (2 Corinthians 10:5) we long to have God's Word guiding and guarding every thought (Psalm 119:11).

This takes discipline, as authentic followers of God seek to intake daily this fresh way of thinking and use it to evaluate all that thoughts, feelings and actions (Matthew 7:21-27).

- Listen to sermons with pens and minds engaged.
- Read from God's Word every day
- Memorize
- Meditate (By that I mean read, re-read, and think habitually on)
- Talk about it!

Take the time, and make the effort to have a renewed mind if you are engaged in the battle to avoid compromise and glorify God! If you make this choice, learn to evaluate where you are adding to God's Word, evaluate where you are taking away from God's Word and stop *compromising*! Check your thoughts about God with how He wants to be thought of, and where there is a gap, close it! We need each other to do this, and so we flow to the last of the essentials...and like the first it is relational, perhaps wise in light of the Great Command.

4. Relational rallying

This is a commitment to help one another in our walks with God. To realize that God has called us to fight this battle together for His glory. We are not to fight compromise alone!

Hebrews 3:12-14 states, *"Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. ¹³But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. ¹⁴For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end."*

Sin is seeking to deceive those who want to follow God, to have mastery over them (Genesis 4:7) and the Bible's answer is healthy community where word saturated people gather together and encourage one another to pursue God in love and grace! It is helpful to remember that the holiest people are the most loving when love and holiness are defined biblically (1 Peter 4:8; John 13:33-34).

So to fight compromise in our own lives, we must be a part of small groups that are encouraging us to fight on in healthy ways for the glory of our God. We hear stories of Harvard, the Anglican Church, The Family Integrated Church movement, friends that have compromised, and yet perhaps most insidious is compromises attack on our own hearts. As you become more and more aware of this, be one who submits to the King, who answers Elijah's famous question (1 Kings 18:21) with a confident declaration that the God of the Bible is truly the One and Only True God, and so you will follow Him!

May God's people at Cloverdale Baptist Church (and therefore God's bride here) avoid all *Compromise*.

What Is The Gospel?

What is the gospel? <https://www.9marks.org/answer/what-gospel/>

The gospel is the good news about what Jesus Christ has done to reconcile sinners to God. Here's the whole story:

1. The one and only God, who is holy, made us in his image to know him (Gen. 1:26-28).
2. But we sinned and cut ourselves off from him (Gen. 3; Rom. 3:23).
3. In his great love, God sent his Son Jesus to come as King and rescue his people from their enemies—most significantly their own sin (Ps. 2; Luke 1:67-79).
4. Jesus established his kingdom by acting as both a mediating priest and a priestly sacrifice—he lived a perfect life and died on the cross, thus fulfilling the law himself and taking on himself the punishment for the sins of many (Mark 10:45; John 1:14; Heb. 7:26; Rom. 3:21-26, 5:12-21); then he rose again from the dead, showing that God accepted his sacrifice and that God's wrath against us had been exhausted (Acts 2:24, Rom. 4:25).
5. He now calls us to repent of our sins and trust in Christ alone for our forgiveness (Acts 17:30, John 1:12). If we repent of our sins and trust in Christ, we are born again into a new life, an eternal life with God (John 3:16).

Now that's good news.

A good way to summarize this good news is to biblically unpack the words God, Man, Christ,

Response

1. God. God is the creator of all things (Gen. 1:1). He is perfectly holy, worthy of all worship, and will punish sin (1 John 1:5, Rev. 4:11, Rom. 2:5-8).
2. Man. All people, though created good, have become sinful by nature (Gen. 1:26-28, Ps. 51:5, Rom. 3:23). From birth, all people are alienated from God, hostile to God, and subject to the wrath of God (Eph. 2:1-3).
3. Christ. Jesus Christ, who is fully God and fully man, lived a sinless life, died on the cross to bear God's wrath in the place of all who would believe in him, and rose from the grave in order to give his people eternal life (John 1:1, 1 Tim. 2:5, Heb. 7:26, Rom. 3:21-26, 2 Cor. 5:21, 1 Cor. 15:20-22).
4. Response. God calls everyone everywhere to repent of their sins and trust in Christ in order to be saved (Mark 1:15, Acts 20:21, Rom. 10:9-10).

(Some of this material has been adapted from *The Gospel and Personal Evangelism* by Mark Dever, p. 43)

