

6-SESSION BIBLE STUDY

# GOD, WHAT DO I DO?

A BIBLE STUDY ON JUDGES 1–5 ABOUT MAKING  
WISE DECISIONS IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

KATIE M. REID

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To the women who have helped shaped my faith:  
Mom, Sarae, Laurie, Paula, and Christy

For God has not given us a spirit of fear,  
but one of power, love, and sound judgment.

2 TIMOTHY 1:7

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# How to Use This Study

Whether you study the Bible on a regular basis, are an occasional reader, or are brand-new to it, I invite you to read God’s Word as loving instructions given to you by a perfect heavenly Father. When you interact with the Bible through the lens of His lavish love, you begin to see the text—and God, others, and yourself—in a different way.

## **Perspective Shift**

I spent decades living as a slave to God instead of delighting in being a daughter of God. I made decisions out of a place of guilt instead of grace, out of burden instead of freedom, out of fear instead of faith. It was a miserable way to live. I am grateful Jesus delivered me from that crippling mindset and shifted my perspective to enjoy and honor Him instead of wearing myself out trying to impress Him.

I don’t want you to fall into that performance trap like I did.

As you go through this study and learn about the judges and the actions they took, invite God to teach you about Himself and to solidify decisions you can make that will serve you well and honor Him in the process.

There are clear commands provided in God’s Word for our protection. Like a parent cupping the face of their child, trying to help them understand a better way, God may do the same with us. He is willing to correct us because He wants more for us, like He did for the Israelites during the time of the judges. We may be tempted to bypass difficult passages of

Scripture but, as you will see throughout this study, the gospel is present throughout the entirety of Scripture. Even the hard-to-understand accounts in the Bible point to the character of God and the incredible story of deliverance, redemption, and restoration He offers us through Jesus. It's such Good News!

## **The Lay of the Land**

Before you begin Week 1, there is an introductory lesson that will lay the foundation for the entire study. Don't skip over this short lesson because it provides a necessary foundation.

Pray before you begin each lesson, asking God to help you understand what you are reading, get to know Him better, and grow in your relationship with Him. A brief overview and a key verse are given before each week of study begins. Those five verses would be great to memorize.

### ***Lesson Layout***

There are five weeks of study and five lessons of study within each week, plus the introductory lesson. Each week begins by stating the overarching decision that frames every lesson. Together, we will learn how to:

- Remember who Jesus is and what He has done.
- Obey God's commands completely, not partially.
- Be responsible with our thoughts, actions, and influence.
- Endure through the power of the Holy Spirit and the armor of God.
- Rise in faith to fulfill our unique purpose at this time in history.
- Testify of God's power, His glorious deeds, and His mighty wonders.

Each day's lesson has five main sections: **Read, Focus, Engage, Reflect,** and **Decide**. The **Read** section introduces the day's Bible passage as well as the main verse for the lesson. Read the Bible passage in its entirety before you start each day of study. Consider reading it out loud to help you stay focused. The **Focus** section includes teaching about the passage

to help you interact further with what you have just read. The **Engage** section includes questions, fill in the blanks, matching, and other activities to enrich your study. The **Reflect** section provides an opportunity to apply what you learned through questions designed to lead you to action. And finally, each lesson ends with a **Decide** statement to help you move forward in your faith. Altogether, there are twenty-five decisions offered over the course of this study to empower you as you take your next steps. At the end of each week you will find a prayer and wrap-up questions to summarize what you learned.

Also included in each lesson are **Bonus** study opportunities to help you broaden your knowledge and go deeper into the text. If time allows, feel free to engage with some or all of the bonus content.

Each day's lesson will take about twenty to thirty minutes to complete. Structure your time of study in whatever way works best for you. The point isn't to rush through but to take time to contemplate what God is showing you about Himself, His people, and how you can move forward with godly wisdom in whatever decision you face.

### ***Which Version of the Bible Should I Use?***

The Christian Standard Bible (CSB) is used throughout this study. Some of the fill-in-the-blank questions will be based on the CSB version; if you don't have a copy of the CSB, you can look up the passages on BibleGateway.com or in the YouVersion app.

You can do this study on your own, with a friend, or in a small or large group.

**Access additional resources, like the key verse printables, further teaching, group resources, and a Bible study playlist, at [KatieMReid.com/Judges/](https://KatieMReid.com/Judges/).**

I am excited that you have decided to dive into this study!  
All In,  
Katie

*Dear God,*

*Thank You for the gift of Your Word. Increase our appetite for truth. May we crave time with You and find satisfaction in Your presence. Instead of striving to figure things out, may we surrender more to You. Instead of trying to muster up the desire to study, may we receive Your help to adjust our approach and view Bible study as a “get to,” not a “have to.”*

*How amazing it is that we can encounter You, the living God! Thank You for this journey through Judges. Teach us what we need to understand and apply to bring You glory and grow up in You. Illuminate Your Word, show us where we have wandered, and lead us back to You—to Your open arms, ready to forgive and receive us.*

*We offer up the areas where we are uncertain, where we aren't sure which way to turn or what to do next. You are waiting to guide us; we simply have to ask. Give us ears to hear, eyes to see, minds to comprehend, and hearts ready to follow Your direction, receive Your loving correction, and apply Your time-tested wisdom for the days ahead.*

*In Jesus's name, Amen.*

## INTRODUCTION

# THE DECISION TO REMEMBER

### **Mount Precipice**

The ascent up the steep hill is slow going in the oven-like heat of the Middle East. One sandaled foot in front of the other, I step closer to the top. Finally, I reach the stone-capped platform and am privy to a panoramic view of the Jezreel Valley. Like a bird of prey, I scan the horizon for my prize. The small town of Nazareth, peppered with slate gray buildings, comes into focus.

I can almost hear a cinematic soundtrack converging upon this moment, the orchestra's score swelling across the desert landscape as it reaches Mount Precipice. I imagine a sweeping aerial shot from a drone, circling over the ancient landmark as I, a fortysomething from the middle of Michigan, am close to encountering something I've been greatly anticipating.

Mount Precipice is believed to be the place the Nazareth townies wanted to throw Jesus off a cliff (see Luke 4:28–30). Thankfully, they didn't get their way. “[Jesus] passed right through the crowd and went on his way” (Luke 4:30).



With the patchwork of fertile fields below and Mount Tabor and Mount Gilboa in the distance, our trip's instructor begins talking about a woman from Scripture he has already mentioned numerous times throughout our travels. *Deborah*. Every time he mentioned her, something stirred in my soul. I was compelled to pay close attention.

With the bird's-eye view from Mount Precipice, I take in the scope of the battle that Deborah and Barak led in response to the Lord's command, recorded in Judges 4. Over a thousand years before Jesus was spared from premature destruction near his hometown, as recounted in Luke 4:28–30, and before Jesus delivered us from sin's destruction by dying on the cross, God provided judges, like Deborah, to serve as temporary deliverers to His people. The judges helped the people make wise decisions in a morally corrupt and hostile climate—pointing to their ultimate need for a permanent Deliverer.

Before we navigate our way through Judges 1–5, it is important to understand key components of God's character and His plan to deliver humanity from the bondage of sin and restore us to Himself. The judges were given to provide temporary deliverance to God's people, whose enemies ruled



over them because the people had rebelled against God's clear instructions. Yet the greater purpose of the judges was to point the Israelites, and us as well, to our need for a perfect and complete Deliverer, Jesus Christ, who died and rose to free us from the earthly burden and eternal consequences of sin, once and for all.

Israel's Jezreel Valley, a region repeatedly contested throughout history, serves as the setting for our study in Judges 1-5. The introductory lesson, in the following pages, lays a strong biblical foundation to stand upon as you discover the first wise decision you can make in uncertain times.

## LESSON A

# “God, What Do I Do When I’m Unsure?”

But because the LORD loved you and kept the oath he swore to your ancestors, he brought you out with a strong hand and redeemed you from the place of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

DEUTERONOMY 7:8

### Read

#### DEUTERONOMY 7

What is something you are unsure about? How do you find clarity in times of uncertainty? Throughout this study, you will discover decisions you *can* make even when you aren’t sure what to do about a particular situation in your life. The power of remembering is the first guiding principle in making wise decisions. When we remember what has been promised through Scripture, we are less likely to despair when we are unsure about what to do in our own lives. God tells His people to remember who He is, what He has instructed, and what He has done.



## Focus

In order to understand the context and time of Judges, we need to remember what God promised His people in the past and how they arrived at this point in their history.

In Genesis 15, God promised Abram, later renamed Abraham, the following things:

- Abram would have offspring as numerous as the stars (vv. 4–5).
- Abram’s offspring would be foreigners for four hundred years in a land that did not belong to them, and they would be enslaved and oppressed (v. 13).
- God would judge the nation that Abram’s descendants would serve, and they would go out of that land with many possessions (v. 14).
- Abram would go to his fathers in peace and be buried at a good old age (v. 15).

God outwardly demonstrated His unconditional covenant in Genesis 15:17–21, assuring Abram that He would keep and fulfill the promises He had given him. Clear guidance for Abram’s next steps was provided in the bedrock of God’s promises.

It is important for us to remember God’s covenant with Abraham and the fulfillment of His promises to him and his descendants as we begin our study. Here is a brief flyover: God provided a son, Isaac, to Abraham and his wife, Sarah. Hundreds of years later, Abraham’s descendants became as numerous as the stars. God then delivered them out of slavery in Egypt through Moses. God formed the Hebrews into Israel, a nation set apart for Him, during their forty years in the wilderness. He gave them laws to live by. After Moses died, Joshua led the people into the land God had promised to them. Throughout this process, the Israelites made mistakes, they rebelled, and they forgot God’s faithfulness time and time again, yet God did not forget His promise to them. God did not break the covenant He made with Abraham and his descendants (Ps. 105:7–11).

The rest of our study takes place after the Israelites entered the land God promised them and started to possess it more fully, through battle.

God had clearly instructed them to drive out the nations living in the land, but they failed to do so, and now the Israelites found themselves needing deliverance from those same nations. Even though they failed in many ways, God did not forget them. He sent temporary judges to govern them, foreshadowing their need for permanent deliverance from the oppression of sin.

## Engage

If you haven't already done so, read Deuteronomy 7, which will help you solidify the covenant God made with His people and better understand Judges 1; then answer the following questions.

1. Verse 1 states that seven nations were to be driven out of the land that was promised to God's people. What were the names of these people groups?

**H** ethites

**G**

**A**

**C**

**P**

**H**

**J**

2. Write out Deuteronomy 7:2 below:

3. In Deuteronomy 7:3, God instructs His people not to intermarry with these nations. What reason does He give for this in verse 4?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. At the end of verse 4, God reveals what His response will be if His instructions are disobeyed. Write out His response:

In verse 5, God clearly lays out four directives for His people in regard to the seven nations mentioned in verse 1.

- A. Tear down their altars.
- B. Smash their sacred pillars.
- C. Cut down their Asherah poles (we will discuss these in a coming lesson).
- D. Burn their carved images.

Verse 6 gives the “why” to these required actions: “For you are a holy people belonging to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be his own possession out of all the peoples on the face of the earth.”

5. Verses 7–8 provide the reasons God chose the Hebrews to be His chosen people. List these reasons below:

### ***Forget-Me-Not***

At the end of Deuteronomy 7:8, we read about God reminding His people that He brought them out from under their oppression in Egypt with His strong hand, redeeming them from slavery and the power of Pharaoh. When we forget what God has done for us in the past, we can be tempted to despair or to slip into arrogance, taking credit for our successes.

The following verses serve as an important warning to the Hebrews and to us when we experience deliverance from oppression and experience the blessing of God's promises.

Be careful that you don't forget the LORD your God by failing to keep his commands, ordinances, and statutes that I am giving you today. When you eat and are full, and build beautiful houses to live in, and your herds and flocks grow large, and your silver and gold multiply, and everything else you have increases, be careful that your heart doesn't become proud and you forget the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery. (Deut. 8:11–14)

Remembering what God did in the past helps inform our present and future decisions. God is infinite and all-knowing; He does not forget His promises. The only thing He chooses to forget is the sin of those who are in Christ (Isa. 43:25; Jer. 31:34; Heb. 8:12). Being "in" Christ means believing in Him, that He is who He says He is in the Bible. It involves receiving His salvation by accepting His forgiveness for our sins, following Jesus, and aligning our lives to His will. In essence, it's about being "all in," holding nothing back from Him.

As we take a closer look at some of the temporary judges God raised up, keep in mind that they serve as an arrow pointing forward to the perfect and total deliverance available to us through the death and resurrection of Christ. Throughout the totality of Scripture, we see our desperate need for deliverance and God answering our deepest need with His greatest gift to us. No matter how dark things get, the promise and hope of Jesus is present—from Genesis to Judges, from the Gospels to Revelation. Not only is it important to remember what God has done for His people in the past, it is crucial to remember what Jesus has done for us.

### ***Jesus's Ta-Da List***

Here is a sampling of the incredible things Jesus has already accomplished!

- ✓ Left heaven and came to earth in the flesh (John 1:1–14)
- ✓ Instructed in truth (John 14:5–6)
- ✓ Pointed to the Father (John 14:8–11)
- ✓ Died on the cross for our sins, was buried, rose again (1 Cor. 15:3–4)
- ✓ Took away sins through His sacrifice (John 1:29)
- ✓ Demonstrated His love for us (Rom. 5:8)
- ✓ Showed us how to love others (John 13:34–35)
- ✓ Gave us the Holy Spirit (John 14:15–17)

This is Jesus's faithfulness on display. Not only did He provide all of this—and more—for us but He is coming back again!

It is comforting that God does not forget us (Isa. 49:14–16). He keeps His promises. God upholds His covenant even when we fail. When we are convinced of God's lavish love, it helps us make clearheaded decisions. Could it be that you're having trouble making a decision because you have forgotten that God does not forget you?

Recalling what Jesus has done for us is a necessary practice. It strengthens our faith to remember He is our Promise Keeper and our Ultimate Deliverer. He has gone to prepare a place for us, if we are His.

## **Reflect**

How do you know if you are His? Read the following verses to find out:

Romans 10:9

2 Timothy 2:19

John 14:5-7

## Bonus

Choose one of the statements from the “Ta-Da” list of Jesus’s amazing acts. Look up the corresponding Bible verse(s) listed beside it and read it through. Record what you learn below:

### DECIDE

When you aren’t sure what to do, decide to remember that God doesn’t forget what He promised His people.

*Dear Jesus,*

*We want to remember how You have redeemed us even though we dirtied ourselves by rebelling against Your pure love for us. You rescued us out of our slavery to sin, giving us new life through Your costly and complete sacrifice for us. You made a way for our sins to be forgiven and our shame to be removed completely. You abolished death and threw down our enemy, the devil, the accuser. We are so grateful. We choose to receive Your deep love for us, proven on the cross, and rely on Your salvation, not our own strength. Help us not to flirt with the world; we want to be faithful to You and have sincere hearts toward You (Ps. 78:22, 42, 34–37). Help us to understand our new identity in You and to behave accordingly, knowing we are loved and cherished—not because we have earned it but because You have mercifully offered that which we have not, and could not, earn.*

*We are your Bride, bought with a price; our value is found in You. Thank You that we have not been left alone. You have given us the gift*

*of Your Holy Spirit to remind us of what You have done and what You have instructed. With great anticipation, we actively await the day when You return for Your Bride and we will experience complete union with You, our Groom. You alone are worthy to receive praise, glory, and honor!*

*In the Name above every name, Amen.*



## WEEKLY WRAP-UP

*This week, I decide to remember who Jesus is and what He has done.*

God promised Abraham he would be the father of many nations and God would give his descendants the land of Canaan (Gen. 17:1–9). Fast-forward a few hundred years, and Moses led the Hebrews (Abraham’s offspring) out of their bondage in Egypt and to the Promised Land. Then Moses died (Deut. 34:1–11). Joshua led God’s chosen people into the Promised Land and helped them begin to inhabit the land (Josh. 1:1–6). Then Joshua died (24:29–32). There was still work to be done for God’s people to fully possess what He promised them. But with their earthly leaders gone, it was time to see if they would do what was right without the oversight they once had.

Answer the following questions to help summarize what you learned during this introductory lesson. If possible, use biblical references to back up your responses.

1. What did God deliver His people from?

2. What did God promise His people?

3. What did Jesus deliver us from?

4. What does Jesus promise us?

5. Based on what you discovered in this introduction, how can the decision to remember help you make wise decisions in uncertain times?