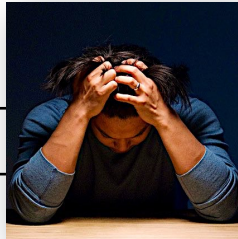


WHY Life Falls Apart... And How to Avoid It!



"In those days Israel had no king; all the people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes." Judges 17:6 NLT

- When was there a time you felt like life was "falling apart"?

The book of Judges contrasts life that ignores God with life that follows God. A life that ignores God results in turmoil, failure, conflict, disorderliness, etc. A life that follows God results in peace, prosperity, and orderliness. The book of Judges illustrates the bumper sticker: **"No God, No Peace. Know God, Know Peace."** The book of Judges conveys a warning desperately needed in the 21st century, where people question the eternal absolutes of God's Word and embrace moral relativism. Today's society needs to learn from the mistakes of the past—life that ignores God falls apart.

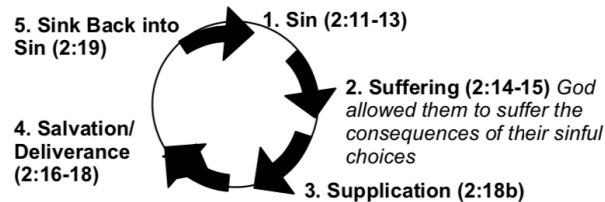
Central Lesson Life that **IGNORES** God falls apart.

Key Scripture: Judges **17:6** and 21:25 *"In those days Israel had no king; all the people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes."* (NLT)

Key Chapters: Judges **chapter 2** summarizes the book of Judges.

- It records the **transition** from Joshua's Godly generation to the ungodly Israelites after Joshua died (**2:6-10**).
- It describes Israel's **CYCLE of sin to salvation (2:11-19)**. The remaining chapters, 3-21, illustrate Israel's cycle of sin to salvation.
- Chapter 2 reveals God's purpose for not destroying the Canaanite pagan nations (**2:20-23**). They would be a means of **testing Israel's faithfulness & obedience** (2:22; 3:4). God also allows us to experience difficulty in order to test our faithfulness & obedience. Do you pass the test?

The Cycle of Sin to Salvation (The Cycle of Disobedience to Deliverance).



Title: The name "Judges" in Hebrew means "to govern, rule, deliver, or save." The name comes from the individuals that God raised up after Joshua died. They were to lead & deliver Israel from its enemies. There were 12 individual Judges (not including Abimelech, who appointed himself as ruler, chapter 9).

The book could better be titled **"The Book of Failure."** It records the dark days of Israel's history. God had blessed them by bringing them into their promised land. However, they repeatedly turned from God, lived only for their lustful desires, worshipped pagan idols, and became self-centered, depraved, disorganized, and eventually defeated & oppressed by foreign pagan nations.

Finally, God raised up the Judges to deliver them from their captivity after they repented of their sins & turned back to God. The Judges were:

1. Othniel (oth-nee-ale' 3:7-11	7. Jair (yaw-ere') 10:3-5
2. Ehud (ay-hood') 3:12-30	8. Jephthah (yif-tawkh') 10:6-12:7
3. Shamgar (sham-gar') 3:31	9. Ibzan ((ib-tsawn') 12:8-10
4. Deborah & Barak (deb-o-raw' & baw-rawk') 4:1-5:31	10. Elon (ay-lone') 12:11-12
5. Gideon (ghid-ohn') 6:1-8:35	11. Abdon (ab-dohn') 12:13-15
6. Tola (to-law') 10:1-2	12. Samson (shim-shone') Chs. 13-16

Author: Unknown. Ancient Jewish tradition identifies **Samuel** as the author (1 Samuel chapters 1-28). In addition, the Talmud (the ancient Jewish commentary on the law, traditions, etc.) points to Samuel as the author.

Key Words: *"The Israelites did evil in the Lord's sight..."* (NLT) 2:11; 3:7, 12; 4:1; 6:1; 10:6; 13:1. Also, *"rescued"* (NLT) Judges 2:16, 18; 3:9, 31; 7:2; 8:22.

Outline: Bible teacher Warren Wiersbe outlines Judges in three parts:

- I. **Apathy (Chapters 1-2)**
- II. **Apostasy (Chapters 3-16)**
- III. **Anarchy (Chapters 17-21)**

Theme: The key theme of Judges is that **life without God falls apart!** (2:11-15). Israel's downward slide resulted from partial obedience—they did not complete the conquest of the Land by driving out all the pagan nations.

The Life Application Bible explains:

"Judges is...a book about sin and its consequences. Like a minor cut or abrasion that becomes infected when left untreated, sin grows and soon poisons the whole body.... Simply stated, the reason for this rapid decline was sin—individual and corporate. The first step away from God was incomplete obedience (1:11-2:5); the Israelites refused to eliminate the enemy completely from the land. This led to intermarriage and idolatry (2:6-3:7) and everyone doing 'as he saw fit' (17:6). Before long the Israelites became captives. Out of their desperation they begged God to rescue them. In faithfulness to his promise and out of his loving-kindness, God would raise up a judge to deliver his people and, for a time, there would be peace. Then complacency and disobedience would set in, and the cycle would begin again.... Observe Israel's repeated downward spiral into sin, refusing to learn from history and living only for the moment." (p. 372).

Major Lessons:

1. Guard against following & obeying God **HALF**-heartedly.
2. Living life without God is usually a slow slide rather than a quick leap.
3. Life without God falls apart for everyone—there are no exceptions.
4. Godly leadership is essential to spiritual vitality and success.

Central Lesson: Life that **IGNORES** God falls apart.

- ▶ Accept Christ as your Savior. ▶ As a Christian, dedicate your life to Christ. ▶ Invite someone to next Sunday's study. ▶ Attend a small group. ▶ Read the Bible this week ▶ Pray for friends that need Jesus.