Unit 9, Session 1

The Pattern of Rebellion

Summary and Goal
The Israelites knew the names well: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua. The stories of these men and God’s miraculous ways and mighty hand had shaped their identity and their history. But the identity and history of a person’s parents, grandparents, and beyond does not take the place of individual faith and obedience. In this session, we will see that the children of Israel had conquered the promised land, but they had not conquered their own sin and rebellion against God, the One who had given them the victory. The opening chapters of the Book of Judges reveal a cycle of sin that would plague God’s people for generations. God had been faithful to His promises, and He would remain faithful, even when His people were unfaithful.

Session Outline
1. God’s people rebel against God by abandoning Him (Judg. 2:8-13).
2. God’s people are punished and given over to their enemies (Judg. 2:14-15).
3. God’s people are saved through God’s chosen leader (Judg. 2:16-19).

Session in a Sentence
God punishes His people when they rebel against Him, but He also provides a way of deliverance.

Christ Connection
The judges saved people from the consequences of their sin but could not change the cause of their sin. Jesus is the Savior and Judge who takes upon Himself the consequences for our sin and then offers us new hearts that seek His righteousness.

Missional Application
Because we have been forgiven of our rebellion through Christ, we identify and resist the prevailing idolatries in our society so that our distinctiveness will back up our proclamation of the gospel.
Group Time

Introduction

INTERACT: Ask group members the opening question in the DDG (p. 85).

What examples of rebellion and revolution, national or personal, stand out to you? Why? (be prepared to give answers of your own to jump-start the conversation)

EXPLAIN: Reference the paragraph in the DDG (p. 85) as you comment on the nature of national and then personal rebellion. Connect the rebellious human heart to the Israelites’ situation: in the promised land but still suffering under the rebellion of sin.

Throughout history, revolutions have formed new nations, implemented social change, and altered the way we live. But revolution and rebellion do not just take place on a national level. Children rebel against their parents, teens rebel against authority, and adults rebel against the status quo. Overtly or secretly, we’ve all rebelled against some sort of authority in our lives. And each one of us, all people created in the image of God, has considered God’s authority and commands and replied, “No, I don’t want to.”

• Joshua had led the people with faith in God, resulting in victory over their enemies. The Israelites were in the land, but they still had to clear the land of the remaining inhabitants. Completing this work would require faith and obedience.

• As the Book of Judges opens, we see that initially the Israelites obeyed, even though Joshua was dead, but that would not last. Sin is a powerful internal foe with severe consequences for those who fall before it.

SUMMARIZE: In this session, we will see that the children of Israel had conquered the promised land, but they had not conquered their own sin and rebellion against God, the One who had given them the victory. The opening chapters of the Book of Judges reveal a cycle of sin that would plague God’s people for generations. God had been faithful to His promises, but what would He do when His people were unfaithful in return?

For additional teaching options and other resources, please visit www.GospelProject.com/additional-resources.
**Point 1:** God’s people rebel against God by abandoning Him (Judg. 2:8-13).

**SAY:** The stage appeared to be set for a smooth transition to another leader who would continue guiding God’s people on in faith to more victories, but the Israelites chose to go a different direction.

**READ** Judges 2:8-13 (DDG p. 86), asking group members to circle any references to the true God and to underline any references to idols to take note of this passage’s emphasis on idolatry.

8 Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of 110. 9 They buried him in the territory of his inheritance, in Timnath-heres, in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash. 10 That whole generation was also gathered to their ancestors. After them another generation rose up who did not know the LORD or the works he had done for Israel.

11 The Israelites did what was evil in the Lord’s sight. They worshiped the Baals and abandoned the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of Egypt. They followed other gods from the surrounding peoples and bowed down to them. They angered the LORD, for they abandoned him and worshiped Baal and the Ashtoreths.

**EXPLAIN:** Reference the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 86) as you explain why humans often pursue idolatry rather than worship the one true God: *Idolatry is everywhere, idolatry is easy, and idolatry is explainable.*

The rebellion of God’s people was not an anomaly but often the norm. At the heart of their rebellion was idolatry; they chose to worship the gods of the inhabitants of the promised land and turned their backs on the God who had brought them out of Egypt. Here are three reasons why humans often pursue idolatry rather than worship the one true God: *Idolatry is everywhere, idolatry is easy, and idolatry is explainable.*

- **Idolatry is everywhere.** Not only do we have potential idols all around us—possessions, career, leisure, technology—we are surrounded by idol-worshipers as well, and they are not just found outside of the church. Who among us puts God first in our lives all the time? Choosing to give family or job or sports or health or *anything else* first place in our lives over God plagues our culture and the church.

- **Idolatry is easy.** There is no shame in acknowledging that following God is difficult. It requires sacrifice. It requires faith. It requires aligning our priorities according to God’s will instead of our own. Idolatry, on the other hand, is much less demanding, and modern idolatry has inverted our focus from giving another glory to receiving pleasure for ourselves. We make idols of that which pleases us.

- **Idolatry is explainable.** It is easy to explain, to rationalize, idolatry when it is so prevalent around us and when God’s ways seem so daunting. “Everyone else is doing it; why should I be different? And does God really expect me to follow Him the way He describes in Scripture? I can’t do that! Not even the people in Scripture could do it!”
**FILL IN THE BLANKS:** Provide group members with the answers for the call-out in their DDG (p. 86).

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**Sin as Idolatry:** Sin is not only a **physical act** of rebellion against God, but it is also a matter of the **heart**. In Scripture, idolatry usually refers to bowing down to a statue made of wood or gold. But idolatry can take on more subtle forms: a seeking of approval, security, power, pleasure, etc.

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**Essential Doctrine “Sin as Idolatry”:** Sin is not only a **physical act** of rebellion against God, such as lying or stealing, but it is also a matter of the **heart**. The physical displays of sin are the fruit of what has been birthed in the heart of a person (Matt. 15:10-20). In Scripture, idolatry usually refers to bowing down to a statue made of wood or gold, worshiping created things instead of the Creator. But idolatry can take on more subtle forms: a seeking of approval, security, power, pleasure, etc. We can diagnose the idolatry of our heart by examining the areas where the desires of our heart have turned into idolatrous demands (Jas. 4:1-2).

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**EXPLAIN:** Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 86) to point out that this generation of Israelites did not know the Lord. Their parents had failed to teach them His works and ways, but they were still responsible for their rebellion. Make the connection to how believers today are to care for the faithfulness of others.

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In a conscious act of the will, the Israelites chose to turn from God to idols. But there was more to it than that. These Israelites did not know God as they should have. They didn’t know His character or what He had done. Their parents had failed to obey God and pass on His works and ways to the next generation. This was disastrous for their descendants, but their children were still responsible for their own rebellion.

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- God commanded the Israelites to teach their children about His ways (see Deut. 6). He commanded them to establish memorials testifying to His works (see Josh. 4). Their disobedience to these commands resulted in their children rebelling against God. This is the fruit of failing to disciple across generations.
- Today, we are still called not only to trust and follow God but also to watch out for and encourage one another toward love and faithfulness (Heb. 10:23-25). We are called to know God as we also make Him known to others. We are responsible for our own choices in obeying God or turning to idols, but we also are accountable for caring about the faithfulness of others, including our brothers and sisters in Christ, the next generation of our own families, and the next generation of potential disciples.

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**INTERACT:** Ask group members the following question.

What are some excuses people use to justify their idolatry and to live outside of God’s will? (this is the way I was taught to live; my parents were hypocrites; the church is full of hypocrites; I’m doing what makes me happy; God wants me to be happy; I didn’t know God had a problem with this; I’m just following my heart)
Point 2: God’s people are punished and given over to their enemies (Judg. 2:14-15).

SAY: God is love. That means God forgives and shows mercy when we sin, but it also means He does not allow sin to continue unchecked. Even better than the best parent guiding children on the straight and narrow way, God is sure to let His children know when they are living in disobedience to Him and His Word (see Deut. 8:5; 11:1-7; Heb. 12:5-11). That's exactly what He did with the Israelites because of their rebellion and idolatry.

READ Judges 2:14-15 (DDG p. 87).

14 The LORD’s anger burned against Israel, and he handed them over to marauders who RAIDed them. He sold them to the enemies around them, and they could no longer resist their enemies. 15 Whenever the Israelites went out, the LORD was against them and brought disaster on them, just as he had promised and sworn to them. So they suffered greatly.

EXPLAIN: Use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 87) to connect God’s discipline of His children with His love for them.

God does not ignore sin indefinitely. Though the Lord declared that He is slow to anger (Ex. 34:6), there are times when His anger against sin will lead to discipline. To be clear, discipline and love are not enemies needing to be reconciled; they are friends working in unison for God’s glory and our good. It was not unloving for God to send enemies to prevail against His children; it was a corrective act of love, not a punitive act of spite. Not correcting His children and allowing them to continue on in their idolatry would have been unloving.

- The words of verses 14-15 are the antithesis of the power God had promised the Israelites. God had said He would wipe out their enemies: “No one will be able to stand against you” (see Deut. 7:24; 11:25; Josh. 1:5; 10:8). No one—as long as the people obeyed God. That singular condition was important.

Commentary: Deuteronomy 28 provides a lengthy description of the blessings God would give His people if they faithfully obeyed the Lord (vv. 1-14). But immediately following that list of blessings is a much longer list of curses should they fail to obey (vv. 15-68). The volume of warnings directed toward His people reveals how serious God takes the disobedience of His people. In the midst of all these warnings we read, “The LORD will cause you to be defeated before your enemies” (v. 25). God is always faithful to His word, both in giving His people victory over their enemies and in giving His people’s enemies victory over them.
INSTRUCT: Ask group members to use the scale in their DDG (p. 87) to respond to the following question.

How do you tend to respond God’s discipline in your life?

- Open resistance
- Indifference
- Submissive humility

EXPLAIN: Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 87) to connect the Israelites’ disobedience and idolatry with their unbelief regarding God. Then apply this truth to the lives of your group members: belief is proven not in what we say but in how we live.

Disobedience caused the Israelites to fall from “No one will be able to stand against you” to “They could no longer resist their enemies” (Judg. 2:14). We might be tempted to say of the Israelites, “What were they thinking?” God had identified their secret weapon: Himself. He had warned them of the results of their disobedience and idolatry. Yet they chose other gods. We can’t fathom their cluelessness until we look more closely at our own lives, at our own struggle with unbelief and hypocrisy.

- The Israelites knew what God had promised, but they did not believe it. Believing leads to obedience, and obedience results in blessing. Unbelief leads to disobedience, and disobedience results in God’s discipline to draw the wayward child back to Himself.

Application: Scripture teaches that “everything is possible for the one who believes” (Mark 9:23) and that “without faith it is impossible to please God” (Heb. 11:6). Believing God—not merely believing in Him but trusting in His character and believing what He says is true—is the root of obedience. It’s the key to victory and fellowship with Him. There are people filling the pews of churches today who would say: “Yes! I believe God’s Word is true, and I know Jesus and I am saved.” But merely saying we believe something is not believing it—how we live proves what we believe (Jas. 2:14-26).

INTERACT: Ask group members the following question.

How does discipline work to correct and train God’s people? (discipline helps us to see the error of our sinful ways so we return to abiding in Christ; God’s discipline helps to shape the way we think, feel, and believe so our minds can be renewed according to His will; sometimes suffering comes just because we are followers of Christ, and we are to view this as God’s discipline so we keep God’s glory and mission as our first priority over the joys and pleasures of this world; discipline teaches us to endure suffering with faith and patience)
**Point 3:** God’s people are saved through God’s chosen leader (Judg. 2:16-19).

**READ:** Ask a volunteer to read Judges 2:16-19 (DDG p. 88).

16 The **Lord** raised up judges, who saved them from the power of their marauders, but they did not listen to their judges. Instead, they prostituted themselves with other gods, bowing down to them. They quickly turned from the way of their fathers, who had walked in obedience to the **Lord’s** commands. They did not do as their fathers did. 18 Whenever the **Lord** raised up a judge for the Israelites, the **Lord** was with him and saved the people from the power of their enemies while the judge was still alive. The **Lord** was moved to pity whenever they groaned because of those who were oppressing and afflicting them. 19 Whenever the judge died, the Israelites would act even more corruptly than their fathers, following other gods to serve them and bow in worship to them. They did not turn from their evil practices or their obstinate ways.

**PACK ITEM 11: GOD IS...** Reference the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 88) as you explain why God would continue to show grace and mercy to His rebellious people. Allow group members to call out the various attributes of God on this poster as they relate to the highlighted points below. [Examples in brackets below]

When we read through the Book of Judges, we see Israel’s repeated rebellion. If we were God, we would have walked away from them and left them in their sin and its consequences, not been moved to pity for their suffering. But **God is not like us.**

**God desires for His people to enjoy a relationship with Him.** Unlike us, God is ever faithful.

- **God is not like us.** His thoughts and ways are not ours; they are higher than we can understand (Isa. 55:8-9). While we might argue that the Israelites deserved to be abandoned because of their sins, we forget that God, by His own revelation, is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in faithful love (see Ex. 34:6-7; Ps. 103:8-10). [all of the attributes]

- **God desires for His people to enjoy a relationship with Him.** He wants them to know Him, love Him, and live for Him, so He loves, pursues, and disciplines to that end. Every act of God’s judgment in Judges was followed by His mercy. Every act of discipline included His guidance. [God is love, gracious, merciful]

- **God is ever faithful.** The Judges God raised up were flawed men and women. They were sinners in need of a Savior themselves. But they were each provided by God to rescue His people in their time of need solely out of His gracious love for them. God’s love is a faithful love, flowing forth from an ever-faithful God. This is why He would continue to lead, guide, and love Israel even before they repented, drawing them toward it. And it is why He does not abandon us as well. [God is unchanging, love, faithful, truthful]
INTERACT: Ask group members the following question.

How do God’s attributes help to explain both His punishment of sin and His mercy and grace for rebellious sinners? (God is holy and just, so by nature He hates sin and must punish it; God is gracious and merciful, so He can pardon and forgive sinners; God is unchanging, so He will always be faithful to His promises to punish sin and love and forgive His people)

EXPLAIN: Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 88)

Mercifully, God raised up judges to rescue His people from the hands of their enemies and to bring them back to obedience, but their rescue was always short-lived. The people would obey God while the judge who had delivered them was living, but once that judge died, the people once again did not listen and returned to their rebellion. More than laziness or lukewarm faith, the Israelites at the time of the judges pursued idolatry. And still God showed grace and mercy, just as He does with us, but we have a better Judge.

- The Israelites’ lack of listening was more than being distracted or paying half-hearted attention. The Israelites heard what the judges said, they saw the deliverance God had brought, but they did not act in accordance with what they heard and saw. That lack of obedience is what is in mind here. In fact, they actively sought to disobey God.

Commentary: The Hebrew word for “listen” in verse 17, shema, is the same found in Deuteronomy 6:4-5, “Listen, Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.” More than a mental activity, as we often use “listen/hear,” the use of this verb in the Old Testament focuses on obedience because of hearing.

INTERACT: Ask group members the following question.

What will it mean for God’s people to listen to His Word? (God’s people will expose themselves to God’s Word more and more, through personal Bible reading, faithful Bible teaching and preaching, and fellowship around the Word of God; it will mean joyful obedience to God’s commands; it will mean participating in the gospel mission to share Jesus with the nations to the ends of the earth)
EXPLAIN: The grip of sin on the Israelites seemed more than they could bear. Under the influence of a strong leader or judge, there were moments of victory and obedience. The judges saved the Israelites from the consequences of their sin but could not change the cause of their sin. This is why they repeated the cycle of sin over and over. Yet in Christ we have a Savior and Judge who takes upon Himself the consequences for our sin and offers us new hearts that seek His righteousness. Without Jesus, we would be doomed to repeat the pattern of sin and rebellion seen in the Israelites. But by grace we have been saved from all our sin, once and for all. So let us pursue obedience from gratitude, knowing that when we do fail, when we do rebel and pursue idolatry, God is always present and faithful to direct, convict, and discipline us as an act of gracious love. In the midst of our greatest rebellion, He orchestrated our greatest deliverance; why would He ever fail us now?

READ the following missional application statement in the DDG (p. 89), and encourage group members to choose at least one of the options below as a way to respond to the truth of God’s Word.

Because we have been forgiven of our rebellion through Christ, we identify and resist the prevailing idolatries in our society so that our distinctiveness will back up our proclamation of the gospel.

- How will you respond to the sin and idolatry found in your own life?
- What are some ways your group can hold one another accountable to listen to God’s Word and obey in gratitude for your salvation?
- Where do you see idolatry in our culture today? What can you do to address these idols and show that Jesus is better?

CLOSE IN PRAYER: Father, we deserve to be cast out of Your kingdom as rebels, and yet, You have mercifully delivered us into the kingdom of Your beloved Son. Thank You for demonstrating Your holiness and Your love through the cross, where Jesus willingly received the just penalty for sin due to us. Help us to accept Your discipline where we need it as You conform us to the image of Your Son by Your Spirit. Amen.

PACK ITEM 12: THE JUDGES HANDOUT: Pass out a copy of this handout to each group member to help them see the pattern of rebellion in the Book of Judges as they keep up with their Daily Study devotions throughout this unit.

INSTRUCT: As your group departs, encourage group members to read and respond to the Daily Study devotions in their DDG (pp. 90-92), which build and expand upon the group study. Also advocate for small groups or families to use Encourage One Another (p. 93) for mutual accountability and fellowship grounded upon the foundation of God’s Word.
Daily Discipleship

Throughout the week following the session, use the ideas below to remind and encourage your group members to live as disciples of Jesus Christ. The Daily Study devotions in the DDG (pp. 90-92) will help group members get into God’s Word and study it for themselves. Encourage One Another (p. 93) will help group members and families fellowship with one another with purpose.

Daily Study

Brief daily devotions in the DDG (pp. 90-92) will help group members take initiative in their own discipleship.

- Make sure all group members have access to a Bible to read. Have some Bibles available to give to guests who may need one, or offer to get one and arrange a time to meet to give it and show how to navigate it for the devotions.
- Share the following idea from the devotion for Day 2 as a part of point 1 in the session: The faithfulness of God extends not only to His love and mercy but also to the consequences of sin. The God who is so faithful to provide is just as faithful to discipline.

Consider leading by example and reading the daily devotions yourself with your own DDG. Based on your study, use brief messages throughout the week (group text, email, social media) to encourage your group to keep up with their daily time in God’s Word and to live it out. Here are a couple of examples you can use:

- Day 3: “In Christ, our sin is forgiven, but it is not without consequence, not without discipline from God.”
- Day 5: “The best person to minister to the wounded is someone who has been wounded. So ask God to help you grow in what you’re going through.”

Visit www.GospelProject.com/Blog for additional content and resources you can use to help group members gain more insight into their daily studies. Send group members a link or a portion of a blog post or other content that you believe will be helpful and encouraging for their time in God’s Word.

Encourage One Another

This brief plan for fellowship and accountability in the group member’s DDG (p. 93) will help groups of 2-4 people to meet sometime during the week to reflect on the session and to share how God is working and they are responding. It could also be used for family discipleship with students and children who are using The Gospel Project in their groups.

- Encourage group members to hold up Jesus as God’s chosen leader for one another’s lives; He saves and He disciplines His people.
- See yourself as a member of the group who also needs encouragement in the faith, and participate in such a group this week.
Additional Commentary

Point 1: God’s people rebel against God by abandoning Him (Judg. 2:8-13).

“According to Judges 2:7, the Israelites worshiped Yahweh throughout the lifetimes of Joshua and the elders who outlived him. The firsthand experiences of seeing the Lord’s great works emboldened the people to be faithful. Tragically, as Joshua and his generation passed from the scene, the next generation did not know the Lord or His works on their behalf. The brutal realities of having to squeeze out a crop from an often-stubborn land prompted the Israelites to enhance their chances by worshiping the gods of the peoples around them. In Canaan, the non-Israelites worshiped Baal, the storm god, and his female counterpart Asherah. The Israelites erroneously believed that worshiping Baal would guarantee the rains needed for their crops. Similarly, worshiping Asherah would guarantee the fertility and productivity of the land. Apparently, at times they worshiped Baal and Asherah to the extent of forgetting Yahweh altogether (1 Sam. 12:9). At other times, they apparently worshiped both Yahweh and Baal, seeing no problem with this syncretistic approach to religion (1 Kings 18:21).”

“The fundamental problem in Israel is reduced to ‘The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord and served the Baals.’ This phrase, which is borrowed from Deuteronomy, provides a formal link between this preamble (2:1-23) and the narratives that follow … This raises an important question regarding the author’s awareness of Yahweh’s disposition in this matter. How did he know their actions were evil in the sight of Yahweh? On the one hand, he may have drawn this conclusion by comparing Israel’s behavior with the patterns of normative righteous conduct established in the covenant, especially the first two principles of covenant relationship outlined in Exodus 20:1-17 and expounded upon by Moses in Deuteronomy 5–11. On the other hand, this comment reflects the author’s apparent omniscience … As a divinely authorized interpreter of historical events, through the agency of the Spirit of God, the author is informed by God and therefore is able to describe Yahweh’s evaluation of the Israelites’ conduct.”

Point 2: God’s people are punished and given over to their enemies (Judg. 2:14-15).

“The Lord’s response is curiously polarised. Both 2:14 and 2:21 include the same Hebrew words, ‘so the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel’ (2:14,20 ESV). He punishes Israel’s sin with relentless cycles of oppression. The shocking fact is that the Lord himself becomes their enemy—the Lord gave them … he sold them … the hand of the Lord was against them (2:14-15). However, sandwiched between these two statements about the divine anger are actions of deliverance: the Lord raised up judges and he saved his people (2:16,18).”
“Like the previous segment, this section is introduced with a thesis statement: ‘The anger of the LORD burned against Israel.’ Although modern readers may protest this image of God [literally, ‘and his nose burned’] … the expression of divine fury must be interpreted against the background of extravagant demonstrations of grace in the past. Yahweh is a passionate God; he cannot stand idly by while other divine competitors snatch his people from him. Nor can he passively accept his own people’s adulterous affairs with other gods. Yahweh’s expression of anger against his people is described in the form of two roughly parallel statements: He gave them into the power of plunderers; He sold them into the power of their enemies.”

“as the LORD had sworn. God had threatened to deliver Israel into its enemies’ hands if it forsook him (Deut. 28:25; Josh. 23:13). He also warned that these nations would be snares and traps to Israel (Ex. 23:33; Deut. 7:16; and esp. Num. 33:55), which came true with a vengeance during the period of the judges (Judg. 2:14-15,21-23)."

Point 3: God’s people are saved through God’s chosen leader (Judg. 2:16-19).

“The judges (Heb. Shophetim) were primarily military leaders, though some, like Deborah (Judg. 4:4,5), were also administrators and judges. These judges were also empowered by God to lead the Israelites against their oppressors … The judges were primarily local deliverers. In some cases, several judges ruled in different parts of the land at the same time.”

“Because of their distress, the Lord raised up judges for Israel, and they saved them from the power of their marauders. There is no mention of repentance by the people; the judges were raised up as the result of the Lord’s pity on their groaning. In relenting from the punishment he had imposed on his people, the Lord showed himself to be ‘a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger and abounding in faithful love and truth’ (Ex. 34:6). The judges typically governed Israel (or part of it) and sought to lead them in the ways of the Lord during their lifetimes—a ministry that is most evident in the life of the final judge, Samuel. Yet their influence on the people was limited, and after each judge died Israel invariably reverted to their idolatrous ways. This period of Israel’s history was a downward spiral, with each generation acting more corruptly than their fathers. The judges slowed rather than stemmed the rising tide of iniquity.”

References
1. Andrew Murray, Abide in Christ, in The Essential Works of Andrew Murray, ed. Tracy M. Sumner (Barbour, 2008) [eBook].
In these sessions of The Gospel Project, we experience some of the most exciting narratives in Scripture. There are accounts here of sin and judgment, of moral decline and merciful intervention, and of rescuers who need rescue. Through it all, one thing is clear: God is with His people and He is faithful to His promise.

It’s important to keep that central theme in mind because many people read these stories about the conquest of the land and try to find examples for emulation. To be clear, we can learn a lot from these Old Testament heroes (see 1 Cor. 10), but we cannot implement their virtues apart from our connection to the Vine—Jesus Christ Himself, the One who bears fruit in us and through us.

As we walk through our present wilderness, struggling against sin and encountering sorrow, we know that the God who has gone before us is faithful. He is the One who prepares the way for us to be His ambassadors. He is the One who breaks the chains of our idolatry and lifts our gaze to His unchanging glory.