

THEY FORGOT *THE LORD*

unit 8 | session 1



CHRIST CONNECTION

God raised up Jesus Christ as our ultimate deliverer in response to our need for salvation from sin and death.

LOSING IDENTITY

This week, we're covering the passages and main points below. But we encourage you to dig in and read all of the content on this timeline.

Judges 3:1—Judges 3:31

GOD TESTS HIS PEOPLE

JUDGES 3:1-8

1 Now these are the nations that the LORD left, to test Israel by them, that is, all in Israel who had not experienced all the wars in Canaan. 2 It was only in order that the generations of the people of Israel might know war, to teach war to those who had not known it before. 3 These are the nations: the five lords of the Philistines and all the Canaanites and the Sidonians and the Hivites who lived on Mount Lebanon, from Mount Baal-hermon as far as Lebo-hamath. 4 They were for the testing of Israel, to know whether Israel would obey the commandments of the LORD, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses. 5 So the people of Israel lived among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. 6 And their daughters they took to themselves for wives, and their own daughters they gave to their sons, and they served their gods. 7 And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. They forgot the LORD their God and served the Baals and the Asheroth. 8 Therefore the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia. And the people of Israel served Cushan-rishathaim eight years.

GOD DELIVERS HIS PEOPLE

JUDGES 3:9-11

9 But when the people of Israel cried out to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for the people of Israel, who saved them, Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. 10 The Spirit of the LORD was upon him, and he judged Israel. He went out to war, and the LORD gave Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand. And his hand prevailed over Cushan-rishathaim. 11 So the land had rest forty years. Then Othniel the son of Kenaz died.

MAIN POINT.

God's perseverance in delivering us is greater than our inclination to sin.



THEOLOGY CONNECTION

GOD IS MERCIFUL

Mercy refers to God's compassion and is often expressed in God's withholding something, such as punishment for sin (Eph. 2:4-5; Titus 3:5). Both mercy and grace are undeserved, meaning people can do nothing to earn God's mercy and grace. If we could, then it would no longer be the free gift of mercy or grace.

DISCUSSION

GOD TESTS HIS PEOPLE

JUDGES 3:1-8

- God could've eliminated Israel's enemies, but He allowed them to remain. Why might He also allow difficulty in our lives?
- 🧠 • Read verses 5-7. What process do you see happening? What could it help us understand?
- ♥ • How are we sometimes like Israel, mirroring and "settling among" the world rather than living as God's people?

GOD DELIVERS HIS PEOPLE

JUDGES 3:9-11

- ✝ • Othniel delivered, or saved, the people from the enemy, but he eventually died. What does this show us about depending on worldly deliverers?
- 📖 • How did God respond when His people cried out to Him? What can we learn from this?
- What is peace? What does verse 11 show us about the result of depending on God?



THIS WEEK, HOW CAN YOU LIVE OUT YOUR IDENTITY AS GOD'S SON OR DAUGHTER INSTEAD OF LIVING LIKE THE WORLD?

CULTURAL CONNECTION

Who do you look like—not in a physical sense, but in your character, in your identity? Is your identity wrapped up in who God says you are, or is it wrapped up in who the world says you're supposed to be? The world often tells us we're supposed to fit a mold. We're supposed to be popular, yet unique. We're supposed to look a certain way. We're supposed to have the latest trends and think our parents are crazy. We're supposed to go through a "wild phase" and experiment with alcohol. We're supposed to test sexual boundaries in our relationships. But God doesn't say any of this. He calls us to look like His Son, Jesus. What's at stake if you don't? You miss out on walking in your real identity. You settle for a cheap version of yourself and look like everyone else. But God calls you to more. As a believer, you're His son or His daughter, and you have the incredible privilege of living like it.



DAY ONE

1 PETER 2:9-10

Think back to recess as a little kid. You're on the playground, and everyone gathers up for a game of kickball. Two appointed team captains begin to choose teammates. Maybe you were always chosen first; maybe you weren't chosen until the very end. Whether it was a game of kickball or something else more serious, most of us have been in a position of waiting to be chosen—of wanting to be chosen.

God chose us. He chose us first, before we could choose Him. We didn't do anything to be chosen. We weren't good enough or talented enough or holy enough. But God chose us anyway and made us His people—His sons and daughters! This passage says that all believers become part of a “royal priesthood, a holy nation.” What does this mean? It means we get to enjoy real relationship with God, and we get to represent Him to the world. He took us out of darkness and brought us into the light, and we get to carry that hope to others. Israel often failed to represent God, instead becoming more like the tribes surrounding them. But through the power of the Holy Spirit living within us, we can walk closely with the Lord and show others the way to Him as well. We can live out our identity as God's chosen people.

- **WHY DOES IT MATTER THAT GOD CHOSE US FIRST, BEFORE WE COULD CHOOSE HIM?**
- **READ VERSE 9. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF GOD MAKING US HIS CHOSEN PEOPLE?**

PRAY

GOD, THANK YOU FOR CHOOSING US AS YOUR PEOPLE EVEN WHEN WE WERE STILL SINNERS. HELP ME TO LIVE OUT MY IDENTITY AS YOUR CHILD AND TO SHOW OTHERS HOW THEY CAN KNOW YOU.





DAY TWO

1 PETER 2:11-12

Have you ever moved schools or joined a new team or group? Maybe there was part of the transition that felt new and exciting, but for a lot of us, these types of situations make us feel like outsiders. We feel unknown and unseen, like strangers. Many of us will do anything to avoid feeling this way.

Oddly enough, Peter instructed believers to live like “sojourners and exiles” While this may sound unappealing at first, let’s think about what Peter means. Sometimes, it’s easy to forget that this isn’t our real home. As believers, we’ll join God in heaven for all eternity. The world in its current state is only temporary, yet we become really attached to our lives here. We become attached to material possessions, to success, and to popularity. Peter isn’t saying we should be on the outside looking in; he is saying to live like this isn’t our final home. He is saying to invest in what’s eternal—in our relationship with the Lord and in helping others know Him. Instead of being trapped by worldly cares, we have the opportunity to live in such a way that others give God glory (v. 12). The way we talk, act, and love will often mean we’re more like strangers here; it’ll mean we often don’t meet culture’s standards; it’ll mean we hold very loosely what can’t go with us. But we’ll be investing in our eternal home and in what lasts, hopefully pointing others there as well.

- **WHAT WORLDLY THINGS DO YOU STRUGGLE WITH BEING TOO ATTACHED TO? EXPLAIN.**
- **WHY ARE WE SO OFTEN AFRAID OF FEELING LIKE “SOJOURNERS AND EXILES” HERE?**

PRAY

**GOD, HELP ME TO LIVE WITH OPEN HANDS HERE.
HELP ME TO LIVE AS A CITIZEN OF HEAVEN AND TO
INVEST IN WHAT LASTS.**



DAY THREE

LUKE 15:11-32

Imagine that you were going to inherit an incredible fortune one day. Instead of waiting, you decide to ask for the fortune now. You move away from home and waste all of the money on food and material possessions. Before you know it, you're broke and living on the streets. You're left with nothing, so you decide to return home. You hope your family will accept you.

This is the story of the lost son, but it's our story—and Israel's story—as well. We have a great inheritance waiting for us; we're coheirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17)! But how often do we grow impatient? How often do we get distracted by what we see here: fame, success, material possessions? How often do we wander away from God and chase after the things of this world? Here's the deal: nothing could take away the lost son's position in his family. No matter how far away he wandered from home, he was still a son; his father always remained his father. But the son wasn't living as if he belonged to the family. As believers, nothing can take away our salvation. Nothing can take away our status as God's sons and daughters. But we lose so much when we wander away. We lose so much when we chase the things of this world. We don't have to chase the world. We belong to our Father, and He has shared everything He has with us.

- **WHAT ARE SOME THINGS YOU'RE TEMPTED TO CHASE OTHER THAN GOD?**
- **WHAT DOES THIS PARABLE SHOW YOU ABOUT GOD'S NATURE? HOW DOES IT CHANGE THE WAY YOU VIEW HIM?**

PRAY

GOD, THANK YOU FOR BEING A GOOD FATHER TO ME. THANK YOU FOR GIVING YOUR SON AND FOR SHARING EVERYTHING YOU HAVE WITH ME. HELP ME TO CHASE ONLY YOU AND TO LIVE LIKE I'M YOUR CHILD.



DAY FOUR

1 JOHN 3:1-3

A lot of us look like a parent or another family member. In fact, many of us may often get told how much we look like our mom or dad, an aunt or an uncle. You might have your dad's eyes or your mom's nose. Maybe you have your grandmother's hair color or your grandfather's height. Maybe you have an older sibling's sense of humor. Whether we know our family members well or not, we carry their traits and their features with us without even trying.

As children of God, we should carry His traits too. When people see us, they should be able to tell that we belong to the Father. Think of it like this: we don't really have to do anything to look like someone in our family; it's just part of who we are. We should be so connected to God that being like Him is also just a part of who we are and of who we're becoming. We'll never look perfectly like the Lord; in fact, we can't even begin to grasp the entirety of who God is until the day we finally see Him face to face (v. 2). But we can know Him more intimately than most of us realize. We can know Him better through His Word. God delights in revealing Himself to us, and He calls us to be like Him. What a privilege that we carry Him with us through the gift of the Holy Spirit. What a gift that people can see Him through us. May we never take this lightly.

- **IN WHAT AREAS OF YOUR LIFE DO YOU LOOK LIKE GOD THE FATHER? IN WHAT AREAS OF YOUR LIFE DO YOU STRUGGLE TO LOOK LIKE HIM?**
- **WHAT STEPS DO YOU NEED TO TAKE TO KNOW GOD MORE?**

PRAY

GOD, HELP ME TO KNOW YOU MORE DEEPLY SO THAT I CAN BE LIKE YOU. THANK YOU FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT, WHO LIVES IN ME AND MAKES ME MORE LIKE YOUR SON.



DAY FIVE

MATTHEW 5:13-16

Let's talk about the benefits of salt and light. First, without salt, our food would be pretty bland and boring. But more importantly, during biblical times, salt was critical in preserving food. Since refrigeration wasn't an option, meat would easily spoil. Salt was a matter of life and death because if food spoiled, people either starved or became deathly ill. Light served a similar function. Traveling at night was extremely dangerous because of criminals along the roads. Some type of light was often crucial for safety and direction. Cities were lit up at night using candles so that people could find protection.

Jesus explained that believers should be the salt and light in this world. What was He saying? If we are to be the salt of the earth, then we act as a preservative too. We live in a way that points to God even in an evil culture; we preserve godliness and holiness. Our lives point to abundant life in Jesus. We'll influence this world in a positive and godly way and make it better. If we are to be the light in this world, then we'll shine in the darkness. We'll shed light on the good news of the gospel and not on ourselves. Like salt and light in biblical times, it's crucial for us to mirror Jesus in our lives. In doing this, God uses us to draw people to Him.

- **THIS WEEK, HOW CAN YOU LIVE LIKE SALT AND LIGHT?**
- **WHEN IS IT DIFFICULT FOR YOU TO LIVE LIKE SALT AND LIGHT?**

PRAY

GOD, I SOMETIMES STRUGGLE TO LIVE LIKE SALT AND LIGHT. HELP ME TO LIVE IN A WAY THAT POINTS OTHER PEOPLE TO JESUS. HELP MY LIFE TO REFLECT WHO YOU ARE.