



# ISRAEL TURNS TO IDOLS

JOSHUA 12:43-35; JUDGES 2:11-16, 3:7-12, LUKE 18:22-24

## LEARN THE WORD

### Joshua 1:9

*"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."*

- The Israelites repeatedly disobeyed the Lord and received punishment in the form of enemies mistreating them. When they cried to the Lord for help, He was merciful and raised up judges to deliver them.
- Idolatry in the Old Testament was worshiping false gods. Idolatry for us is when we treasure anything in our lives more than God.

## WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

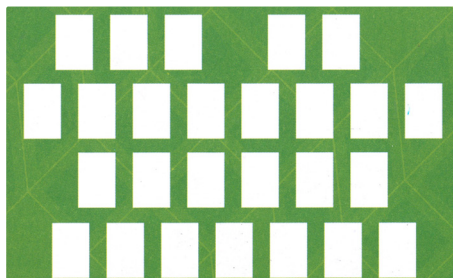
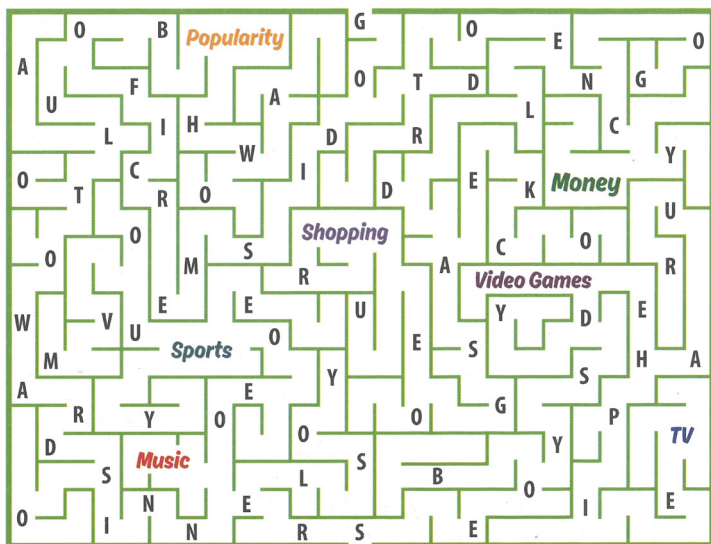
## OUTWORD FOR FAMILY DISCUSSION

Suppose your friend says, "I love the Lord and would never worship an idol. I can't understand how Israel could forget God so soon after Joshua died."

### What could you say?

*I'm glad that you are confident about your love for the Lord. The Israelites were also confident that they would always serve God. They promised to remember the Lord and keep His commandments. But they let the influence of the people around them turn them away from the true God. We must be careful not to let the things around us, like being popular, doing what we want, or pursuing the things of the world, become more important to us than God. We must put God first.*

**Activity:** Navigate this maze being careful to avoid the possible idols we may struggle with today. Pick up the letters along your route and place them in order on the blanks below. The phrase will remind you of what God is like.



## HOMEWOR FOR PARENTS

Judges chapter 1 summarizes the conquest and the failure of Israel to completely cast out the idolatrous inhabitants. Judges 2:1-3 records the angel of the Lord warning Israel that this failure would have bitter consequences. God would no longer drive out the people of the land, and their gods would become a snare to the Israelites. Joshua's generation seemed to take the warning to heart. However, after Joshua's death, the people became idolatrous and did not know the Lord or the miracles He had done for Israel (Judges 2:10). Their idolatry took the form of worshipping the gods of the Canaanites, including the Baals.

Judges 2:11-23 describes Israel's cycle during the era of the judges, a period of about 300 years. The recurring pattern included the Israelites worshipping false gods and angering God; God bringing punishment in the form of oppression by idolatrous nations; the Israelites crying out to God for deliverance; God showing mercy on them by raising up a judge; and after deliverance, the Israelites turning again to idolatry and beginning the cycle again.

Israel's quick fall into idolatry may seem far removed from us. In our culture, there is little temptation to actually worship a Baal or to make an idol and bow down to it. But the root of Israel's disobedience, failure to trust God, is common today. Idolatry, making anything in our lives more important than God, can include pleasure, worldly possessions, control, and comfort. Idolatry will put our selfish desires above the one true God. As we read Israel's history and see blessings for obedience and consequences for disobedience, the root issue is always faith.