

# Christianity 101

## The Purpose of The Bible?

A Bible Study of The Mount Zion Church

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In the previous lesson, we acknowledged that the written Word of God provides us with accounts of God's actions, thoughts, expectations, feelings, and concerns for mankind. We also determined that God inspired writers to recount, write, and record what was necessary for others to know about the behaviors, actions, and attitudes that are required to be His followers. Whether in historical accounts, poetry, letters, or prophecy, we see God's hand in all of the Bible and believe that it is without error.

We believe that God speaks to all aspects of our lives in His word. This means that the foundation of our lives in terms of how to be men and women of God resides in The Bible and we can know what God expects of us if we would simply study His word.

The lesson which follows helps to solidify our understanding of the danger of not knowing God's word by analyzing a time in the history of the Israelites after Joshua brought them into the Promised Land. When we casually approach God's word, we set ourselves up for missing the mark or blurring the lines between God's expectations and the world's enticements.

**Warm-Up Questions:** How often do you hear people say this is a lost generation religiously? What do they mean when they say this?



## I. The Danger of Laziness—Judges 2: 6-10

**<sup>6</sup>After Joshua had dismissed the Israelites, they went to take possession of the land, each to their own inheritance. <sup>7</sup>The people served the LORD throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him and who had seen all the great things the LORD had done for Israel.**

**<sup>8</sup>Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of a hundred and ten. <sup>9</sup>And they buried him in the land of his inheritance, at Timnath Heres<sup>[b]</sup> in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash.**

**<sup>10</sup>After that whole generation had been gathered to their ancestors, another generation grew up who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done for Israel.**

The book of Judges identifies a repetitive pattern of sin and forgiveness. The people sin and God delivers them by empowering a leader to overthrow the people who defeat the Israelites while they are sinning. Prior to this pattern beginning, we are informed by the historical writer that Joshua’s latter years of leading were marked by the people’s obedience to God. Upon Joshua’s death and the elders who were Joshua’s contemporaries, the people lost their desire to be faithful to God because they did not understand God, nor did they know the great things He had done for their ancestors.

- How did a generation of people grow up not knowing the Lord?

Were they simply too lazy to share with their children what God had done for them? When one considers how much one can learn in 15 minutes a day, it becomes disappointing to acknowledge how we de-prioritize Biblical study. What about time? Do we not have the time to study?

- On average, people spend **3 hours and 15 minutes** on their phones per day.
- Individuals check their phones an average of **58 times** each day.

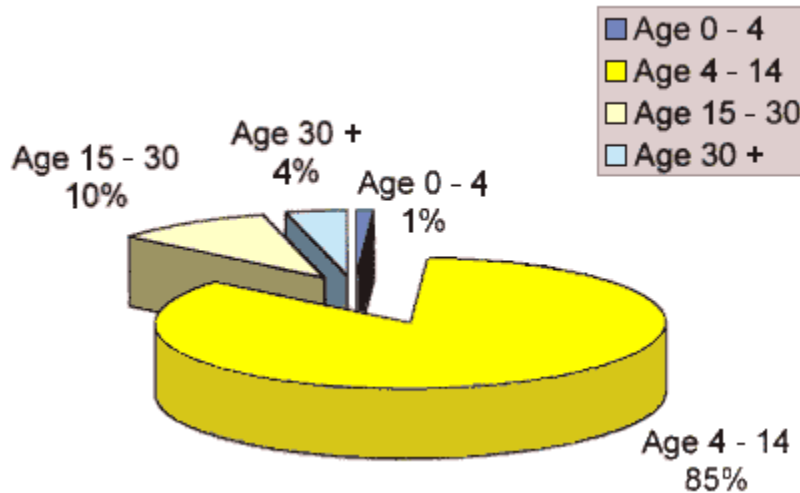
Can we utilize time better? Of course. And if we could capture 15 minutes of phone time and use it in Bible study, we would not be forgetting The Lord!

**Activity 1: In the space below, write some possible reasons they did not know who God was or what he had done and how this would impact them.**

They did not know God because...	Impact on them...

How does this same issue play out today? See the data below and discuss with your group what this indicates.

### Age at which Americans generally have a likelihood of accepting Christ.



A survey cited by the International Bible Society indicated that 83% of Christians make their first commitment to Jesus between the ages of 4 and 14, thus when they are children or early youth. Surveys done by the Barna Research Group indicate that American children age 5 to 13 have a 32% probability of accepting Christ, but youth or teens aged 14 to 18 have only a 14% probability of doing so. Unbelieving adults ages 19 and over have just a 6% probability of becoming Christians.

## II. The Loyalty Danger—Judges 2: 11-13

**<sup>11</sup>Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD and served the Baals. <sup>12</sup>They forsook the LORD, the God of their ancestors, who had brought them out of Egypt. They followed and worshiped various gods of the peoples around them. They aroused the LORD's anger <sup>13</sup>because they forsook him and served Baal and the Ashtoreths.**

Baal and Asherah were the religious practices of the people who lived in the Promised Land. The Canaanite people's religion based on fertility gods became the spiritual battleground on which God's people continued to struggle and fail. A short explanation of this issue can be found here:

<https://www.thatttheworldmayknow.com/fertility-cults-of-canaan>

It should not be a surprise that the result of our inconsistent teachings about Christ leads us into a position where we have generations of people who do not know the Lord. But, the result does not end there. When people do not have God as their Lord, they choose ungodly options. Deuteronomy 6: 6-7 makes very clear what we should be doing for those who need to know God. We are told to impress the understanding of God on the minds (understanding of) the children/ youth.

## im·press

*verb*

/im'pres/

1. make (someone) feel admiration and respect.  
"they immediately impressed the judges"
2. fix an idea in (someone's mind).  
"nobody impressed on me the need to save"



- How are we guilty of not doing this?
- Why do you think we are inconsistent in our study and teaching?
- What has been the result?

### III. The Success Danger...Judges 2: 14-15

<sup>14</sup>In his anger against Israel the LORD gave them into the hands of raiders who plundered them. He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, whom they were no longer able to resist. <sup>15</sup>Whenever Israel went out to fight, the hand of the LORD was against them to defeat them, just as he had sworn to them. They were in great distress.

- Take a moment and consider our current society. How is the hand of the Lord against us, our families, our neighborhoods, our country, our world?

We cannot deny that God's word promises us blessings. In fact, we love to read and reread the scriptures that present to us a blessed life. However, we also must include that God is clear about curses that come our way when he removes His protecting hand from us. In Micah 6: 9-16 one can see an example of God's response to a failure to keep His commands. The clarity of why the people were under punishment appears to be the same issue God has with His people today.

**Activity 2: Analyze Micah 6: 9-16 for God’s argument against His people and then detail His response.**

What were they doing wrong?

What was God’s punishment?

One can see that God is adamant about us remembering Him and how we have been delivered. The lack of attention to study puts us in a space where we forget God. When we forget God and minimize God we make other fake gods important. For the people in Judges 2, they made Baal and Asherah equal to God. The outcome is that we get to the point where we think we have succeeded by our own strength and wisdom. Studying The Word helps us to recall God’s goodness historically and then pushes us to remember God’s goodness personally.

Closing Prayer: Lord, we want to always remember your goodness. Your word is a tool that we greatly underutilize and because of that we often seek answers that do not include you. We do not want to elevate anything above you, so please help us to study your word regularly and to share it with future generations. In Jesus name, amen.