

# Judges 11-12

## Discussion Guide: Judges 9–10

**Theme:** *The Danger of Self-Made Leadership — When God's People Get the Leaders They Want*

### Big Idea

When God's people reject His rule, they often end up with leaders who reflect their own broken desires—leading to destruction. Yet even then, God remains just and merciful.

### Opening Icebreaker

- Why do you think people are often drawn to strong, confident leaders—even when their character is questionable?

## Discussion Questions + Leader Notes

### 1. Who is Abimelech, and how does he rise to power in Judges 9:1–6? What stands out?

#### Leader Notes:

- Son of Gideon (but not a judge raised by God)
- Manipulates relationships, appeals to self-interest
- Murders his brothers (70 sons of Gideon)
- This is leadership built on ambition and violence—not calling

### 2. What does Abimelech's rise reveal about the people of Shechem?

#### Leader Notes:

- They fund and support him
- They prefer shared identity over righteousness ("he is our brother")
- People often get the leaders they are willing to tolerate

### 3. What is the point of Jotham's parable in 9:7–15?

#### Leader Notes:

- Trees refuse to rule → only the worthless bramble accepts
- Warning: destructive leadership often comes from those eager for power

- Foreshadowing Abimelech's rule

#### **4. What warning does Jotham give in 9:19–20?**

**Leader Notes:**

- If this was done in good faith → rejoice
- If not → destruction will follow
- This is prophetic—it sets up what happens next

#### **5. In 9:22–25, what does it mean that “God sent an evil spirit” between Abimelech and Shechem?**

**Leader Notes:**

- God is sovereign over the breakdown
- He brings justice through division
- This is judgment unfolding, not random chaos

#### **6. How do we see the consequences of Abimelech's leadership play out (9:26–57)?**

**Leader Notes:**

- Betrayal, violence, destruction
- Shechem is destroyed
- Abimelech dies in humiliation (a woman drops a millstone)
- Full-circle justice—his violence returns on him

#### **7. What does Judges 9:56–57 make clear about everything that happened?**

**Leader Notes:**

- God repaid the evil
- This was divine justice
- Nothing was overlooked or forgotten

#### **8. Judges 10:1–5 briefly mentions Tola and Jair. Why do you think this is included?**

**Leader Notes:**

- A contrast: quieter, stabilizing leadership
- Not all leadership is chaotic—but it's short-lived
- Transitional moment

## **9. In 10:6–9, how is Israel’s sin described? What feels different here?**

### **Leader Notes:**

- They serve *many* gods (not just one)
- Full spiritual fragmentation
- The drift is accelerating

## **10. What is different about God’s response in 10:10–14 compared to earlier cycles?**

### **Leader Notes:**

- God initially refuses to deliver
- “Go cry out to the gods you have chosen”
- This is meant to expose the emptiness of idolatry

## **11. How do the people respond in 10:15–16? What seems more genuine this time?**

### **Leader Notes:**

- They confess clearly
- They remove foreign gods
- There is actual repentance, not just desperation

## **12. What does 10:16 reveal about God’s heart—even after repeated rebellion?**

### **Leader Notes:**

- “He became impatient over the misery of Israel”
- God is moved with compassion
- Justice and mercy meet again

## **Closing Application**

- Where are you tempted to follow strength, charisma, or personality over character and godliness?
- Are there areas where you’ve been tolerating compromise—and now seeing the consequences?
- What does real repentance look like in your life right now?

## **Gospel Connection (Leader Emphasis)**

- Abimelech is a picture of broken, self-made leadership

- Israel keeps choosing poorly—and suffering for it

Point to Jesus:

- Jesus is the true King who does not take power—He lays His life down
- He leads not through manipulation or violence, but through sacrifice

A strong line:

“Where Abimelech takes life to gain power, Jesus gives His life to save His people.”

## **Leader Tip**

Don't let this become:

- “Be better leaders”

Instead:

- Expose the heart that wants control, power, and comfort
- Point to the kind of King we actually need