

Dear Heavenly Father,

### *Praise*

The author of Judges said, “In those days...everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (Jdg 21:25). I praise you today as the God who is the source of all that is right and good. If I do what is right in *your* eyes, you will safely guide me through the darkness and confusion of this wicked world. All praise to the shining Light of truth and goodness!

### *Today in Your Word*

Today you told me about Israel’s first civil war. It began when a Levite and his concubine decided to spend the night in the Benjamite city of Gibeah. The Levite turned aside from Jebus (Jerusalem of the Jebusites; cf. Deut 7:1), only to find that the men of Gibeah were as bad or worse than the “foreigners” he wanted to avoid (Judges 19:12). What happened that night teaches me that when I compromise, I begin to Canaanize (I begin turning into the very thing you hate). It also shows me how quickly a society can degenerate into moral depravity (Judges 20:28—Phinehas was still priest in those days!). Gibeah had become like Sodom, and years later, Hosea would allude to “the days of Gibeah” to expose the moral rot of his own day (cf. Hos 9:9; 10:9). How sobering to realize that when I refuse to submit myself to you, I share a stubborn and rebellious heart with the sexual perverts of Gibeah. The Levite took his concubine home and used her dismembered body to call for retribution. The Benjamites refused to give up the perpetrators, and a bloody civil war began. This teaches me that I set a snare for my own feet when I pity those you have said to destroy (Deut 7:16; cf. Deut 13:12–16). At the beginning of the war, the other tribes inquired of you at Bethel, but it wasn’t because they loved you or were committed to doing your will. They were just going through the religious motions. It wasn’t until they lost 40,000 men that they noticed you never said you would go with them or give the Benjamites into their hand (compare Judges 20:18, 23, 28). I should take heed, for this can happen to me if I ask you to bless my plans with success without first giving you my loyalty and allegiance.

### *Reflection*

The people rightly condemned the wickedness of the men of Gibeah, but *not* because they loved you and respected your law. They took action against Gibeah because *they thought it was the right thing to do*. When I do what is right in my own eyes, the result is a confusing jumble of virtue and vice that shames you and dead-ends in disaster.

### *Request*

Father, guard me from my tendency to act according to my own sense of right and wrong. Help me to submit to the direction of your Word, for “Your Word is truth” (John 17:17).

### *Thanksgiving*

Thank you for loving me enough to show me the rotten underbelly of a sinful society. It serves as a warning to me against the seduction of leaning on my own understanding (cf. Prov 3:5).

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

*Suggested Hymn: “[If You But Trust in God to Guide You](#)” – Georg Neumark.*

*Meditation Verse: Judges 20:35.*