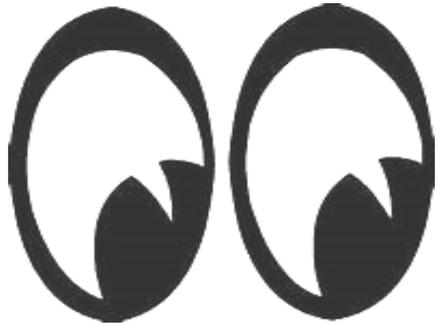




FIX MY



Hebrews 12:2

2016 DEVOTIONS

This devotional guidebook belongs to _____

Dear C.E. Mission Weeks participant:

It is our hope and prayer that the brief Bible studies contained in this Devotional Booklet will be used by the Holy Spirit to: 1) personally challenge and strengthen you in your relationship with Jesus Christ, and 2) enhance the spiritual growth and relationship building amongst your Youth Group members as you study together.

This is your copy to personalize and make notes in. Please strive for the deepest Scriptural truth for **you**, without settling for quick and shallow answers.

May our Heavenly Father thoroughly bless you as you strategize to know Him better and are refreshed by His Word as you serve Him this week.

Serving the ultimate Visionary,

Your C.E. Mission Weeks Staff:
Dave Coryell, Colleen Ossman, Chrissy Brodish

FIX MY EYES

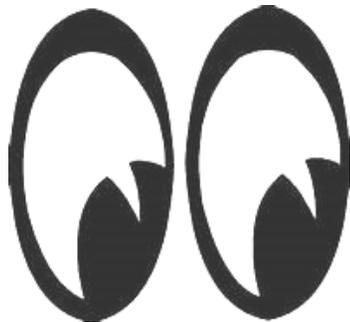
Hebrews 12:2 is the overall verse for this summer; “*Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*” As we mentioned in the pre-trip devotional, looking to Christ first in our day and putting Him first in our lives can have a huge impact on each and every day of our life. It is a choice each day; we have to decide whether we are going to live for Him that day or for ourselves.

Judges 21:25 reads; “*In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.*” The translation of that is this “*Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.*” This verse is basically the opposite of what Hebrews 12:2 reads. We will explore various people in the book of Judges and the impact they had on the Israelites who continued to struggle with keeping their **eyes fixed on Jesus**.

Israelites began to lose sight of all of the amazing things God had done for them. He had provided for them time and time again. He directed them on the paths they should go, when they sought Him out. He loved on them as a good father should. But as time passed the Israelites slowly began to make choices that they thought were better for them, without consulting their Heavenly Father. These were God’s chosen people. He loved them so much, and I have no doubt it truly hurt Him to watch them deliberately choose to turn the other way. He reached, He waited, He hoped. But they continued to walk in disobedience. They continued to call the shots. They continued to think that there wasn’t a need to **fix their eyes on God**, because they had each other’s back. In time, and after a lot of pain and heartache, the Israelites realized life would have been easier in the long run, if they would have just listened and stayed focused on what really mattered.

Disobedience leads to disaster... The cycle these people lived was not a good one, not one that any one of us wants to live; disobedience, disaster, repentance, rescue, and then disobedience again... But at times we also choose to live this way. We think we got it, and then we wander off on our own and unfortunately make a big mess of things, rather than staying focused and keeping our eyes upward.

God waits and hopes for us to repent and come back to Him... Throughout Judges, God used many people, both men and women to bring light and hope into the Israelites’ life. He didn’t give up on them. He still wanted to rescue them from their sin, just as He doesn’t



give up on us. He still waits and hopes that we too will go to Him and be rescued by His love and grace. It comes down to a choice, who we will listen to and who we will follow.

Reflection Time:

Today’s verses come from opposite ends of the spectrum. The question we have to ask ourselves is where do we fall in that spectrum? Which side do you lean more towards; **Fixing your eyes** on Jesus, or **Fixing your eyes** on yourself and others?

Can you recall a time in your life when you chose to do what was right in your eyes and not necessarily what was right in God’s eyes? (Share that time with someone)

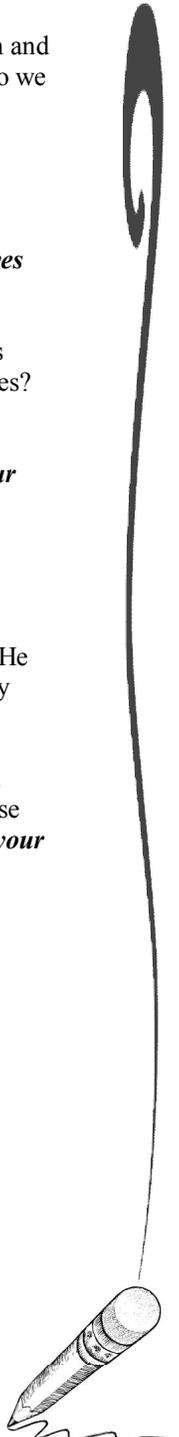
So as you live... do you **Fix your eyes** on Jesus or do you **fix your eyes** on what seems right in your own eyes?

Who has God brought in your life to give you that hope? Who redirects your walk and to help you get your **eyes fixed on Him**?

Remember, God’s standards are high, but it is with good reason. He wants us to strive towards perfection. He wants to make each day count. He also wants us to glorify Him in all that we say and do.

Take a minute and reflect, sit with someone from your group and share some of your struggles that you listed with them. Share those areas or people that tend to get in the way when you try and **Fix your eyes** on Jesus. Pray for one another.

Your Thoughts and Comments:



FIX MY EYES

Pray together as you prepare to look in to God's Word together.

Read Judges 3:12-30

Reflect: As you read this passage, what were some words that stood out to you?

What about the word "again" ... "**Again**, the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord." ... So the Lord allowed their enemies to reign over them. And "**Again**, they cried out to the Lord and He gave them a deliverer." Here is the repetitive cycle we mentioned in yesterday's devotions. Disobedience, disaster, repentance, rescue, and then disobedience again. They begin to realize they are in way over their head, so **again**, they go back to the Lord in agony pleading for help. They realize they have messed up and they don't know what to do.

So once **again** God provides a deliverer, one who is wise and can help them get victory.

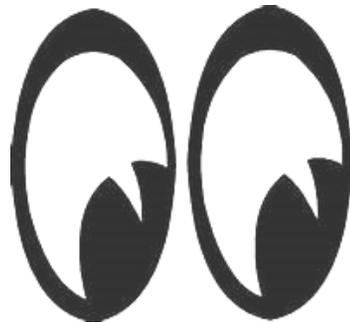
Ehud, was strong and wise. He needed to deliver the annual tax money to the King of Moab, so he knew that it would be an opportune time to take action.

Do you think it was key that the Bible mentions that Ehud was left handed?
(Reread vs.15)

You see most likely when Ehud and the others arrived in the kingdom, they were searched. But they probably were searched on their left sides, assuming that if they pulled a weapon out it would be on the left and they would be using their right hand. But, God is a God of surprises. God knew Ehud was left handed, and that he would have his sword on his right side. So no one ever suspected when Ehud was left alone with the king that he would harm the king, let alone kill him.

Reflect:
How else was Ehud clever in how he handled the situation?

It is also mentioned that the king was a very large man. So when Ehud stabbed him the whole dagger was enveloped into the king's body. Even the king himself, couldn't save himself.



What happens next?

Does God leave them or does He continue to be with them?

How do you see God's hands in and through this whole situation?

What is the biggest lesson you will take away from this today?

Think about how much easier things could have been if the Israelites **Fixed their eyes** on the Lord.

Think about an area in your life in which you are not **Fixed on Him**. Pray about that.

Pray and thank God for being with you every step of the way.

Your Thoughts and Comments:



FIX MY EYES

Judges 6-8 (Gideon)

Pray as you read Judges 6-8 that God will hear what God wants to say to you today.

Read Judges Chapters 6-8 and think...

What is God saying to me through these chapters?

How does this relate to *Fixing my eyes* on Him?

Gideon was a Mighty Man of Valor

In other words... a person who “has strength of mind or spirit that enables them to encounter danger with firmness: personal bravery.” (Webster dictionary)

How did Gideon prove that he was a “mighty man of valor?”

Could Gideon have had that strength if it weren't for having *his eyes fixed* on Jesus?

Gideon's Bold Step

What bold thing did Gideon do that was against what everyone else did? (Judges 6:25-27)

How did God honor Gideon's faith and boldness?

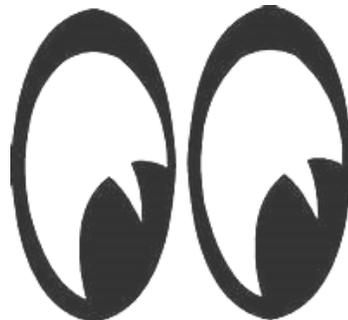
How differently could things have ended up for Gideon and the Israelites if Gideon's focus was either on himself or on a different “god”?

How did Gideon *Fix his eyes* on God in this situation?

Gideon's Disbelief turned to Belief

Gideon tested the Lord to be sure that this was real and that God was truly going to save them. (Judges 6:36-40)

Gideon believed and moved forward, knowing God would be with them.



Our idea vs. God's idea

Gideon prepared the men and was ready to fight, with 32,000. However, God had a different idea. Gideon truly had to trust that God had his back. This battle had nothing to do with numbers, but rather who was fighting for them. God was the one truly fighting the battle. All Gideon and the men had to do was *keep their eyes fixed on God*.

What else happened that affirmed to Gideon that now was the time to go and fight? (Judges 7:9-14)

What happened when the Israelites were focused on God and not themselves?

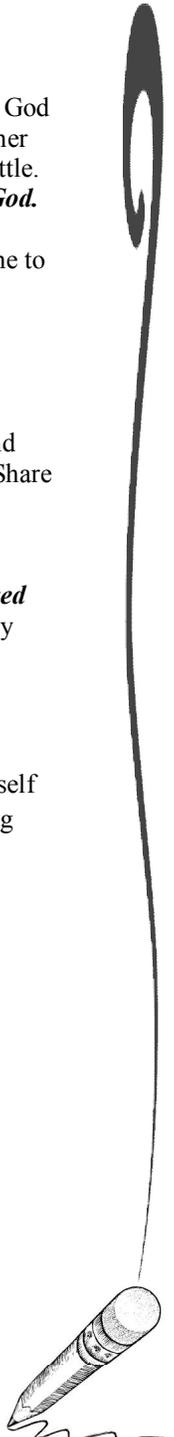
Have you ever been in a situation when you realized your idea and God's idea were much different? If so, how did things turn out? Share your story with someone else in the group.

One last look...

Gideon was a mighty warrior and as long as he kept his *Eyes Fixed on God* he was empowered to do incredible things. But at the very end of Chapter 8: 24-28, what does Gideon do that shows he lost focus?

Pray and thank God that He always has your back. Ask Him to show you ways in which you need to rely on Him more and yourself less, and perhaps what things tend to get in the way of you staying focused on Him.

Your Thoughts and Comments:



FIX MY EYES

Judges 13-16 (Samson)

Pray and ask God to clear your mind and prepare your heart for His Word.

Read Judges Chapters 13-16, the story of Samson.

Hopeless to Hopeful (ch. 13)

The Israelites were in a desperate place once again. They lost focus and so the Lord handed them over basically to their enemies, the Philistines. However, God always finds a diamond in the rough. He finds that one person who is seeking to please Him and live in obedience: Manoah and his wife.

How did Samson's mother have her *eyes fixed on God*?

God had a goal, when He first came to Manoah and his wife, Samson's parents. God's agenda never changed. They were submissive to what God asked of them.

One deceiver for another... (ch. 14-16)

Samson enjoyed riddles and seemed to make it a game of his. However, it often got the best of him. What may have been one of Samson's biggest weaknesses?

He seemed to have lots of physical strength. But when it came to the ladies, he would cave after a while. And this in turn would only cause more heartache for himself and those around him.

How did Samson's physical strength hurt him and those he cared about?

One final blow! (ch. 16)

God still used Samson on several occasions to keep the Israelites safe from the Philistines. He followed through right until the end and used Samson to destroy thousands of Philistines. Even though Samson at times had a different agenda, God still used him. God still uses us even in the midst of our own mess.

At what point did Samson finally realize that he needed help beyond his physical strength?

Sadly it was at the final hours of Samson's life that he looked to the Lord for wisdom and strength, not just physical but spiritual as well.

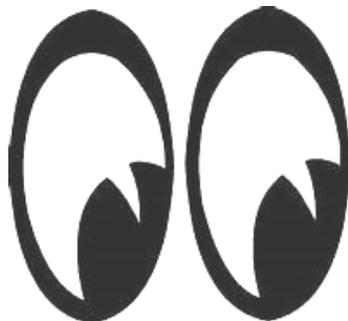
How different do you think things may have looked if Samson stayed focused? If he continued to look to the Lord before every battle and especially before every choice he made, if he kept his *eyes fixed on the Lord*, how different would things have turned out?

What is something that you could learn from Samson's life?

What are some areas in your life that seem to get in the way of your *focus to the Lord*?

Pray with someone and lift up those areas to the Lord, then keep one another accountable for them.

Your Thoughts and Comments:



FIX MY EYES

Judges 20-21 Israel vs the Tribe of Benjamin

Pray and ask the Lord to help prepare your mind and heart for His message for you today. Pray that any distractions you may have will be put aside and that you can truly focus on whatever it is He wants to say to you.

Read together Judges 20-21

Reflect

In this story we see two from the same family going up against one another, the Tribe of Benjamin was against all of the other tribes. The Tribe of Benjamin was residing in a not so nice town, Gibeah. Even the older man who was mentioned knew that being in the town square was not wise or safe. However, he didn't do a lot to protect those in his home or the man's concubine. The man from Mizpah wanted to make a statement to the people of Israel and I think he wanted some kind of justice done. An innocent life was taken, for selfish desires of these men. He wanted revenge.

Where else have you seen two people or groups divided against one another because of different beliefs or even sometimes misunderstandings?

(Iron Man vs. Captain America, Superman vs. Batman) In these examples, both are supposed to be there for the good of man but they somehow get caught up in their own issues and get sidetracked as to what is really right and what is really wrong. They lose their focus. Do you see the connection?

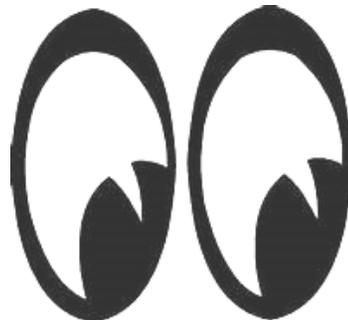
Sometimes we can be misinformed about a situation, or possibly we don't have all of the information needed to make a proper assessment. Do you think this was the case with the Tribe of Benjamin?

What happened in this story that caused such a division between the tribes?

Once the Israelites met and had a plan, they were focused as one. Pick out some key verses that show how the Israelites *Fixed their eyes* on the Lord.

How did that help them?

How was the tribe of Benjamin not *Fixed on the Lord*?



How then do the rest of the tribes search out ways in which they can still provide for the Tribe of Benjamin? Even though they were at odds with one another they didn't abandon their "brother." They knew they were still family and they needed to help provide for them. So in some ways this is also a story of forgiveness and grace.

Personal Reflection:

When have you been caught in the middle of a conflict between two opposing sides? Perhaps neither was really wrong, but had a different perspective. How did you handle the situation?

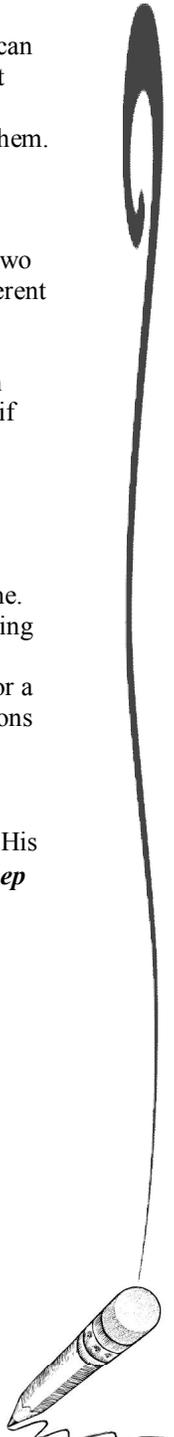
In what ways have you shown others grace and forgiveness when placed in a conflicting situation? What difference would it make if your *Eyes were fixed on the Lord*?

Talk to someone today and share those areas in which you have struggled the most with.

Pray and ask the Lord to help you remain focused as you go home. May He show you those areas in your life that are not God honoring and that are pulling you away from Him rather than drawing you closer to Him, those things that have become like an idol to you or a distraction from *Keeping your eyes on Him*. Remember distractions aren't always bad thing. It is just anything or anyone that comes before your time with the Lord.

Remember God loves you very much. May you continue to feel His love and grace around you each and every day as you strive to *keep your eyes on Him*.

Your Thoughts and Comments:



A decorative border made of black musical notes (quarter notes) arranged in a rectangular shape around the text.

Suggested Song List for Theme:

FIX MY EYES

Fix My Eyes - for KING & COUNTRY

I Will Follow - Chris Tomlin

Oceans (Where Feet May Fail) -
Hillsong United

Where You Go I Go - Brian Johnson

There is Power - Lincoln Brewster

Jesus, Only Jesus - Passion

I Fix My Eyes on You - Tommy Walker

Fix Your Eyes - Twila Paris