**What May Not Appear as Sin Can Really Displease God**

A long time ago, when my daughter was quite young, she was helping me wash the dishes. After rinsing the soapy plates, she would hand them to me so that I could dry them. So what did I do? Right before her eyes, I rewashed the dishes to make sure that they were really clean. Obviously, my daughter was displeased since she could see that I did not have too much faith in her work! Not wanting to dishearten her, I made up some bogus excuse to assure her that I wasn’t rewashing them because her work was not good enough. Looking back, I am not too sure whether she bought that. Today’s study is about why our lack of faith in God displeases Him, and how that can result in missed opportunities and blessings in life.

**Discussion Question:** Share about the time when someone’s lack of confidence in you (e.g., parent, coach, friend, teacher or pastor) really affected you.

**What is faith?** Before examining the faith of Barak & Jephthah, a preliminary work on faith needs to be established in order to correctly gauge their faith.

1. Discuss the following verses:

a. Hebrews 11:1

b. Hebrews 11:6

c. Matthew 13:58

2. Based on these verses, how would you define faith?

**Analyzing the living faith exercised by the two judges: Barak & Jephthah**

3. Barak: Read Judges 4:4-10, 14-22.

1. Was Deborah pleased with his response upon being summoned to lead the troop into battle? Notice that God had informed

Barak the specific way in which He was going to defeat the enemy (4:7, 5:21: “The river Kishon swept them away”).

b. Why the insecurity? What difference would the presence of a woman make in a war?

4. Judge Jephthah did a similar thing. Read Judges 11:28-40 and focus on verses 29-30.

a. In what way is “If you give me the Ammonites into my hands, I will sacrifice the first thing that comes out of my house when I

return home” similar to Barak’s “If you don’t go with me, I won’t go”? Notice what God did (29) to secure the victory for him.

b. Ultimately, why was his vow such an affront to God?

5. Despite their imperfect faith, God used these two men to deliver Israel from her oppressors. Moreover, their names are found in Hebrew 11:32 as examples of certain OT people who demonstrated faith in God, as Barak finally did, later.

a. What change do you see in Barak when told by Deborah, “Go” (without her)?

b. What does this say about God? How should this make us feel, especially when we are in a poor spiritual condition?

**Application**: Share your experience of either giving into fear or overcoming it to obey what you believed was God’s will for your life

at that moment. It could be in any area of our lives.