



# GEEKS UNDER GRACE

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## BATMAN NINJA (2018) | Relying On God | BIBLE STUDY

Facilitator Note: We encourage facilitators to take this Bible study and expound on it throughout the week, allowing it to be a springboard for deeper conversation and personal meditation.

### PRESS START

Batman Ninja contains a variety of classic anime tropes, from giant robots to secret ninja clans.

**Ask:** What was your favorite trope and what did it remind you of?

### EQUIP

In the film, we have a Batman who's a bit out of his element. This Batman has grown to be very reliant on his gadgets. Generally, when the comics/shows have approached this subject, they focus more on the detective side of things; however, in Batman Ninja we are looking more at his martial arts/ninja training. He had grown sloppy with his ability to use what was around him as he relied heavily on the technology that gave him shortcuts to do his job faster.

**Ask:** While technology and shortcuts can be very helpful, have you ever found yourself in a place where you realized you had become too reliant on it? (Example: Growing too reliant on using a calculator to do math or using your phone to store contacts instead of remembering a person's phone number?)

### LEVEL UP

For a moment, let's move from the Dark Knight to the story of King Saul. In **1 Samuel 8**, the people of God demand a king. Therefore, in **chapter 9** God arranges for a special man to take that position: enter Saul. From the text of chapter 9, we see Saul is an obedient son. Beyond that, he appears to be humble. We get that from his response to Samuel when he tells him they are going to go eat together.

**1 Samuel 9:21** *"Saul answered, 'Am I not a Benjaminite, from the least of the tribes of Israel? And is not my clan the humblest of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then have you spoken to me in this way?'"*

In Israel, those of the tribe of Benjamin had been through a great humbling many years before this moment. They were warring people and, in **Judges 20**, God had humbled them and brought correction. By sheer nature of the culture, the lessons of the former generation would have been taught to the next in hopes they would learn from it. It is due to this teaching that we see this humility in Saul. His entire people had to learn to be reliant on God.

But flash forward many years later after he is king of all of Israel. In 40 years he had become a very effective king. He was a fantastic military leader. He led his people from victory to victory. But something happens over the years. He begins to rely less on God and more on his own understanding.

### Read 1 Samuel 13:1-14

Just like that, all he had worked hard for starts to slip through his fingers. In the chapters to follow, you see the tragic roadmap that ends in his death by his own hand; a slippery slope that began years before by one act of disobedience.

### MOD

So what's the application here and how does it relate to the Dark Knight? Unlike Batman, Saul never corrected his path. Instead, he stubbornly continued down a path of destruction. He found his reliance on his own understanding to be more comfortable than in God, and thus caused his downfall. But if he had made a change and realized, much like Batman did, that he needed to stop relying on the wrong thing, then things may have ended very differently for him.

Fortunately, Saul's mistake was a learning moment for future generations. No doubt the cautionary tale was told to the son of Saul's successor. We can infer this because it was Solomon, King David's son, who wrote:

**Proverbs 3:5** *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding."*

Sometimes, our own understanding becomes the crutch we use to get through difficult times. Sometimes our own understanding is God-given and can be effective. But it doesn't always mean it's the right tool for the right time. We need to dig deep into our spiritual utility belts and grab the one thing that is always effective: trusting in the Lord.

## PRAY

We're going to close this time together with some prayer. Maybe some of you here are currently struggling with a situation caused by your reliance on your own understanding. Maybe you've lost your way and need to get back to the basics of the faith...trusting in God. If that's the case, then as we pray, we will pray for those things; however, we want you to do something specific. We want you to verbally pray over those things. Personally ask God to help you with your situation and to give you wisdom and provision. The rest of us will be praying with you.

## THE NEXT LEVEL

**John 15:4-5** *"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."*

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