

The Cost of Missing Instruction inspired by Judges 17:1-6 and 18:18-19, 27

Raymond sat quietly on the front steps of the community center, watching children ride their bikes up and down the street. The neighborhood was full of energy, but there was also confusion. Everyone seemed to be doing what felt right to them, yet few people stopped to ask whether their choices were actually wise.



Inside the center, Raymond volunteered as a mentor where he often wondered why so many young people struggled with direction.

One afternoon, his longtime friends, Cille and Pearl, stopped by.

"Raymond," Cille said as she sat beside him, "why do you think so many people make decisions that hurt themselves and others? They know better, don't they?"

Raymond leaned back and sighed.

"Not always Cille, sometimes people don't have instruction, and sometimes nobody teaches them the right path."

Pearl nodded thoughtfully.

"My grandmother used to say that if you don't learn truth, you'll create your own version of it."

Raymond smiled.

"That's exactly what's happening around us."

A few days later, Raymond met a teenager named Marcus at the center. Marcus proudly showed him a social media page where he gave advice to hundreds of followers.

"People listen to me," Marcus said confidently.

"Where did you learn all this?" Raymond asked.

Marcus shrugged.

"I just say what feels right."

Raymond's heart sank.

"What if what feels right isn't right?"

Marcus paused.

"I never thought about that."

That evening, Raymond gathered several young people for a discussion.

"Let me tell you something," he began. "When people don't receive proper instruction, they often build their lives on whatever seems good at the moment. That's dangerous."

Cille, helping with the meeting, added, "A house without a foundation won't stand very long."

The students listened carefully.

One young girl raised her hand.

"How do we know what's right?"



"By learning from trustworthy sources," Raymond replied. "By listening to wise counsel and by studying God's Word instead of making up our own rules."

Pearl smiled.

"Instruction is like a map. You can wander without it, but you'll probably get lost."

Weeks later, a problem arose in the neighborhood. Some young men had started a club that promised success and purpose. At first, it seemed harmless, but Raymond discovered they were teaching selfish values and encouraging people to chase popularity above character.

Several teenagers from the center wanted to join.

"They seem successful," one student argued.

"They have answers," another said.

Raymond shook his head.

"Not every voice offering direction deserves to lead you."

The group reluctantly agreed to hear him out.

"Years ago," Raymond continued, "people abandoned sound guidance and followed whatever looked beneficial... the result was confusion and destruction... a lack of instruction can make bad ideas appear attractive."

Cille stepped forward.

"Real leadership doesn't just tell you what you want to hear because it teaches you what you need to hear."

Pearl added, "And wisdom often requires patience."

The students decided not to follow the club.

Months passed, and the community center began to grow. The young people studied, served others, and learned from mentors. Slowly, they became leaders themselves.

One evening, as the sun painted the sky orange and gold, Cille looked around the busy center and smiled.

"Look at this place now."

Pearl laughed.

"It all started because someone cared enough to teach."

Raymond watched students helping one another with homework, planning service projects, and encouraging younger children.

Then he said, "People rise when they receive Godly instruction. When there is no guidance, everyone does what seems right in their own eyes. But when truth is taught, lives change."

The room grew quiet.

For a moment, everyone understood.

Instruction was not merely information... it was direction... it was protection... it was the difference between wandering and purpose.



And because Raymond chose to teach rather than simply watch, an entire community found a better path forward.