

Who Was Gideon?

Psalm 27:3: (KJV) *Though a host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear...*



Have you ever heard the expression “putting out the fleece” when referring to someone trying to make a decision? Its origin comes from an unlikely biblical hero from an unremarkable tribe. He was the youngest of an insignificant family. Yet, Gideon was chosen by God to do a mighty work - to free Israel from the cruel oppression of the Midianites and Amalekites. Getting such an unnoticed individual to do works of such greatness took providence and patience on God’s part. Gideon needed to develop a God-based confidence to boldly move forward and stand against enemies of immense power. The story of this man’s journey not only inspired a nation, it left a trail of lessons for us to apply in our everyday Christian walk.

Hebrews 11 provides a list of faithful servants of God from ancient times:

Hebrews 11:32: (NASB) *And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets.*

Why Gideon? To understand his story, we have to understand his world. The Old Testament reveals Israel in a constant cycle of deliverance - disobedience - oppression - deliverance - disobedience - oppression. Why this necessary generational cycle? Because human nature forgets the wisdom and experience of their fathers’ and grandfathers’ mistakes. New generations would hear secondhand of the consequences for previous disobedience. Without personal experience, they repeated history.



God ALWAYS told His people there would be hardship when they did not follow Him:

Judges 2:1-3: (NASB) *¹Now the angel of the LORD... said, I brought you up out of Egypt and led you into the land which I have sworn to your fathers; and I said, I will never break My covenant with you, ²and as for you, you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall tear down their altars. But you have not obeyed Me; what is this you have done? ³Therefore I also said, I will not drive them out before you; but they will become as thorns in your sides and their gods will be a snare to you.*

Did Israel listen? No, they make things worse by developing relationships with pagan peoples:

Judges 3:5-7: (NASB) *⁵The sons of Israel lived among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; ⁶and they took their daughters for themselves as wives, and gave their own daughters to their sons, and served their gods. ⁷The*



sons of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and forgot the LORD their God and served the Baals and the Asheroth.

The Law was in place to keep them separate and pure because Israel carried the Messiah's lineage. God's specific and exacting direction should have helped them avoid temptation, as they would definitively know right from wrong.

AWARENESS LESSON:

Look around! Are we separate from the world and its interests?
We cannot jeopardize or compromise our covenant with God.

This reminds us of how Lot moved right next to Sodom and Gomorrah. For more on this, please search our archives for Ep. 1064: *Is He Who Hesitates Really Lost? The Story of Lot.*

The Israelites were friendly with their neighbors, married and eventually forgot Jehovah's covenant with them. But God never forgot them. His jealousy was based on His love for His people. Separation from the Baal worshippers around them would have served them well.

This was the disobedient world in which we find Gideon. It was a particularly difficult time in Israel's history.

**This was not Israel's first fall from favor.
How bad would things get under Midianite intimidation?**

Being out of God's favor is never a good idea. Israel had not only drifted, they were racing down the wrong path and were once again godless and in need of rescuing. Their experiences were teaching them what living on their own - without God's protection - meant. Could their false gods rescue them?

Israel broke their covenant with God and would be overrun by the Midianites for seven years.



Origin of the Midianites: After Sarah died, Abraham's concubine Keturah and had six children - one was Midian. The Midianites are from one line of descendants of Abraham. Here they are fighting against a different line of Abraham's descendants from which Messiah would come. These were cousins. The Bible records many issues with the Midianites (including during the time of Moses), so this was a longtime enemy that kept coming back generation after generation.



Judges 6:1-5: (NASB) *¹Then the sons of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD gave them into the hands of Midian seven years. ²The power of Midian prevailed against Israel. Because of Midian the sons of Israel made for themselves the dens which were in the mountains and the caves and the strongholds.*

It became so dangerous, the people had to leave their cities and hide in caves.

³For it was when Israel had sown, that the Midianites would come up with the Amalekites and the sons of the east and go against them. ⁴So they would camp against them and destroy the produce of the earth as far as Gaza, and leave no sustenance in Israel as well as no sheep, ox, or donkey. ⁵For they would come up with their livestock and their tents, they would come in like locusts for number, both they and their camels were innumerable; and they came into the land to devastate it.

Their enemies stole the food they grew. “Midian” appropriately means strife.

AWARENESS LESSON:

The conquering Midianites reflect our battle with fleshly weaknesses. They repeatedly come up because they have not been conquered, which makes for a continual battle. Dabbling in idolatry inevitably leads to a broken relationship with God and the need for change!

We cannot let down our guard! We cannot rationalize dabbling in a little of this and a little of that - it waters down our relationship with God, allowing the enemy to attack us until we are too weak to fight back.

After seven years of oppression, the people FINALLY cry out to God. He sends an unnamed prophet:

Judges 6:6-10: (NASB) *⁶So Israel was brought very low because of Midian, and the sons of Israel cried to the LORD. ⁷Now it came about when the sons of Israel cried to the LORD on account of Midian, ⁸that the LORD sent a prophet to the sons of Israel, and he said to them, Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, It was I who brought you up from Egypt and brought you out from the house of slavery. ⁹I delivered you from the hands of the Egyptians and from the hands of all your oppressors, and dispossessed them before you and gave you their land, ¹⁰and I said to you, I am the LORD your God; you shall not fear the gods of the Amorites in whose land you live. But you have not obeyed Me.*



Observations:

- God’s prophet was sent to convict them of their sins (convict meaning “convince”). He needed to convince them they were out of harmony with God. Idolatry brought them adversity.

Hebrew 1:9 tells us to not only love righteousness but to hate iniquity, meaning evil or wickedness. We cannot love righteousness and feel apathetic about what is against God. We are told to hate it. We are to



be fully convicted so that when we encounter it, we are repelled by and not attracted to sin.

- God reminds them He promised He would defend them and protect them - as long as they maintained heart loyalty and faithfulness to Him. God was faithful to His Covenant, but Israel was not.
- God tells them what they did wrong - they did not obey His voice.

One major problem with sin is rationalization. "This behavior is not so bad." We need to be convicted and move forward.

God allows the Israelites to suffer for a long time until they finally ask for help.

AWARENESS LESSON:

Look UP!

Once we get tired of the defeat and folly of our godless ways, we need to humbly acknowledge our desperation before God and willingly accept His providence.

God knows He will deliver them, but He also knows it is more important they be educated about sin's penalty.

**Gideon is about to get the opportunity to save Israel.
Will he be able to get out of his own way?**

In every story of drama and unlikely victory, there inevitably arises an unlikely hero. They are usually an individual of strong integrity and a humble spirit who are simply going about their business until destiny calls. This precisely describes Gideon, the quietly valiant man who would bring Israel back to God.

An angel visits Gideon and changes the direction of Israel. Gideon speaks to him, thinking the angel is just a man:

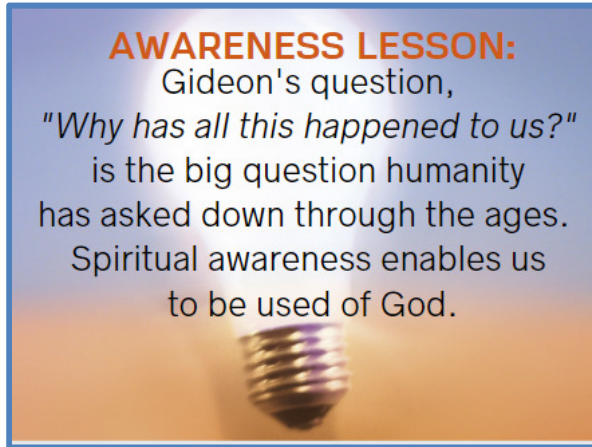
Judges 6:11-13: (NASB) ¹¹Then the angel of the LORD came and sat under the oak... which belonged to Joash... as his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the wine press in order to save it from the Midianites. ¹²The angel of the LORD appeared to him and said to him, The Lord is with you, O valiant warrior. ¹³Then Gideon said to him, O my lord, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? But now the LORD has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian.

Gideon is clueless! It did not even seem to occur to him that the Lord's disfavor, as manifested in the successes of the Midianites against Israel, was on account of Israel's disloyalty to the Lord in idolatry.

- Joash means "whom the father bestows."
- Gideon means "destroyer" or "cutter."



We will soon see both were appropriate names.



Sometimes we have the same difficulty - "How did I get myself into this mess?" Our actions have consequences, and we need to make sure we are following closely to the Lord's instructions so that we are not bringing trouble upon ourselves.

EXAMPLE

An example might be going into debt in order to get the latest and greatest "whatever" we feel we need to have. We spend, spend, spend and then wonder, "Why am I so stressed about money and have no time to spend studying the Bible?"

Sometimes troubles arise because we Christians do exactly what we should be doing and are persecuted for Christ's sake. That is not this situation.

When we are called to follow after Christ, sometimes we feel like Gideon: "Who me? Are you talking to me?" God does make us aware that something special can take place.

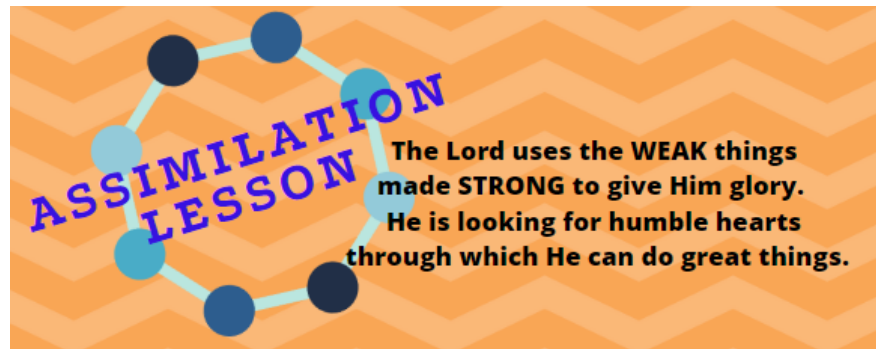
A simple but unfathomable, life-changing command is given that will challenge him to take the next step. This command will take the **awareness** that created a foundation for Gideon to do God's work and challenge him to **assimilate** its meaning.

Judges 6:14-15: (NASB) ¹⁴The LORD (as represented by the angel) looked at him and said, Go in this your strength and deliver Israel from the hand of Midian. Have I not sent you? ¹⁵He said to Him, O Lord, how shall I deliver Israel? Behold, my family is the least in Manasseh, and I am the youngest in my father's house.

Gideon is humble. He is shocked at the suggestion of him being the one to save Israel.

David had a similar story - he was the youngest of his brothers. The Apostle Paul said he was *the least of the apostles* in 1 Corinthians 15:9. Moses was *the meekest man on earth* in Numbers 12:3.

God looks for humility because humility can be shaped.



1 Corinthians 1:27: (NASB) *But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong.*

God chose Gideon. He was weak and fearful but had a great heart and attitude. He had to grow into the responsibility.

God's plan was to perform powerful things through Gideon:

Judges 6:16-18: (NASB) ¹⁶*But the LORD said to him, Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat Midian as one man.*

The overwhelming power of Midian will be reduced to that of an individual man.

Gideon is overwhelmed and needs assurance, so he asks for a sign from the angel:

¹⁷*So Gideon said to Him, If now I have found favor in Your sight, then show me a sign that it is You who speak with me.* ¹⁸*Please do not depart from here, until I come back to You, and bring out my offering and lay it before You. And He said, I will remain until you return.*

Gideon is hospitable and sets a small meal down in front of the angel whom he presumably still thinks is a man. He is told to pour it out on a rock. The angel has a staff in his hand and touches the food and WHOOMP! It creates fire from the rock that consumes the food. The angel then miraculously disappears!

Gideon suddenly realizes this was an angel from the Lord and is upset:

Judges 6:22-23: (NASB) ²²*When Gideon saw that he was the angel of the LORD, he said, Alas, O Lord God! For now I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face.* ²³*The LORD said to him, Peace to you, do not fear; you shall not die.*

(We are not told how God is now speaking to Gideon. Perhaps the angel reappeared or Gideon is hearing a voice.)



Why was Gideon so upset since others saw angels and did not die? The only previous warning (for example, to Moses) was against seeing God Himself.

Perhaps one reason is Gideon's generation was so far away from the information about not being able to look at God that the details were confused. Or maybe he was so overwhelmed by the visit that he was just unsure and scared of what the implication would be.

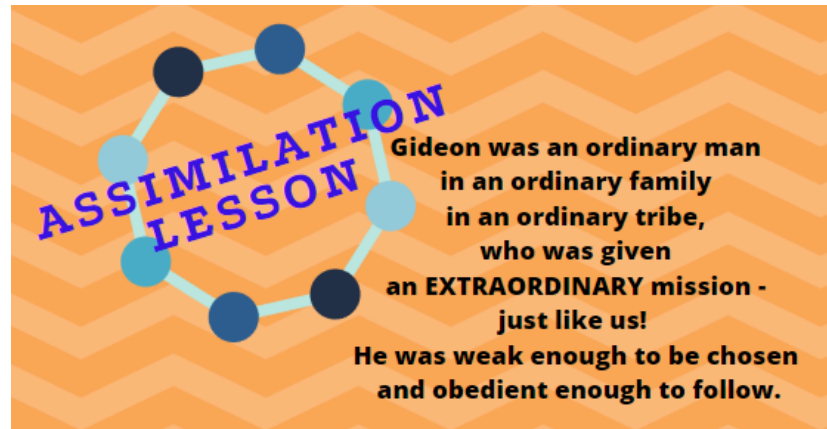
Gideon builds an altar to the Lord and calls it *Jehovah-Shalom*, which means "the Lord is peace."

There were three parts to the message he received: - peace to you - do not fear - you will not die. Jesus gave the same message:

John 14:27-29: (NASB) ²⁷*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.* ²⁸*You heard that I said to you, I go away, and I will come to you..* ²⁹*Now I have told you before it happens, so that when it happens, you may believe (you will live through this).*

John 18:8: (The Passion Translation) *Jesus replied, I told you that I am the one you're looking for, so if you want me, let these men go home.*

Jesus gave the same sense of assurance we see in the story of Gideon. There are similar messages elsewhere in the Bible. This shows us God's recurring care and providence in different circumstances.



If we are going in the right direction of godliness, walk forward - even if it is just baby steps. When we become aware that we are being called by God to follow Jesus, we have to walk forward. We want to seek godly living by “cleaning up our house” and by focusing our hearts and minds so we can be an honor and glory to the Lord.

Gideon’s character was strong, but he was weak in that he had no clue how to stand for righteousness. God took his strength of character and weakness of position and built upon it.

Once we have an **awareness** of our circumstances, and we **assimilate** what they mean, we are then called upon to **activate** ourselves - to prepare ourselves for the inevitable and major challenges ahead.

Judges 6:25-27: (NASB) ²⁵*Now on the same night the LORD said to him, Take your father’s bull and a second bull seven years old, and pull down the altar of Baal which belongs to your father, and cut down the Asherah that is beside it; ²⁶and build an altar to the LORD your God on the top of this stronghold in an orderly manner, and take a second bull and offer a burnt offering with the wood of the Asherah which you shall cut down.* ²⁷*Then Gideon took ten men of his servants and did as the LORD had spoken to him; and because he was too afraid of his father’s household and the men of the city to do it by day, he did it by night.*

The first thing we want to note is there was idol worship in Gideon’s own backyard on his father’s property. We will start to see the progression of how Gideon became a great warrior. The first step would be for him to clean up his own house before leading the people.



Asherah was a mother goddess associated with trees. “She” frequently is associated as a wife or companion of Baal.

(Source: Wikipedia) The name Asherah appears forty times in the Hebrew Bible, but it is much reduced in English translations. The word *’āšērā* is translated in Greek as *ἄλσος* (grove; plural: *ἄλση*) in every instance apart from Isaiah 17:8; 27:9 and 2 Chronicles 15:16; 24:18, with *δένδρα* (trees) being used for the former, and, peculiarly, *Ἀστάρτη* (Astarte) for the latter. The Vulgate in Latin provided *lucus* or *nemus*, a grove or a wood (thus KJV Bible uses *grove* or *groves* with the consequent loss of Asherah's name and knowledge of her existence to English language readers of the Bible over some 400 years). The association of Asherah with trees in the Hebrew Bible is very strong. For example, she is found under trees (1 Kings 14:23; 2 Kings 17:10) and is made of wood by human beings (1 Kings 14:15, 2 Kings 16:3–4). Trees described as being an asherah or part of an asherah include grapevines, pomegranates, walnuts, myrtles, and willows.



We preach a moral code of righteousness and doctrinal truths, but is our house in order, or are we hypocrites? Is our public life the same as our private life? Our habits, the way we talk, how we deal with others - do they reflect the same Christian we represent ourselves as being? Are we living in harmony with the principles of righteousness? Do we need to “clean out” our own backyards?

1 Peter 4:17: (NASB) *For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?*



Gideon did as he was told but was so fearful he did it at night. Was God displeased?

No, it was wise. This would be his first act of warfare and the cover of night ensured success. If he had tried this during the day, his father’s men would have noticed and he would have been stopped.

We also should manage our enthusiasm to do God’s will to make sure we go about it the right way.

God never scolds Gideon for his fear or lack of faith. Every footstep is fraught with uncertainty, but Gideon slowly, surely and obediently continues in the right direction.





(Jonathan tells his story in pieces throughout the rest of the episode.)

Early on in our marriage, Jewel and I saw change coming from the Lord. We saw many overrulings and had experiences that showed us God was telling us something, but what were we to do? We were confused but watching, and then it happened. Someone we respect suggested that we move from Delaware and interview for a specific job in Connecticut. We took it as from the Lord. It was scary at first to look for a job I had never done before, but if He directed, we needed to follow through.

Gideon's obedience began to awaken his inner warrior and brought his own father back to standing with God.

Gideon's faith is still developing. Will putting out the fleece finally convince him it is time for action?

Whenever someone stands against a strong and pervasive tide, there will inevitably be pushback and rage. Gideon drew a God-directed line in the sand, and he did it, in what looked to be, a surprise attack upon sacred pagan ritual. This battle would unleash the war that would change things for a generation.

Gideon lived a consistent life of faith and reverence for God's righteousness. He was faithful but just did not know what to do. He did not have any direction as to how to stand against the enemy. He was ready to do a big work in the face of dramatic odds.

The next morning there was an angry stir among the men of the city because an altar of Baal was destroyed:

Judges 6:29-32: (NASB) ²⁹They said to one another, Who did this thing? And when they searched about and inquired, they said, Gideon the son of Joash did this thing. ³⁰Then the men of the city said to Joash, Bring out your son, that he may die, for he has torn down the altar of Baal, and indeed, he has cut down the Asherah which was beside it. ³¹But Joash said to all who stood against him, Will you contend for Baal, or will you deliver him? Whoever will plead for him shall be put to death by morning. If he is a god, let him contend for himself, because someone has torn down his altar. ³²Therefore on that day he named him Jerubbaal, that is to say, Let Baal contend against him, because he had torn down his altar.

Joash's response is similar to Elijah taunting the priests of Baal that maybe their god is sleeping. (1 Kings 18)



The mob was ready to kill Gideon, but Joash thought quickly and said, “If Baal is a god, and one lowly man cut down his altar, can’t he defend himself?” If Baal was a true god, he could kill Gideon himself. This becomes an immediate life-and-death experience for Gideon and he is getting more confident.

The showdown begins in Judges 6:33-35. The Midianites and Amalekites set up camp around the Israelites. Gideon, now in a position of authority, gets the message out to other tribes to help in the fight. 32,000 are assembled to fight for Israel.

Gideon is still developing - he needs to be sure:

Judges 6:36-40: (NASB) ³⁶Then Gideon said to God, *If You will deliver Israel through me, as You have spoken,* ³⁷*behold, I will put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor. If there is dew on the fleece only, and it is dry on all the ground, then I will know that You will deliver Israel through me, as You have spoken.* ³⁸*And it was so. When he arose early the next morning and squeezed the fleece, he drained the dew from the fleece, a bowl full of water.*

He did not just feel it, he saw the miracle’s magnitude. But what if there was something weird about the fleece that attracted the dew in some way? Maybe this was not even a sign!

Gideon asked to reverse the test to make sure the result was unmistakably supernatural:

³⁹Then Gideon said to God, *Do not let Your anger burn against me that I may speak once more; please let me make a test once more with the fleece, let it now be dry only on the fleece, and let there be dew on all the ground.* ⁴⁰God did so that night; for it was dry only on the fleece, and dew was on all the ground.



Should we “put out the fleece”? Should we be testing God and looking for direct answers?

We do not believe this is appropriate for us to find out the will of God by trying to direct Him. “God, answer me this way.” This is a typical atheist challenge. “If God is there, He should talk to me right now.” Who do we think we are? Gideon was not looking for guidance. God already told him what to do. He was looking for confirmation and assurance. He needed to be sure in order to fight a war.

God works with us as individuals and what might be appropriate for some may not be appropriate for others. God knows our maturity level and sometimes the Lord graciously puts up with our requests. Sometimes God puts the fleece out for us, where after requesting help, we get a clear sense of what we need to do.



I have in the past prayed for an indication in an understandable way to do what is right. Then I would pay attention. I would never say to God, “I need the answer by 3 pm.” It would be requested, “...in Your time, in Your way so that I can understand it.” The answer would come in study or a conversation with my church group or my wife. There is a difference between praying for guidance and Gideon’s specific request. In his case, his nation’s lives were at stake.



Why was Jesus critical of those with weak faith, and yet here Gideon gets overt supernatural signs over and over again?

When Jesus said, *O you of little faith*, he really meant “O you of small faith that can grow.” He acknowledged they had faith and that there was room for that faith to grow. When Peter walked on water but started to sink ([Matthew 14:28-33](#)), Jesus did not scold him. He was saying, “Peter, you are just about there. You had faith but need more. Stay with me and I will teach you.” Jesus acknowledged potential rather than being critical.

We do not live in the time of Gideon. We have other resources to help us determine God’s will, including the written Bible and the Holy Spirit, God’s power and influence.



(Continuing) Before I received that suggestion from our dear friend, Jewel and I put out the fleece. We knew God wanted us to go somewhere, but we did not know where. We prayed He would sell our home by a certain date. Then we would know it was His will to move on. (We were spiritually immature at the time.) We did have enough faith to trust Him however the change would happen. This is not the kind of thing we would do now.

Gideon saw 135,000 of the enemy against his 32,000 and wanted surety on what God’s will was.



ACTIVATION LESSON

**Learning to be mighty
in the hand of God is a process.
God understands
the frailty and weakness
of our imperfect humanity
and guides us
to grow into wielding His might.**

Gideon’s uncertainty was met by a very gracious response on the part of God.

**Two important tests would determine the size of Gideon’s army.
Would you have passed these tests?**

Our gut reaction to being faced with seriously unfavorable odds is always to find ways to even things up. The requirements for fighting the battles God puts in front of us are often counterintuitive. God evens the odds in ways we cannot imagine. All we must do is bravely march forward in faith.



Gideon gathers his small army of 32,000. God is about to dramatically filter down the army's size:

Judges 7:2-3: (NASB) ²The LORD said to Gideon, The people who are with you are too many for Me to give Midian into their hands, for Israel would become boastful, saying, My own power has delivered me. ³Now therefore come, proclaim in the hearing of the people, saying, Whoever is afraid and trembling, let him return and depart from Mount Gilead. So 22,000 people returned, but 10,000 remained.

The first filter: Fear. Anyone who was afraid could leave. Imagine Gideon's shock when the Lord reduced his army by 22,000!

The second filter: Zeal! God said there were STILL too many and instructed Gideon to bring the 10,000 to the water.

There God will show him how to choose those who would go into battle:

Judges 7:5-7: (NASB) ⁵So he brought the people down to the water. And the LORD said to Gideon, You shall separate everyone who laps the water with his tongue as a dog laps, as well as everyone who kneels to drink. ⁶Now the number of those who lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, was 300 men; but all the rest of the people knelt to drink water. ⁷The LORD said to Gideon, I will deliver you with the 300 men who lapped and will give the Midianites into your hands; so let all the other people go, each man to his home.

The tiny army of 300 took provisions and trumpets, and the others went back to their tents.

The soldier could not put his face down to the water without loosening his armor, removing his helmet and breastplate and laying down his sword. But the faithful squatted at the water's edge with their bodies erect and eyes alert. With their armor and swords intact, they cupped their hands and brought the water up to their lips and lapped it. They were in a state of readiness, not relaxed.

Much of Gideon's story is about the preparation *before* the battle.



Here it would be indisputable that the victory would be because of the Lord Jehovah. Gideon's little army would get clobbered unless God was with them.



(Continuing) I drove to Connecticut for a job interview. Then the overwhelming fear hit me at the interview with the task that was before me. It did not go well, and I did not get that job. I felt like I had let God down.



Going to battle with 300 against 135,000 is remarkable - a 450:1 ratio. Later in Israel's history, there were exactly the same odds when Elijah faced the prophets of Baal. It was one man against 450 prophets. SAME ODDS! Same idolatrous god. Our God is the God of incomprehensible odds!

God instructs Gideon to venture down into the enemy's camp and just listen.

Awareness has brought assimilation and **activation**. Now comes the transition to pure **action**.

Judges 7:11-14: (NASB) ¹¹And you will hear what they say; and afterward your hands will be strengthened that you may go down against the camp...¹²Now the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the sons of the east were lying in the valley as numerous as locusts; and their camels were without number, as numerous as the sand on the seashore.

This enemy was clearly overwhelming so God arranged for him to muster up the courage to do battle:

¹³When Gideon came, behold, a man was relating a dream to his friend. And he said, Behold, I had a dream; a loaf of barley bread was tumbling into the camp of Midian, and it came to the tent and struck it so that it fell, and turned it upside down so that the tent lay flat. ¹⁴His friend replied, This is nothing less than the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel; God has given Midian and all the camp into his hand.

What a crazy dream! Gideon was ready to go but still afraid. He was told to sneak into the enemy camp and just listen. What are the odds he would encounter two men talking about a dream, mentioning Gideon by NAME? And of all things, the dream was about a loaf of barley bread tumbling into the camp and wiping out the tents. The men miraculously interpreted this dream, saying, "This must mean the sword of Gideon will destroy us all."

What unbelievable providence! How did they know who he was? Maybe word spread through spies? Maybe they heard of the bold move of cutting down Baal's altar and living to tell about it? This seems reasonable since this act is what caused the war to start.

This is speculation, but perhaps many or all of the Midianites had that same dream by God's providence. Multiple conversations would have instilled fear in them, with the name of Gideon permeating throughout the camp. This would have kept them on edge of something impending.

Gideon hears this, bows in worship, and then goes back to his army and proclaims God's deliverance!





Is it possible we could get to that point of having absolutely no doubt God is leading us? “All I have seen teaches me to trust the Creator for all I have not seen.”



Christian Questions was a “no doubt” circumstance. (Christian Questions aired as a terrestrial radio program until 2016.) We sat down at the radio station 21 years ago and talked to the manager. He said, “You can start next week.” He left the room and we had no idea what the cost would be. Jonathan and I looked at each other and said, “It doesn’t matter whatever it costs. This is an open door and is God’s will. Let’s do this.” Neither one of us were making much money at the time. The manager came back and said, “We will give it to you for free for the first year!” God left no doubt! We, therefore, had to act without doubt.

Gideon gets his army together and provides the new weapons of this war:

Judges 7:16-18: (NASB) ¹⁶He divided the 300 men into three companies, and he put trumpets and empty pitchers into the hands of all of them, with torches inside the pitchers. ¹⁷He said to them, Look at me and do likewise. And behold, when I come to the outskirts of the camp, do as I do. ¹⁸When I and all who are with me blow the trumpet, then you also blow the trumpets all around the camp and say, For the Lord and for Gideon.

Gideon gets people together and provides the new weapons of this war. Spears? Knives? Flaming arrows? Nope. A clay jar, a torch and a ram’s horn trumpet. These are your weapons. Ready to go? The 300 must have been people of great faith! They trusted in Gideon, which reminds us of the lesson of “finding your Nehemiah,” someone spiritually sound you can trust to guide you while your faith is growing. For more on this, please search our archives for Ep. 997 and 998 *How Do You Change Your World?* The Apostle Paul taught a similar concept when he stated variations of *Follow me as I follow Christ* seven times.

The 300 were men of great faith and courage - their faith was in both God AND Gideon.



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CQ Kids videos are two-minute animated stories perfect for bedtime, Bible class, homeschoolers and parents. (And even for the rest of us when you want a quick refresher on some great questions.) We will play an excerpt from the one called, “How Did Gideon Defeat His Enemies?” View this and other great topics at christianquestions.com/cq-video or ChristianQuestions.com/youtube and subscribe to our YouTube channel.



Excerpt from How did Gideon Defeat His Enemies? CQ Kids Video Series

- The 300 men were divided into three groups, surrounding the enemy. Each man had a trumpet and an empty jar with a torch inside. At Gideon’s signal, everyone broke their jars, held their torches in their left hands and blew their trumpets in their right hands. The book of Judges says they shouted, “The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!” The enemy was completely surprised by all of the noise and light, probably thinking there were many more soldiers than just 300...

Gideon's 100 men and the other two companies positioned themselves at the opportune time. They acted just when the "middle watch" was beginning - those who had been watching were going off duty and the next watch was coming in. They probably had not yet settled in.

Judges 7:20-23: (NASB) ²⁰When the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers, they held the torches in their left hands and the trumpets in their right hands for blowing, and cried, A sword for the LORD and for Gideon. ²¹Each stood in his place around the camp; and all the army ran, crying out as they fled. ²²When they blew 300 trumpets, the LORD set the sword of one against another even throughout the whole army; and the army fled... ²³The men of Israel were summoned from Naphtali and Asher and all Manasseh, and they pursued Midian.



A sword for the Lord and for Gideon - the name revealed in the dream was being shouted! They were afraid of this mighty warrior with the thin resume. He was the mighty power in God's hand. All around trumpets are blaring, fires, crashing, and noise and they freak out. In their confusion, they kill one another! 120,000 killed themselves in one night (**Judges 8:10**).

Why was this strategy so effective? The reason is simple. A perfect illusion had been created. In those days when an army moved at night, it was customary for only the regimental trumpeter or bugler to signal attack or retreat. When the Midianites were suddenly awakened by the noise of the breaking of pitchers, and saw 300 widely-spaced lamps completely surrounding them, and heard 300 buglers sounding attack, the instant and natural conclusion of these trained men of war was that 300 regiments of fully armored men were attacking them, that they were hopelessly outnumbered. The breaking pitchers did sound very much like the rattling of armor and the clashing of swords upon iron shields in battle. Then the great number of camels in the camp panicked, stampeded and created added pandemonium. This was chaos!



**ACTION
LESSON**

**Gideon's CLARITY of PURPOSE
and VALIANT ACTIONS**
 stared impossibility in the face
 and handed it over to God Himself!
**Are we prepared enough
for our actions to do the same?**

Gideon and additional fighters he summoned from the hill country of Ephraim ended up killing the Midianite leaders.



(Continued) While staying at a very good friend's house (Rick) in Connecticut, the day after the interview we were all sitting in the kitchen and the phone rang. In just hours from that call, I had a job! The Lord provided in His way but used others to bring us to that point. By the way, two weeks before our deadline date, we had a buyer for our home. All was good, until a few days before the closing, the buyer backed out. On the date we chose, the buyers called and changed their minds and bought the home. Whew! The Lord taught us a lot through our experience. In retrospect, putting out the fleece might not have been the best idea!

The grace of God takes us where we are and gives us what we need. He shows us how to grow beyond that point, to something higher and stronger.

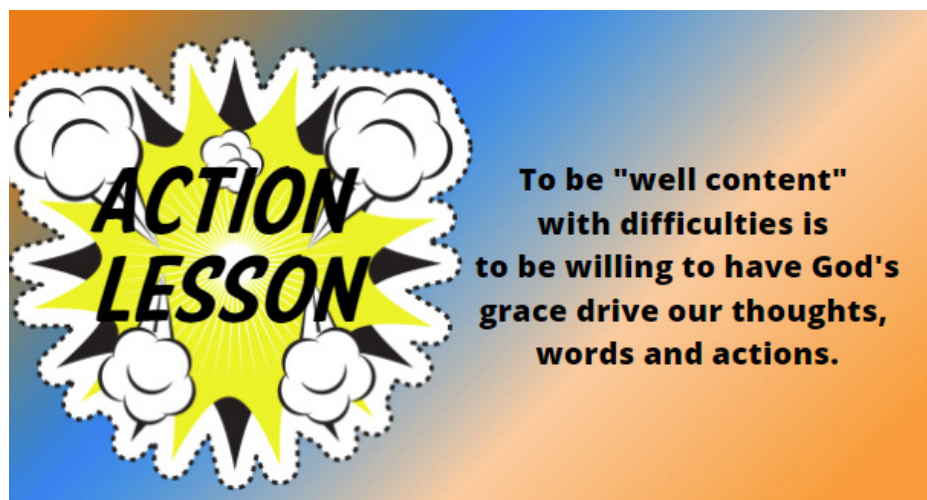
What about us? Can we be one of God's specially-chosen 300?:

2 Corinthians 4:6-7: (NIV) ⁶For God, who said, Let light shine out of darkness, made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ. ⁷But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.

Judges 8 tells more of Gideon's story. He became Israel's fifth judge, and there was peace for 40 more years, and he went on to have 71 sons with many wives and a concubine. He died of old age, but as soon as he died, Israel once again turned to false gods. The cycle continued: Deliverance, disobedience, oppression.

2 Corinthians 12:9-10: (NASB) ⁹And he has said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. ¹⁰Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

Weakness meaning in the frailty of their flesh, does not know what or how. We need direction. God sees potential in that weak individual and gives direction. Do we take that direction so we can act?





**With God
on our side,
we are always
in the majority.**

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Even if we are taking small baby steps, if we are moving forward in the right direction, the Lord will be pleased with our efforts.

Gideon was a timid but faithful man made very strong. May we be like Gideon in our daily service to God, and be as faithful as he was.

God took a man who had never fought a battle and made him a general of a victorious army through his faith. Through God's providence and patience, Gideon grew into a warrior in His service.

*Who Was Gideon?
For Jonathan and Rick (and Julie!) and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*



Join us next week for our podcast on November 11, 2019:
Ep. 1099: Should Christians Care About
the Jewish Tabernacle?

