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Judges 6 – 7

“Lessons from Gideon”

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Gideon was the fifth judge of Israel. It was at what is known today as the spring of Gideon,¹ located at the base of Mt. Gilboa,² that Gideon gathered the army of Israel to fight against the Midianites,³ whose army numbered in the multiple thousands.

In this study, Pastor Gary’s teaching focuses on three questions Gideon, and all Believers before and since, have asked: If God is good, why do bad things happen, and how can God use a person like me, and how can I know your will, God? His outline on knowing God’s will in our lives includes the following four points: the counsel of God’s Word, the confirmation of godly people, the comfort of God’s peace, and the consecration of a pure life. We’ll also look at wonderful ways God worked in and through Gideon to win the victory for the nation of Israel!⁴

Historical Background

1. In Hebrew, Gideon’s name means, “feller” or “hewer of wood.”
2. Little is known about Gideon’s life outside of the biblical account found in [Judges 6-7](#).
3. The Midianites were a ruthless people, who at one time were friendly toward the Israelites.

¹ [Judges 7:1](#) - “... the spring of Harod.”

² According to [1 Samuel 31](#), Mt. Gilboa is the place where King Saul and his son, Jonathan, died.

³ The Midianite camp was about four miles north of the spring of Gideon, on Mt. Moreh. In between Mt. Gilboa and Mt. Moreh is the Jezreel Valley.

⁴ <http://bit.ly/1gOCwDn>

- a. When Moses killed the Egyptian, he fled to Midian, and lived there 40 years.⁵
 - b. Moses' father-in-law was a Midianite.
 - c. The Bible tells us the Midianites practiced what is known today as a "scorched earth policy," which is why the Israelites hid themselves in caves, etc.
4. The Midianites oppressed Israel for seven years, and when God responded to their cry, he raised up an unnamed prophet who told them the reason they've experienced difficult times was their rebellion against God.
 - a. **Judges 6:7-10** - *"When the Israelites cried to the Lord because of Midian, he sent them a prophet, who said, 'This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: I brought you up out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. I snatched you from the power of Egypt and from the hand of all your oppressors. I drove them from before you and gave you their land. I said to you, 'I am the Lord your God; do not worship the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you live.' But you have not listened to me.'*
5. **Judges 6:11** tells us *"the angel of the Lord"* found Gideon *"threshing wheat in a winepress."*
 - a. A winepress would have been a large vat that a person would step down into, which is the remarkable thing about this part of Gideon's story: No one threshes wheat in a winepress!⁶
 - b. Wheat was threshed above ground on a threshing floor so the breeze would separate the chaff from the wheat.
 - c. *"The angel of the Lord"* is what is known in theological terms as a Christophany, which is a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus.
 6. Since Gideon was fearful for his life, on the surface, it seems a little bit ironic that *"the angel of the Lord"* would say, *"The Lord is with you, mighty warrior."*⁷
 7. We can take encouragement from God from this account, because God didn't see Gideon as a fear-filled wheat thresher; instead, God saw all of the hidden potential in Gideon to be a leader and a *"mighty warrior."*

⁵ [Exodus 2:11-15](#) and [Acts 7:29-30](#).

⁶ <http://bit.ly/1kyuTb3>

⁷ [Judges 6:12](#)

If God Is Good, Why Do Bad Things Happen?

8. **Judges 6:12-13** - *“When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he said, ‘The Lord is with you, mighty warrior.’ ‘But sir,’ Gideon replied, ‘if the Lord is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our fathers told us about when they said, ‘Did not the Lord bring us up out of Egypt?’ But now the Lord has abandoned us and put us into the hand of Midian.’ ”*
9. We must never forget that we live in a fallen world, and that since sin entered the world through the human race, the world is now spoiled and corrupted by sin.
10. **1 John 5:19** - *“We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.”*
11. In a fallen world we will be exposed to sin, death, evil, murder, disease, and all kinds of things that were not part of God’s original intention for the human race.
12. God’s intention was to create paradise, but man’s sin corrupted the world through his sin, which is why, in a fallen world, we experience difficulties, hardship, injustice, and inhuman things people do to others.
13. The Christian’s hope is in Christ, because through faith in Jesus Christ, all who believe on him will one day be rescued from a world of evil and sin.
14. The fact that evil exists does not negate the truth of Scripture, which tells us that God is good, perfect, and holy.
15. Believers know this world is not heaven, and they take hope in the fact that Christ has prepared a place for them in heaven, where there will be no more death, sorrow, or evil.
16. Pastor Gary has said, for unbelievers, this world is as good as it gets, but for Christians, the best is yet to come!

How Can God Use A Person Like Me?

17. **Judges 6:14-16** - *“The Lord turned to him and said, ‘Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian’s hand. Am I not sending you?’ ‘But Lord,’ Gideon asked, ‘how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I*

am the least in my family.’ The Lord answered, ‘I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites together.’ ”

18. Gideon was not a man who was seeking power or a leadership role; he’s a reluctant leader in the making.
19. The best leaders are not those who have fought for the role, but those who are sought for the role.
20. The fact that Gideon doesn’t have an impressive resume helps us understand that he is God’s hand is upon him and God has chosen him for this particular time and this particular reason.
21. We can take encouragement from Gideon’s life to know that God uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things.

God, How Can I Know Your Will?

22. **Judges 6:36-40** - *“Gideon said to God, ‘If you will save Israel by my hand as you have promised - look, I will place a wool fleece on the threshing floor. If there is dew only on the fleece and all the ground is dry, then I will know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you said.’ And that is what happened. Gideon rose early the next day; he squeezed the fleece and wrung out the dew - a bowlful of water. Then Gideon said to God, ‘Do not be angry with me. Let me make just one more request. Allow me one more test with the fleece. This time make the fleece dry and the ground covered with dew.’ That night God did so. Only the fleece was dry; all the ground was covered with dew.”*

23. The Counsel of God’s Word

- a. **Psalm 32:8** - *“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you.”*
- b. **Psalm 119:105** - *“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.”*
- c. God’s Word will illuminate the direction we need to go and his purpose in our lives, but we must be in his Word.
- d. Knowing the Scriptures will give us direction and the standard of God, so we’ll have a way to measure, judge, and discern things.
- e. The bottom line is, we need the Word of God in our hearts and in our lives.

24. The Confirmation Of Godly People

- a. Oftentimes God will speak to us through other people, however, we need to be careful to only receive confirmation from others, not direction.
- b. The fact is, when God is calling us to do something or he's leading us somewhere, he doesn't give that information to us through someone else, because he has a direct line with us, so to speak.
- c. God uses others to speak into our lives as a confirmation of what God has already been speaking to you about.
- d. [Proverbs 11:14](#) - *"For lack of guidance a nation falls, but many advisers make victory sure."*
- e. [Proverbs 24:6](#) - *"[For] waging war you need guidance, and for victory many advisors."*

25. The Comfort Of God's Peace

- a. [Colossians 3:15a](#) - *"Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts..."*
- b. God wants us to have a sense of peace about what he's calling us to do.
- c. When we try to discern what God's will and direction is, we need to remember this important truth: Never go against your peace.

26. The Consecration Of A Pure Life

- a. [Romans 12:1-2](#) - *"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will."*
- b. This simple truth is, that when we live a godly life, we will know what *"his good, pleasing, and perfect will"* is for our lives.
- c. Some people, thinking wrongly, believe you can know what God's will is without living a godly life.

Gideon's "Army"

27. [Judges 7:1-8](#) - *"Early in the morning, Jerub-Baal (that is, Gideon) and all his men camped at the spring of Harod. The camp of Midian was north of them in the valley near the hill of Moreh. The Lord said to Gideon, 'You have too many men for me to deliver Midian into their hands. In order that Israel may not boast against me that her own strength has saved her, announce now to the people, 'Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back and leave Mount Gilead.' So twenty-two thousand men left, while ten thousand remained. But the Lord said to Gideon, 'There are still too many men. Take them down to the water, and I*

will sift them for you there. If I say, 'This one shall go with you,' he shall go; but if I say, 'This one shall not go with you,' he shall not go.' So Gideon took the men down to the water. There the Lord told him, 'Separate those who lap the water with their tongues like a dog from those who kneel down to drink.' Three hundred men lapped with their hands to their mouths. All the rest got down on their knees to drink. The Lord said to Gideon, 'With the three hundred men that lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hands. Let all the other men go, each to his own place. So Gideon sent the rest of the Israelites to their tents but kept the three hundred, who took over the provisions and trumpets of the others.'

28. [Judges 7:19-22](#) - *"Gideon and the hundred men with him reached the edge of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, just after they had changed the guard. They blew their trumpets and broke the jars that were in their hands. The three companies blew the trumpets and smashed the jars. Grasping the torches in their left hands and holding in their right hands the trumpets they were to blow, they shouted, 'A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!' While each man held his position around the camp, all the Midianites ran, crying out as they fled. When the three hundred trumpets sounded, the Lord caused the men throughout the camp to turn on each other with their swords. The army fled to Beth Shittah toward Zererah as far as the border of Abel Meholah near Tabbath."*

29. When God used the three hundred men to fight the Midianite army, the Midianites experienced shock and awe, and assumed that the Israelite army vastly outnumbered them, and in the confusion, they turned on each other with their swords!

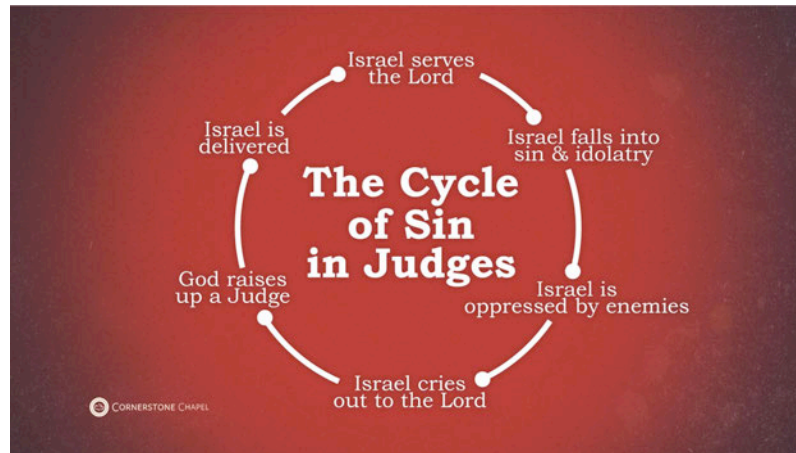
30. God only used a select few to defeat the formidable Midianite army, because he always wants his people to be in a place where they will know he's the only one

Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read [Judges 6:1-6](#) to provide an overview for this study.
3. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences about times when they didn't feel as though they had a lot to offer in service to the Lord. (See #7 above)

4. How has the Lord used you, as an ordinary person, to do extraordinary things?
5. How did the Lord help you understand that in you, he saw the potential to serve him in a specific way at a specific time and place?
6. How has the Lord used you because you were willing to make yourself available, regardless of your gifting, background, and experience?
7. Read and discuss [Acts 4:1-13](#).
8. Share examples of ways the Lord has helped you mature in your faith because you've spent time with him and his Word.
9. Allow the people in your group to share examples of what seem like impossible situations they are dealing with.
10. How is the Lord showing you that you need to trust him, because he's the only way out or the only answer?
11. Read and discuss [Judges 6:12-13](#).
 - a. How does the Lord help you handle times when bad things happen to good people?
 - b. Read and discuss [1 John 5:19](#).
12. Read and discuss [Judges 6:36-40](#).
13. In what ways has the counsel of God's Word helped you discern his will?
 - a. Read and discuss [Psalm 32:8](#) and [Psalm 119:105](#).
14. How has the Lord used the confirmation of godly people to help you discern his will?
 - a. Read and discuss [Proverbs 11:14](#).
15. How has knowing God's peace in your life helped you trust in his plan for your life?
 - a. Read and discuss [Colossians 3:15a](#).
16. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences about the ways the Holy Spirit is helping them live a consecrated and pure life.
 - a. Read and discuss [Romans 12:1-2](#).

17. Close your time in prayer by asking the Holy Spirit to help each person: to trust and have faith in the Lord that he will help them when they are in impossible situations, with what seem like insurmountable odds; remember the godly counsel Pastor Gary gave regarding discerning God's will in their life (receive counsel from God's Word – get the confirmation of godly people – know the comfort of God's peace – consecrate themselves to live a pure life).



* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).