

Calvary Chapel  Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEACHER'S PACKET

Kindergarten

Sunday Morning

Study 25

Gideon

Gideon

The Objective is the key concept for this week's lesson. It should be the main focus of the study.

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verses support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

Objective The goal of this lesson is to use the story of Gideon to illustrate the importance of trusting God rather than yourself.

Key Verses

Judges 7 (see Judges 6 for context) - Main Teaching Passage

Psalms 20:7

Matthew 6:25-34

Matthew 7:7-11

Memory Verse - Joshua 24:15b (February Memory Verse)

"But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

Hook

Take a chair from the room and label it "God." Fold a piece of paper or use any other craft supplies available to make some sort of chair or stool shape (it doesn't have to look great) and label it "myself." Ask the class which chair you should trust to hold you if you sit on it. If you are feeling daring, try them both out.

In this example, you had to choose between two chairs to trust. In today's story, the main character, Gideon, has a choice between trusting himself and trusting God.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

The story of Gideon takes place during the period of the judges, one of the darkest times in Israel's history. Everyone in Israel was doing what was right in his own eyes, and they had sunk into idolatry. As a result, they were conquered and ruled by the Midianites, a pagan group of people. However, Israel cried out to God, and He sent an angel to Gideon to tell him that he would save the people from Midian.

32,000 soldiers came to join Gideon in battle, but the Lord said that was too many, so Gideon sent home all who were afraid. 22,000 left, leaving only 10,000, but that was still too many. The Lord told Gideon to send the men down to the water to drink. Some knelt down to drink the water, while others lapped the water like dogs. He sent those who knelt down home, leaving only 300 men. Then the Lord had Gideon send spies to Midian's camp, and the spies came back with good news: the Midianites were afraid of Gideon.

Gideon and his army then surrounded Midian's camp with torches, trumpets, and jars. When Gideon gave the signal, the Israelites smashed the pots, waved the torches, blew the trumpets, and shouted, "A sword for the Lord, and for Gideon!" The Midianites were confused, thinking that Gideon brought a large army, and in that confusion Midian was destroyed.

LOOK

It is strange for someone in an army to say that he has too many soldiers. That would be like a person saying that they have too much money or too much food. Ask the kids if they would ever complain that they had too much money, too many toys, too many friends, etc. Even if you don't need all that money or food, it never hurts to have it, and it can be handy to hold on to just in case. The same way, when it comes to soldiers in your army, more is always better ... except in this case.

God told Gideon that an army of 32,000 people was too big. Why would He say that? Because an army that big would be tempted to trust themselves. If they had gone to battle, perhaps they would have won. After the battle, they might brag about their skills. They might say that they won because of a brilliant strategy or courageous fighting. They would be tempted to forget that it was the Lord who gave them victory. With only 300 men, however, they were outmatched by a landslide: 450 Midianites for every one Israelite! Even the bravest, strongest, and most wise army wouldn't stand a chance against those odds. The only way they could win is if the Lord won the battle for them, and indeed He did. With only 300 men, only God could take the credit and the glory for this battle.

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

LOOK (Continued)

Just like the Israelites, God wants us to trust Him with our problems, not ourselves. Name some situations where you might be tempted to trust yourself: you might think that you are so smart that you don't need to pray and ask God for help in school. Maybe you think that you have lots of food in your house all the time and do not need to pray that God would provide food for you and your family. Maybe you think that you are so strong that you never pray to ask God to keep you healthy.

We usually don't consider many of these things as, "trusting ourselves" or "trusting something other than God," but in reality, if we are not trusting God for our needs, we are trusting ourselves or something or someone else. God wants us to ask for everything that we need so that He gets the glory. The application of this is very simple yet often neglected: we need to come to God in prayer for all our needs. God is the one who takes care of us, we need only ask and He will provide what we need (Matthew 6:25-34; Matthew 7:7-11).

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

TOOK

Review the lesson by asking the students if God wanted Gideon to bring more men into battle or fewer. Why did He ask for less? How can we trust Him with our problems? Have the students come up with areas in their lives where they can and should trust the Lord, not themselves.

Pray: Thank the Lord for being our gracious provider of everything we need. Ask Him to provide for our needs and help us to trust in Him, not ourselves.

Parent Question: Did the Lord want Gideon to bring more men or fewer men into battle? Why?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on Judges 7 by David Guzik

THE BATTLE AGAINST MIDIAN

A. Israel's small army is too big for God to use.

1. ([Judges 7:1-3](#)) God tells Gideon to tell all his soldiers who are afraid to go home.

Then Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) and all the people who *were* with him rose early and encamped beside the well of Harod, so that the camp of the Midianites was on the north side of them by the hill of Moreh in the valley. And the LORD said to Gideon, "The people who *are* with you *are* too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel claim glory for itself against Me, saying, 'My own hand has saved me.'" Now therefore, proclaim in the hearing of the people, saying, 'Whoever is fearful and afraid, let him turn and depart at once from Mount Gilead.'" And twenty-two thousand of the people returned, and ten thousand remained.

a. **The people who are with you are too many for Me:** This was a great test of Gideon's faith. His army of 32,000 men was already overmatched by 135,000 Midianites. Yet God thought his army was *too big*, and He commanded Gideon to invite all who were afraid to go home. He was left with only 10,000 men.

i. Gideon was probably surprised at the number of men who were afraid to fight and hoped that only a few hundred would leave. But we are told that they assembled in a place where they could see the 135,000 Midianite troops ([Judges 7:8](#)). The sight of a huge opposing army made many Israelite soldiers afraid.

b. **Lest Israel claim glory for itself against Me, saying "My own hand has saved me":** This explains *why* the army of 32,000 was too large. Israel could still take credit for a victory if they had 32,000 troops. They could believe they were underdogs who triumphed through their own great bravery or strategy. God wanted the odds so bad that the victory would clearly be His alone.

i. If we really believe the principle, *not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the LORD of hosts* ([Zechariah 4:6](#)), then our smallness does not matter. If we really believe the principle, *some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the LORD our God* ([Psalm 20:7](#)), then smallness does not matter.

2. ([Judges 7:4-8](#)) Gideon must separate the men according to a particular test.

But the LORD said to Gideon, "The people *are* still *too* many; bring them down to the water, and I will test them for you there. Then it will be, *that* of whom I say to you, 'This one shall go with you,' the same shall go with you; and of whomever I say to you, 'This one shall not go with you,' the same shall not go." So he brought the people down to the water. And the LORD said to Gideon, "Everyone who laps from the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set apart by himself; likewise everyone who gets down on his knees to drink." And the number of those who lapped, *putting* their hand to their mouth, was three hundred men; but all the rest of the people got down on their knees to drink water. Then the LORD said to Gideon, "By the three hundred men who lapped I will save you, and deliver the Midianites into your hand. Let all the *other* people go, every man to his place." So the people took provisions and their trumpets in their hands. And he sent away all *the rest* of Israel, every man to his tent, and retained those three hundred men. Now the camp of Midian was below him in the valley.

a. **The people are still too many:** God already reduced Gideon's army from 32,000 to 10,000. Here He re-

duced it from 10,000 to 300. He did this because 10,000 were **still too many** for God's purpose.

i. We rarely think that bigness can be a hindrance to the work of God. Yet it is harder to truly rely on God when we have many wonderful resources at hand. Though it certainly can be done, it is hard to be big and to rely only on the *LORD*. When we are big, it is possible to do a lot in human resources and "give the credit" to God.

ii. Paul was in danger of being too strong for his own good. Therefore, God brought a weakness into his life so that Paul would keep relying on the *LORD*'s strength - and be stronger than ever ([2 Corinthians 12:7-10](#)).

b. **Bring them down to the water, and I will test them for you there:** This seems a strange test, and there are different ideas as to why God used this to separate the soldiers. Perhaps it was because those who cupped the water in their hands and brought it to their mouth were better soldiers because they kept their eyes on their surroundings even when taking a drink.

i. **As a dog laps:** The ancient Hebrew word for **laps** is *yalok*, used to imitate the sound a dog makes when lapping water.

ii. "The test was peculiarly military. Men in such a position were not on guard against sudden surprise." (Morgan)

iii. We might say that God eliminated the fearful and those who thought first only of convenience, the easy way. "The thought is disturbing, but it may well be true, that the composition of God's army to fight Satan's hosts in any day is really little different. How many Christians are so fearful of the enemy that they are of no real use in this warfare, and how many of the remainder are so self-centered, rather than God centered, that they find little place for effective ministry." (Wood)

c. **By the three hundred men who lapped I will save you, and deliver the Midianites into your hand:** God assured Gideon that victory was certain, even through only 300 men. Now the Israeli army was less than 1% of its original size and the proportion was 400 Midianite soldiers to each Israeli soldier. Gideon could only trust in God because there was nothing else to trust.

3. ([Judges 7:9-11](#)) Gideon must spy on the camp of the Midianites and find encouragement.

It happened on the same night that the LORD said to him, "Arise, go down against the camp, for I have delivered it into your hand. But if you are afraid to go down, go down to the camp with Purah your servant, and you shall hear what they say; and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp." Then he went down with Purah his servant to the outpost of the armed men who were in the camp.

a. **Arise, go down against the camp:** God wanted Gideon to find encouragement in this visit to the enemy's camp. This shows that when God asks us to do hard things for Him, He doesn't fold His arms and sit back and expect us to do it on our own. He is there to guide us and to keep us and to encourage us all along the way.

b. **Afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp:** This is the tender mercy of God. He dealt with the doubts and fears of Gideon, and wanted to assure him.

4. ([Judges 7:12-15](#)) God reassures Gideon through the Midianites.

Now the Midianites and Amalekites, all the people of the East, were lying in the valley as numerous as locusts; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the seashore in multitude. And when Gideon had come, there was a man telling a dream to his companion. He said, "I have had a dream: To my surprise, a loaf of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian; it came to a tent and struck it so that it fell and overturned, and the tent collapsed." Then his companion answered and said, "This is nothing else but the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel! Into his hand God has delivered Midian and the whole camp." And so it was, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, that he worshiped. He returned to the camp of Israel, and said, "Arise, for the LORD has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand."

a. **A loaf of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian:** Only the very poor ate **barley bread**. The vision meant that the camp of the Midianites would be knocked over by a humble nobody.

i. "Barley-meal was rather food for dogs or cattle than for men; and therefore the barley cake would be the emblem of a thing despised." (Spurgeon)

ii. "A cake of barley bread might be a worthless thing; but if God were behind it, it would upset a tent!" (Meyer)

b. **This is nothing else but the sword of Gideon:** God allowed Gideon to see a great confirmation of His future work. This was obviously no coincidence and no display of luck. God used this situation to build the faith of Gideon, and it worked so well that all Gideon could do was worship God.

i. It was no accident that the man dreamed the dream that night; no accident that he told his friend about it at just that moment; no accident that Gideon came to the exact place where he overheard the man telling the dream.

ii. "I think if I had been Gideon I should have said to myself, 'I do not so much rejoice in what this dreamer saith as I do in the fact that he has told his dream at the moment when I was lurking near him: I see the hand of the Lord in this, and I am strengthened by the sight. Verily, I perceive that the Lord worketh all things with unfailing wisdom, and faileth not in his designs. He that has ordered this matter can order all things else.'" (Spurgeon)

iii. It must have built the faith of Gideon to know that his enemies were afraid of *him*. When we are weak in faith we often make our enemies stronger than they really are. We could say that the devil himself is afraid of the normal Christian - or at least afraid of what they *could* become.

iv. We should take it to heart; our enemies, both human and spiritual, are at their core *afraid of us*. "Behold the host of doubters, and heretics, and revilers, who, at the present time, have come up into the inheritance of Israel, hungry from their deserts of rationalism and atheism! They are eating up all the corn of the land. They cast a doubt upon all the verities of our faith. But we need not fear them; for if we heard their secret counsels, we should perceive that they are afraid of us. Their loud blusterings and their constant sneers, are the index of real fear. Those who preach the cross of our Lord Jesus are the terror of modern thinkers. In their heart of hearts they dread the preaching of the old-fashioned gospel, and they hate what they dread. On their beds they dream of the coming of some evangelist into their neighborhood. What the name of Richard was to the Saracens, that is the name of Moody to these boastful intellects." (Spurgeon)

c. **Arise, for the LORD has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand:** Gideon's encouragement was contagious. Having received encouragement, he could not help but spread that encouragement to others and his encouragement built their faith.

i. "But what a pity it is that we should need such little bits of things to cheer us up, when we have matters of far surer import to make us glad! Gideon had already received, by God's own angel, the word, 'Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.' Was not this enough for him? Whence is it that a boy's dream comforts him more than God's own word." (Spurgeon)

B. The army is small enough to be used by God to win the battle.

1. ([Judges 7:16-18](#)) Gideon announces a strange battle plan.

Then he divided the three hundred men *into* three companies, and he put a trumpet into every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and torches inside the pitchers. And he said to them, "Look at me and do likewise; watch, and when I come to the edge of the camp you shall do as I do: When I blow the trumpet, I and all who *are* with me, then you also blow the trumpets on every side of the whole camp, and say, '*The sword of the LORD and of Gideon!*'"

a. **He divided the three hundred men into three companies:** There is no specific mention that God gave Gideon this plan through supernatural revelation. Yet, because Gideon was a Spirit-filled man ([Judges 6:34](#)),

the supernatural can operate very naturally in his life.

b. **Look at me and do likewise:** This plan probably came very naturally to Gideon, but upon reflection one can clearly see how the Holy Spirit prompted him.

2. ([Judges 7:19-23](#)) God strikes the army of Midian with a surprise attack.

So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the outpost of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, just as they had posted the watch; and they blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers that were in their hands. Then 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 they cried, "The sword of the LORD and of Gideon!" And every man stood in his place all around the camp; and the whole army ran and cried out and fled. When the three hundred blew the trumpets, the LORD set every man's sword against his companion throughout the whole camp; and the army fled to Beth Acacia, toward Zererah, as far as the border of Abel Meholah, by Tabbath. And the men of Israel gathered together from Naphtali, Asher, and all Manasseh, and pursued the Midianites.

a. **Then the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers:** The Midianite soldiers awoke to an explosion of noise, light, and movement coming down on them from all directions. No wonder they thought they were being attacked by an army even bigger than they were.

b. **And they cried, "The sword of the LORD and of Gideon":** This cry was not the result of pride on Gideon's part. Instead, it showed wisdom in the attack because clearly the Midianites were already afraid of **the sword of Gideon** ([Judges 7:14](#)), and shouting helped to send them into panic.

i. Perhaps the Midianites did not know who the LORD was, but they knew there was a man from the LORD named Gideon. It was appropriate for Gideon to take this leadership role.

c. **The LORD set every man's sword against his companion throughout the whole camp:** The first phase of the battle wasn't between Israel and Midian, but as the Midianites fought themselves. This is a good example of how we can be *more than conquerors through Him who loved us* ([Romans 8:37](#)). We get the spoils of victory though Jesus won the battle for us.

i. The early Christian writer Origen often emphasized elaborate spiritual meanings to Biblical accounts. In this story he made the 300 men types of preachers of the gospel. Their trumpets were a picture of preaching Christ crucified. Their torchlights represented the holy conduct of the preachers.

ii. **And the men of Israel gathered together from Naphtali, Asher, and all Manasseh, and pursued the Midianites:** "If some have the courage to strike the enemy, there are others who will come out of their hiding-places to hunt the beaten foe. When you really want help, often you cannot get it; but when you can afford to do without assistance, you will sometimes be embarrassed by it." (Spurgeon)

3. ([Judges 7:24-25](#)) Working towards total defeat of Midian.

Then Gideon sent messengers throughout all the mountains of Ephraim, saying, "Come down against the Midianites, and seize from them the watering places as far as Beth Barah and the Jordan." Then all the men of Ephraim gathered together and seized the watering places as far as Beth Barah and the Jordan. And they captured two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb. They killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb they killed at the winepress of Zeeb. They pursued Midian and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on the other side of the Jordan.

a. **Come down against the Midianites:** This was *not* unbelief on Gideon's part. Though God started the work with a small number of soldiers, once the work began, Gideon wanted many to get involved in the work.

b. **They pursued Midian:** God blessed the effort of people of Ephraim, and they made good success against the enemy and their leaders.