



THE 12 APOSTLES BIBLE STUDY SERIES

Gideon

By Brother Ed

We all do need to learn the lesson that repeated sin brings its own consequences, not because God is cruel and vindictive, but because He has our best interests at heart and loves us too much to let us get away with our sins. That is why He chastises His children. Gideon was chastened by God.

There is no doubt that the Bible regards Gideon as an outstanding man of faith. He receives an admirable mention in Heb 11:32 among those who believe God to fulfill His Word, in bringing about realities which they do not yet see.

Where: Ophrah, valley of Jezreel, spring of Harod

Occupations: Farmer, warrior, judge

Outline

God Chastises (Jdg_6:1-6)

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God Chastises (Jdg_6:1-6)

Jdg 6:1-6 The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, and for seven years he gave them into the hands of the Midianites. (2) Because the power of Midian was so oppressive, the Israelites prepared shelters for themselves in mountain clefts, caves and strongholds. (3) Whenever the Israelites planted their crops, the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples invaded the country. (4) They camped on the land and ruined the crops all the way to Gaza and did not spare a living thing for Israel, neither sheep nor cattle nor donkeys. (5) They came up with their livestock and their tents like swarms of locusts. It was impossible to count them or their camels; they invaded the land to ravage it. (6) Midian so impoverished the Israelites that they cried out to the LORD for help.

Quiz

1. Why did God chasten the Israelites? (Jdg 6:1)
2. How frequent and in what manner did the Midianites attack the Israelites? (Jdg 6:2-5)
3. What did the Israelite do? (Jdg 6:6)

Applications

1. Please share with group a time when you experienced trouble.
2. How has it helped you grow and be rid of sin?

God's discipline is a feature of His love, and it is only by allowing us to taste the consequences of our sin that God teaches us to hate it. He has the long-term gains always in view—holiness and righteousness.



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God Convicts (Jdg_6:7-10)

Jdg 6:7-10 When the Israelites cried out to the LORD because of Midian, (8) 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. (9) I rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians. And I delivered you from the hand of all your oppressors; I drove them out before you and gave you their land. (10) 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."

Quiz

1. What are the charges against the Israelites:
(Jdg 6:8-9):
(Jdg 6:10):

Applications

1. How have you shown gratitude for what God has done for you?
2. What are your idols? How are you going to combat against them?

His message from the Lord is that the people have forfeited any right to Yahweh's help because of their persistent idolatry.



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God Calls (Jdg_6:11-16)

Jdg 6:11-16 The angel of the LORD came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites. (12) When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, "The LORD is with you, mighty warrior." (13) "Pardon me, my lord," Gideon replied, "but if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our ancestors told us about when they said, 'Did not the LORD bring us up out of Egypt?' But now the LORD has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian."

(14) 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?"

(15) "Pardon me, my lord," Gideon replied, "but how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family." (16) The LORD answered, "I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites, leaving none alive."

Quiz

1. According to Jdg 6:11-13,15 what are Gideon's credentials?
2. On what basis did God choose Gideon?

Applications

1. Recall the time when you were called by God. How do you describe yourself as a person?
2. How have God changed you thus far?

Gideon did not choose himself. No true servant of God ever does that. In fact, his reaction to the angelic visitor is almost standard in the Bible, "You must have got the wrong number."



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God Confirms (Jdg_6:17-24)

Jdg 6:17-24 Gideon replied, "If now I have found favor in your eyes, give me a sign that it is really you talking to me. (18) Please do not go away until I come back and bring my offering and set it before you." And the LORD said, "I will wait until you return." (19) Gideon went inside, prepared a young goat, and from an ephah of flour he made bread without yeast. Putting the meat in a basket and its broth in a pot, he brought them out and offered them to him under the oak. (20) The angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened bread, place them on this rock, and pour out the broth." And Gideon did so. (21) Then the angel of the LORD touched the meat and the unleavened bread with the tip of the staff that was in his hand. Fire flared from the rock, consuming the meat and the bread. And the angel of the LORD disappeared. (22) When Gideon realized that it was the angel of the LORD, he exclaimed, "Alas, Sovereign LORD! I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face!" (23) But the LORD said to him, "Peace! Do not be afraid. You are not going to die." (24) So Gideon built an altar to the LORD there and called it The LORD Is Peace. To this day it stands in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

Quiz

1. Gideon asked for a confirmation from God for His promise. What sign did God? (Jdg 6:21)
2. What did the Angel ask for as an offering? (Jdg 6:20)
3. What name did Gideon give the altar in Jdg 6:24?

Applications

1. Recall the time when you asked God for a sign or miracle and God granted your request. Share with the group.
2. What is the sign of Jonah? What is the promise?
3. What did God ask us as sacrifice when we are to follow Him?
4. What altars have you set up for God? How has such an altar helped you during the time of need?

We need to underline that Gideon's peace came as a direct result of a word from God and was not generated by his own wishful thinking.



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God Challenges (Jdg_6:25-32)

Jdg 6:25-32 That same night the LORD said to him, "Take the second bull from your father's herd, the one seven years old. Tear down your father's altar to Baal and cut down the Asherah pole beside it. (26) Then build a proper kind of altar to the LORD your God on the top of this height. Using the wood of the Asherah pole that you cut down, offer the second bull as a burnt offering." (27) So Gideon took ten of his servants and did as the LORD told him. But because he was afraid of his family and the townspeople, he did it at night rather than in the daytime.

(28) In the morning when the people of the town got up, there was Baal's altar, demolished, with the Asherah pole beside it cut down and the second bull sacrificed on the newly built altar! (29) They asked each other, "Who did this?" When they carefully investigated, they were told, "Gideon son of Joash did it." (30) The people of the town demanded of Joash, "Bring out your son. He must die, because he has broken down Baal's altar and cut down the Asherah pole beside it." (31) But Joash replied to the hostile crowd around him, "Are you going to plead Baal's cause? Are you trying to save him? Whoever fights for him shall be put to death by morning! If Baal really is a god, he can defend himself when someone breaks down his altar." (32) So because Gideon broke down Baal's altar, they gave him the name Jerub-Baal that day, saying, "Let Baal contend with him."

Quiz

1. According to Jdg 6:25-32, what has God instructed Gideon to do?
2. What was the challenge set by Joash?

Applications

1. What are the secret altars hidden in your backyards that need to be pulled down before we can do anything for the Lord?
2. How have you decided to struck down the idol in honour of God?

The altar that exists in Gideon's own backyard has to come down. You cannot have an altar to the Lord and an altar to a false god on the same property. The Lord is a jealous God. He will not share His territory or His glory with any other.



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The Transforming Factor (Jdg_6:33-35)

Jdg 6:33-35 Now all the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples joined forces and crossed over the Jordan and camped in the Valley of Jezreel. (34) Then the Spirit of the LORD came on Gideon, and he blew a trumpet, summoning the Abiezrites to follow him. (35) He sent messengers throughout Manasseh, calling them to arms, and also into Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali, so that they too went up to meet them.

Quiz

1. According to Jdg 6:33-35, how has God enabled Gideon?

Applications

1. What have you decided to ask God for help and enablement?

This reminds us that God was not looking for the most courageous man in Israel, the greatest warrior, or the most accomplished strategist. He was looking for a man who, knowing his own weakness, would depend all the more upon God for divine strength.



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The Confirming Factor (Jdg_6:36-40)

Jdg 6:36-40 Gideon said to God, "If you will save Israel by my hand as you have promised-- (37) 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." (38) And that is what happened. Gideon rose early the next day; he squeezed the fleece and wrung out the dew--a bowlful of water. (39) 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, but this time make the fleece dry and let the ground be covered with dew." (40) That night God did so. Only the fleece was dry; all the ground was covered with dew.

Quiz

1. According to Jdg 6:36, what do you see inside Gideon's heart?
2. What did Gideon ask God to do for him to confirm His cause?

Applications

1. How do you fight with doubt in your own heart?
2. In what ways is "putting out the fleece" very tempting?

"Putting out the fleece" (asking God to do some special thing to verify His will) is evidence of unbelief and not of faith. God stooped to Gideon's weakness and did what he asked, and He may do that for you; but this is not the level on which God wants to meet you. Immature faith needs signs for reassurance; mature takes God at His Word and obeys.

That being said, although the Holy Spirit had come so powerfully upon Gideon, he was still very weak in faith and clearly daunted by the prospect before him. Who would not be?



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The Reduction Factor (Jdg_7:1-8)

Jdg 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. (2) The LORD said to Gideon, "You have too many men. I cannot deliver Midian into their hands, or Israel would boast against me, 'My own strength has saved me.' (3) Now announce to the army, 'Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back and leave Mount Gilead.'" So twenty-two thousand men left, while ten thousand remained. (4) But the LORD said to Gideon, "There are still too many men. Take them down to the water, and I will thin them out 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." (5) So Gideon took the men down to the water. There the LORD told him, "Separate those who lap the water with their tongues as a dog laps from those who kneel down to drink." (6) Three hundred of them drank from cupped hands, lapping like dogs. All the rest got down on their knees to drink. (7) 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 others go home." (8) So Gideon sent the rest of the Israelites home but kept the three hundred, who took over the provisions and trumpets of the others. Now the camp of Midian lay below him in the valley.

Quiz

1. Who are the real enemies in the soldiers' heart:
(Jdg 7:1-3):
(Jdg 7:4-8):

Applications

1. How has God used circumstances to test your faith?

We never know when God is using the everyday things of life to test our faith. The men in Gideon's army were tested by the way they drank water. Abraham was tested by the offering of Isaac. Lot was tested by a disagreement over land. Israel was tested by thirst, and Moses was tested by the complaining of the people. We must constantly be on guard because sometimes we do not know what the lesson was until we have failed the test



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From Fear to Faith (Jdg_7:9-14)

Jdg 7:9-14 During that night the LORD said to Gideon, "Get up, go down against the camp, because I am going to give it into your hands. (10) If you are afraid to attack, go down to the camp with your servant Purah (11) and listen to what they are saying. Afterward, you will be encouraged to attack the camp." So he and Purah his servant went down to the outposts of the camp. (12) The Midianites, the Amalekites and all the other eastern peoples had settled in the valley, thick as locusts. Their camels could no more be counted than the sand on the seashore. (13) Gideon arrived just as a man was telling a friend his dream. "I had a dream," he was saying. "A round loaf of barley bread came tumbling into the Midianite camp. It struck the tent with such force that the tent overturned and collapsed." (14) His friend responded, "This can be nothing other than the sword of Gideon son of Joash, the Israelite. God has given the Midianites and the whole camp into his hands."

Quiz

1. How has God renewed His promise to Gideon? (Jdg 7:9)
2. How is God's providence being revealed? (Jdg 7:10-14)

Applications

1. Do you trust God to deliver His promises? If not, why not?
2. How has God's providence or circumstances guided you and strengthened you in the past?

Biblical faith affirms that God has revealed all that is necessary to bring us into a living relationship with Himself and to enable us to travel through this world into His presence.



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From Faith to Fulfillment (Jdg_7:15-25)

Jdg 7:15-25 When Gideon heard the dream and its interpretation, he bowed down and worshiped. He returned to the camp of Israel and called out, "Get up! The LORD has given the Midianite camp into your hands." (16) Dividing the three hundred men into three companies, he placed trumpets and empty jars in the hands of all of them, with torches inside. (17) "Watch me," he told them. "Follow my lead. When I get to the edge of the camp, do exactly as I do. (18) When I and all who are with me blow our trumpets, then from all around the camp blow yours and shout, 'For the LORD and for Gideon.'" (19) 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. (20) 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!" (21) While each man held his position around the camp, all the Midianites ran, crying out as they fled. (22) 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. (23) Israelites from Naphtali, Asher and all Manasseh were called out, and they pursued the Midianites. (24) Gideon sent messengers throughout the hill country of Ephraim, saying, "Come down against the Midianites and seize the waters of the Jordan ahead of them as far as Beth Barah." So all the men of Ephraim were called out and they seized the waters of the Jordan as far as Beth Barah. (25) They also captured two of the Midianite leaders, Oreb and Zeeb. They killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb at the winepress of Zeeb. They pursued the Midianites and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon, who was by the Jordan.

Quiz

1. How did Gideon and His men show courage in obedience? (Jdg 7:15-18)
2. What strategy did Gideon use to defeat the Medianites? (Jdg 7:19-21)
3. Who is in control of the battle? (Jdg 7:22-25)

Applications

1. As a Christian leader, do you lead in front, as in accordance with to Jdg7:17? If not, why not?
2. What is the correct way to defeat our enemies or overcome difficulties?
3. Do you believe that God is in control of everything? If not, why not?

Gideon did what he could with his limited numbers, and trusted God to do the rest. He did not fail His obedient servant!



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The Test of Criticism (Jdg_8:1-3)

Jdg 8:1-3 Now the Ephraimites asked Gideon, "Why have you treated us like this? Why didn't you call us when you went to fight Midian?" And they challenged him vigorously. (2) But he answered them, "What have I accomplished compared to you? Aren't the gleanings of Ephraim's grapes better than the full grape harvest of Abiezer? (3) God gave Oreb and Zeeb, the Midianite leaders, into your hands. What was I able to do compared to you?" At this, their resentment against him subsided.

Quiz

1. How did Gideon deal with criticism? (Jdg 7:1-3)

Applications

1. How well do you deal with criticisms from others?

Gideon tactfully gave Ephraimites the "soft answer " that healed the wounds and prevented division. Better to do that than to start another war.. Blessed are the peace makers.



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The Test of Noncooperation (Jdg_8:4-21)

J Jdg 8:4-21 Gideon and his three hundred men, exhausted yet keeping up the pursuit, came to the Jordan and crossed it. (5) He said to the men of Sukkoth, "Give my troops some bread; they are worn out, and I am still pursuing Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian." (6) But the officials of Sukkoth said, "Do you already have the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna in your possession? Why should we give bread to your troops?" (7) Then Gideon replied, "Just for that, when the LORD has given Zebah and Zalmunna into my hand, I will tear your flesh with desert thorns and briers." (8) From there he went up to Peniel and made the same request of them, but they answered as the men of Sukkoth had. (9) So he said to the men of Peniel, "When I return in triumph, I will tear down this tower." (10) Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor with a force of about fifteen thousand men, all that were left of the armies of the eastern peoples; a hundred and twenty thousand swordsmen had fallen. (11) Gideon went up by the route of the nomads east of Nobah and Jogbehah and attacked the unsuspecting army. (12) Zebah and Zalmunna, the two kings of Midian, fled, but he pursued them and captured them, routing their entire army. (13) Gideon son of Joash then returned from the battle by the Pass of Heres. (14) He caught a young man of Sukkoth and questioned him, and the young man wrote down for him the names of the seventy-seven officials of Sukkoth, the elders of the town. (15) Then Gideon came and said to the men of Sukkoth, "Here are Zebah and Zalmunna, about whom you taunted me by saying, 'Do you already have the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna in your possession? Why should we give bread to your exhausted men?'" (16) He took the elders of the town and taught the men of Sukkoth a lesson by punishing them with desert thorns and briers. (17) He also pulled down the tower of Peniel and killed the men of the town. (18) Then he asked Zebah and Zalmunna, "What kind of men did you kill at Tabor?" "Men like you," they answered, "each one with the bearing of a prince." (19) Gideon replied, "Those were my brothers, the sons of my own mother. As surely as the LORD lives, if you had spared their lives, I would not kill you." (20) Turning to Jether, his oldest son, he said, "Kill them!" But Jether did not draw his sword, because he was only a boy and was afraid. (21) Zebah and Zalmunna said, "Come, do it yourself. 'As is the man, so is his strength.'" So Gideon stepped forward and killed them, and took the ornaments off their camels' necks.

Quiz

1. How did Gideon deal with cynics? (Jdg 7:4-9)
2. How did Gideon capture the two Median Kings? (Jdg 8:10-12)
3. How did he punish the men of Sukkoth and Peniel? (Jdg 8:13-17)
4. Why did Gideon ask his elder son Jether to kill the Kings (Jdg 8:18-21)

Applications

1. How do you deal with cynics?
2. What have you learnt from Gideon about perseverance?
3. What have you learnt from men of Sukkoth and Peniel?
4. What would you do to avenge your family honour?

The men of Succoth had no faith in God or appreciation for Gideon and his men, and their lack of love cost them dearly.



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The Test of Personal Popularity (Jdg_8:22-27)

Jdg 8:22-27 The Israelites said to Gideon, "Rule over us--you, your son and your grandson--because you have saved us from the hand of Midian." (23) But Gideon told them, "I will not rule over you, nor will my son rule over you. The LORD will rule over you." (24) And he said, "I do have one request, that each of you give me an earring from your share of the plunder." (It was the custom of the Ishmaelites to wear gold earrings.) (25) They answered, "We'll be glad to give them." So they spread out a garment, and each of them threw a ring from his plunder onto it. (26) The weight of the gold rings he asked for came to seventeen hundred shekels, not counting the ornaments, the pendants and the purple garments worn by the kings of Midian or the chains that were on their camels' necks. (27) Gideon made the gold into an ephod, which he placed in Ophrah, his town. All Israel prostituted themselves by worshiping it there, and it became a snare to Gideon and his family.

Quiz

1. What is the tempting made by the tempting offer the people made him? (Jdg 8:22-23)
2. Who did the people attribute the credit for their deliverance? And Gideon? (Jdg 8:22-23)
3. What reward did Gideon asked for instead? (Jgd 8:24-27)

Applications

1. How you turn down any offer or flattery made by others?
2. Do you give God the Glory always? If not, why not?
3. Where do you see people benefiting from fortune and fame by their faith?

To put a human being in God's place would only worsen matters irretrievably.



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The Test of Retirement (Jdg_8:28-35)

Jdg 8:28-35 Thus Midian was subdued before the Israelites and did not raise its head again. During Gideon's lifetime, the land had peace forty years. (29) Jerub-Baal son of Joash went back home to live. (30) He had seventy sons of his own, for he had many wives. (31) His concubine, who lived in Shechem, also bore him a son, whom he named Abimelek. (32) Gideon son of Joash died at a good old age and was buried in the tomb of his father Joash in Ophrah of the Abiezrites. (33) No sooner had Gideon died than the Israelites again prostituted themselves to the Baals. They set up Baal-Berith as their god (34) and did not remember the LORD their God, who had rescued them from the hands of all their enemies on every side. (35) They also failed to show any loyalty to the family of Jerub-Baal (that is, Gideon) in spite of all the good things he had done for them.

Quiz

1. How did Gideon live in his retirement? (Jdg 8:28-31)
2. Who did the Israelites worship in the end? (Jdg 8:32-35)

Applications

1. How does wealth and comfort affect a person?
2. What would you do to fight the idols of comfort?

The man who declined the title of king seems to have surrounded himself with the outward trappings of royal power. This led to idolatry and apostasy because the heart of man is ever ready to indulge in sin.



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Study Guide – Gideon

God Calls (Jdg_6:11-16)

Quiz 1 His faith is far from robust, his courage is minimal, and his credentials in terms of family background and preparation are almost nonexistent. In many ways, Gideon embodies within himself and his situation the fate of the whole nation—defeatist and negative without hope or vision, under Midian's heel. The "mighty warrior" is timid and inexperienced, is hiding from the enemy.

Quiz 2 God saw what He was going to do with Gideon, so that everyone would know whose power it was at work He still chooses some of His ugliest ducklings to be His swans!

God Challenges (Jdg_6:25-32)

Applications 2: The Lord looked for a fearful young man who acted obediently in faith. Gideon has struck the first blow against idolatry, not just by an outward act of courage, but by throwing down a spiritual challenge to the false god to prove himself. This has the potential not only of discrediting Baal, but of changing men's hearts toward the true and living Lord.

The Confirming Factor (Jdg_6:36-40)

Quiz 1 Gideon was going through agonizing self-doubt, produced by the fear that he might be a victim of his own bright ideas or grossly inflated illusions.

Applications 2. It is a very tempting procedure because it seems to offer a certainty which makes faith redundant. Most of us have probably tried it at some time or other. "If something comes on TV about Ethiopia this evening, then it must be right to send money to that missionary." or perhaps, "If you want me to follow 'plan A' then please let the phone ring by 9:30."

From Faith to Fulfillment (Jdg_7:15-25)

Application 2 In application, we need to stress that the fulfillment of spiritual vision will always require courage, coupled with careful planning and sound tactics. But we also need to note the final, essential ingredient.

The Test of Personal Popularity (Jdg_8:22-27)

Quiz 3 Although Gideon was able to resist the temptation of political power, he did not lose the opportunity of developing for himself a position of religious leadership to which he had no right. Ephod is the garment for the High Priest of the Israelites. He gained fortune too.