

# How Gideon Defeated Midian

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Sunday Plan

SCRIPTURE

Judges 6–8

MEMORY VERSE

Judges 7:2

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*God works through imperfect, hesitant people who are willing to trust Him, not through human strength or confidence. Gideon's story shows that God meets us in our fear, empowers us in our weakness, and calls us to stay faithful even after success — because the real battle is remembering who the victory belongs to.*

# Welcome & Introduction

## Opening Questions:

Ask students to think of a movie, show, or game where the hero is the *least likely* person to save the day. Examples teens might shout out:

- Peter Parker before the spider bite
- Frodo in *Lord of the Rings*
- Luigi instead of Mario
- A background character who suddenly becomes the main character
- A quiet kid who ends up leading the team

### TRANSITION

God did something similar in Israel, as recorded in Judges 6–8.

- Israel is terrified and hiding.
- Gideon is literally threshing wheat in a winepress — hiding from the enemy.
- And God calls *that guy* a “mighty warrior.”
- Gideon doubts, hesitates, asks for signs, and feels unqualified.
- But God patiently works with him, strengthens him, and uses him to rescue a nation.

In this lesson we’ll see how God turns the least likely person into the leader He uses — and how that leader must stay faithful even after success.

## “Hey You... Yes You!”

Judges 6:1–12

## Teaching Points

- Israel turns from God again, and Midian devastates their land. The people hide in fear, showing how sin doesn’t just affect hearts — it affects communities, confidence, and daily life.
- Gideon is hiding in a winepress, trying to survive. God shows up right there — in the fear, in the hiding, in the insecurity. God’s presence is not limited to brave moments.
- The Angel of the LORD calls Gideon a Mighty Warrior while he hides from the Midianites. God has often called people by the character hidden within themselves that isn’t yet apparent to others, or even themselves.
  - He called Abram, Abraham (father of many nations) before he had a son.
  - Jacob (supplanter) had his name changed to Israel (wrestles and prevails with God).
  - Jesus called Peter The Rock while he was still very impulsive.

### DISCUSSION

1. After Adam & Eve sinned, they hid from God. Now we see that after doing “evil in the sight of the Lord,” Gideon and all Israel are hiding. Why do you think humans instinctively hide after sin separates them from God?
2. Why do you think God chose Gideon — a fearful, hiding, insecure person — instead of someone stronger or more confident?
3. How would your choices change if you believed God sees you the way He saw Gideon — as someone with potential, purpose, and strength?

**KEY TRUTH**

God responds to cries for help even when the mess is self-inflicted. Israel cries out, and God sends a prophet to remind them of His faithfulness. God doesn't abandon His people; He calls them back to truth before He calls them into action.

## The Angel of the LORD

Judges 6:13–24

### Teaching Points

- The “Angel of the LORD” often speaks and acts as God Himself. In several Old Testament passages — including this one — the Angel of the LORD speaks in the first person as God, receives worship, and performs divine acts. Because of this, many scholars believe the Angel of the LORD may be a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ, while others see Him as a unique, divine messenger representing God's presence and authority. Scripture doesn't give a definitive explanation, but it consistently portrays this figure as more than an ordinary angel.
- Gideon doesn't hide his confusion — he asks why God allowed suffering and where His miracles have gone. God doesn't rebuke him. Scripture shows that honest wrestling is part of real faith.
- Gideon lists all the reasons he's unqualified — his family is insignificant, and he feels inadequate. God doesn't debate his résumé; He simply says, “Go in the strength you have.” God's call is based on His power, not Gideon's confidence.
- God confirms His calling with grace, not pressure. Gideon asks for a sign, and God patiently provides one. The consumed offering and the declaration “Peace to you” show that God meets Gideon's fear with reassurance, not shame.

**DISCUSSION**

1. Gideon asked hard questions about suffering and God's silence. Why do you think God welcomed those questions instead of shutting him down?
2. How would your confidence change if you believed God's presence mattered more than your abilities?
3. Why do you think God sometimes shows up in ways that are mysterious or unexpected — like the Angel of the LORD — instead of in ways that feel simple or predictable?

**KEY TRUTH**

God's promise — “I will be with you” — is the turning point. The solution to Gideon's insecurity isn't self-esteem; it's God's nearness. Strength comes from presence, not personality.

## Tearing Down Idols Before Taking Down Midian

Judges 6:25–32

## Teaching Points

- Gideon obeys, tearing down the altar of Baal, but he does it at night because he's afraid. God doesn't shame him for this. The text shows that fearful obedience is still obedience, and God honors it.
- When God calls us to take a stand, it may challenge the expectations of people around us. The townspeople are furious when they discover the altar destroyed. Gideon's obedience disrupts the status quo, reminding us that following God can create tension with culture — even religious culture.
- Joash, Gideon's father, surprisingly defends him, arguing that Baal can defend himself if he's truly a god. Gideon's courage sparks clarity in others. Sometimes one act of obedience inspires people who were silent before.

### DISCUSSION

1. What “altars” or influences in your life might God be asking you to tear down — habits, pressures, or voices that pull you away from Him?
2. Gideon obeyed even though he was scared. Why do you think God still honored that kind of obedience?
3. How do you respond when following Jesus puts you at odds with friends, family expectations, or cultural norms?

### KEY TRUTH

God often begins His work in us by confronting the idols closest to home. Before Gideon can fight Midian, God tells him to tear down his father's altar to Baal. The first battle isn't against an enemy “out there” — it's against misplaced worship in his own household.

## For When I am Weak, Then I am Strong

Judges 7:1–15

## Teaching Points

- God removes every possible source of human pride. The water-test reduces the army to just 300 men. God is shaping a situation where Israel cannot say, “We did this.” Sometimes God allows us to feel weak so we can finally see His strength.
- God sends Gideon into the enemy camp to overhear a dream that terrifies the Midianites. God knows Gideon's fear and meets it with reassurance. God doesn't shame Gideon — He builds him up.
- Worship becomes the turning point for Gideon's courage (v.15). Before Gideon ever lifts a sword, he bows in worship. His courage doesn't come from strategy or numbers — it comes from remembering who God is. Worship fuels obedience.

### DISCUSSION

1. Why do you think God reduced Gideon's army instead of increasing it? What does that teach us about how God works in our weakness?
2. Gideon was afraid, so God gave him encouragement in a surprising way. How has God encouraged you through unexpected people or moments?
3. Gideon worshiped before he acted. How might worship — music, prayer, gratitude — change the way you face something scary or overwhelming?

**KEY TRUTH**

God intentionally reduces Gideon's strength to reveal His own. God isn't interested in human confidence — He wants His people to know the victory comes from Him.

## God is the Secret Weapon

Judges 7:16–25

### Teaching Points

- Gideon arms his men with trumpets, jars, and torches — not swords. God's strategy makes it clear that the victory depends on Him, not human strength or clever tactics.
- Unity and obedience matter more than numbers. Gideon tells the 300 to “watch me, follow my lead, and do exactly as I do.” Their victory comes from unified obedience, not individual heroics. Faith often requires moving together in trust.
- When the jars break and the trumpets blast, the Midianites panic and turn on each other. God flips the situation — what looked like Israel's weakness becomes the enemy's downfall.

**DISCUSSION**

1. Why do you think God chose such unusual weapons — jars, torches, and trumpets — instead of something more “practical”?
2. Gideon told his men to follow his lead exactly. Who are the people in your life whose faith you can safely follow — and what makes them trustworthy?

**KEY TRUTH**

Once Gideon steps out in faith, other tribes rally to finish the battle. Courage is contagious; one act of obedience can awaken others who were hesitant or afraid.

## Losing the Lesson

Judges 8:22–35

### Teaching Points

- Spiritual success is the most dangerous moment. Gideon says the right thing (“The Lord will rule over you”) but then gathers gold from the people and makes an ephod that becomes an idol. The very leader God used becomes the source of a new spiritual trap. Gideon's failure isn't dramatic rebellion; it's subtle drift. After the victory, after the praise, after everyone looks up to you — that's when the drift starts. And the next generation inherits the consequences.
- An ephod is a sacred garment worn by the high priest, designed to symbolize representation, intercession, and access to God. It wasn't just clothing — it was a theological statement stitched into fabric.
- Gideon didn't set out to create an idol, but his choices shaped the nation's worship. Influence is

powerful — our actions can pull people toward God or away from Him.

- A generation’s faithfulness can collapse when they forget God’s work. After Gideon dies, Israel immediately returns to idolatry and forgets both God and Gideon’s family. This shows how fragile faithfulness is when it isn’t rooted in gratitude and remembrance.

#### DISCUSSION

1. Why do you think success or praise can sometimes pull people away from God instead of closer to Him?
2. Gideon didn’t intend to create an idol, but he did. What are some things today that start out good but can become “idols” if we’re not careful?
3. Israel forgot God as soon as Gideon died. What do we do so that we don’t make the same mistake?

#### KEY TRUTH

Gideon says the right words — “The LORD will rule over you” — but his later actions show he still wants influence. This teaches that saying the right thing isn’t the same as living it.

## Memory Verses & Closing

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### Memory Verses

- Judges 7:2

Challenge for the Week: Each day this week, identify one “win” in your life — big or small — and practice giving the credit back to God instead of letting it feed pride, comparison, or distraction.

Then ask yourself: “Did this win draw me closer to God today, or did it pull my focus away?”

The goal is simple: Celebrate what God has done without letting the victory become the idol.

Close in prayer.