

GIDEON: THE STRENGTH OF FAITH

Part Six: God Allows Both Old Enemies and Unfaithful Friends To Test Your Faith

Judges 8:1-17

- **Some People Get Angry Even When Victory Comes Because They Wanted a Different Role in God's Plan.**

v. 1

1. Gideon has just completed a tremendous victory over the Midianites, the enemy of Israel. Gideon and God's 300 men were now chasing the Midianites. They had pursued and killed Oreb and Zeeb, two kings of Midian. The men of Ephraim, one of the twelve tribes of Israel (Genesis 41:45-52), argued with Gideon because Gideon had not summoned them to fight against Midian.

- **Well-intentioned friends demand to be a part of God's plans. Faith in God's plan allows you to distinguish between what God wants and what people want.**

vv. 2-3

2. Gideon answers the Ephraimites: God has given Oreb and Zeeb into your hands. Nothing can compare to that triumph over those kings. Compare Judges 7:24-25.

- **Faith in God's plan will allow you to understand where others fit into that plan. Faith allows you to calm down others. Instead of savoring the victory, the Ephraimites wanted to complain about their relatively minor role in the battle. Compare Judges 7:2.**

- Faith allows you to give a gentle answer that turns away wrath. Proverbs 15:1.

- **You Can Expect To Be Weary While Doing God's Will, But Never Stop Pursuing.**

v. 4

3. Gideon had been chasing the Midianites and then crossed the Jordan. He and his 300 men were weary, but kept on pursuing the enemy.

- Notice that God only used 300 men to pursue the enemy.
- Even people doing God's will become tired.
- Faith allows you to pursue, even when weary.

- **You Can Expect Indifference from People Who Still Live in Fear of God's Enemies.**

v. 5

4. Gideon, with his weary 300 men, sought bread while they pursued Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian.

v. 6

5. Seeking to remain neutral, the leaders of Succoth denied food to Gideon because he had not yet seized the kings.

- **Some people remain indifferent and withhold help until they are positive the enemy has been slain by others. Such people sit on the fence, when others actively pursue God's will. These men feared the Midianites more than they feared God.**

v. 7

6. Gideon promised them to thrash them with thorns and briars when the LORD has delivered Zebah and Salmunna into Gideon's hand.

- **Faithful people know that God will accomplish His will through them, no matter what help, if any, other people provide. God could certainly slay a vast army with just 300 men. God did not need anyone to feed this army, but He exposes the lack of faith in Succoth.**

v. 8-9

7. Gideon now moved on to Penuel and sought their help also. The men of Penuel acted just like the men at Succoth. Gideon promised to return and tear down their tower.

- **Once you focus your eyes upon God, you will never allow the faithless to draw you down to their level. You know what God will be doing, and those people who refuse to follow God's plan will face God's justice.**

- **God Strengthens Faith by Keeping You Going No Matter How Weary You Feel and No Matter Who Refuses To Help You**

v. 10

8. God has devastated the army of Zebah and Salmunna. They started with 120,000 men and now only had 15,000. Even then, they did not want to face Gideon's 300 men led by God.

v. 11-12

9. Gideon attacked the Midianites when they least expected it. He routed the army of 15,000 with his 300 men.

- God loves to gather the glory to Himself. When God commands an army of 300, He fulfills His prophecy of using Gideon as one man to slay the enemy. Judges 6:16.

- **God Opposes the Doubters and Indifferent. Faith Alone Brings Salvation and Delivers from Death.**

v. 13-17

10. Gideon returned from battle, captured a youth from Succoth, and learned the names of the seventy-seven elders of that city. He took the elders and disciplined them with thorns and briars from the wilderness. He also tore down the tower of Penuel and killed the men of the city.
 - Lacking faith in God brings deadly consequences. Spiritually, believers never face God's anger because faith has delivered them from the wrath to come.
 - Gideon demanded full loyalty. He would not accept indifferent people who would not fully support God's purposes and plans.