

Study Series: Gideon: Your Weakness. God’s Strength.

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Lesson Title: “From Good to Bad” (pp. 165-178)

Session 12

August 20, 2023

The main point of this lesson is: Gideon got caught up in the emotions of the moment and stopped seeking or following God’s leadership.

Focus on this goal: To help adults guard against the temptation to go beyond God’s leadership

Key Bible Passage: Judges 7:15–8:21

Before the Session

1. Find and prepare to share a news account about a weary athlete or team who focused on the competition and became victorious. (Step 5)

2. Bring a set of dominoes to class. Set them up in a visible location in such a way that knocking over the lead domino causes each succeeding domino to fall as well. (Step 6)

During the Session

Step 1. Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion

To introduce this session, draw a curvy, up and down, horizontal line on the whiteboard and ask learners to consider if that line might illustrate their spiritual lives. State that it is common for many Christians to be up and down in their commitment levels with God. Invite learners to share possible reasons for such unsteady commitment. State that Gideon had a similar experience in his commitment to God.

Step 2. A Unique Strategy

Call on a volunteer to read Judges 7:15-22. Clarify that the passage depicts a victorious moment in Gideon’s life, with worship being the first component in Gideon’s victory. Briefly discuss the meaning and necessity of worship.

Guide learners to identify the three unique weapons that Gideon and his army used and the strategic practicality of such weapons (pp. 165-166).

Call on volunteers to read their news accounts of the battle, noting the common focus in each account (Day One, activity 2, p. 167). Point out that Gideon was on the upward trajectory with God in this Scripture, but that things would soon change.

Step 3. Finishing Well

Call on a volunteer to read Judges 7:23-24. Challenge learners to identify the one glaring action of Gideon that shows this moment might be the beginning of his taking his eyes off God.

Explore reasons why Gideon might have fallen into his old pattern of relying on human strength and not God. After brief discussion state that possibly Gideon didn’t know his task was finished.

Call on a volunteer to read 2 Samuel 7:1-17. Note that God clearly communicated to David that his task was finished. Invite learners to share their answers to Day Two, activity 2 (p. 169).

Step 4. Friendly Fire

Call on a volunteer to read Judges 8:1. Highlight the growing discontent. Invitethe volunteer to read Judges 8:3. Ask learners to explain how Gideon defused the situation.

Enlist four volunteers to form two teams to reenact a silly church squabble—the color of new carpet. The first team will have a person complaining bitterly with the other person fanning the flames of discontent. The second team will have a person complaining bitterly with the other person defusing the situation.

Call on learners to describe a peacemaker (Day Three, activity 2, p. 171). Urge learners to strive to be such peacemakers in their homes, workplaces, and church.

Step 5. Weary, Yet Pursuing

Invite a volunteer to read Judges 8:4-9. Guide learners to note the weariness Gideon and his men were feeling and the fact that they asked others for help, but were flatly refused.

Call on learners to call out descriptive words, in addition to weary, that Gideon and his men must have felt after being refused help. After several words have been listed, add one more word: determined. State that Gideon and his men were determined to press on in their mission for God.

Tell the story you found of the athlete or team who pressed on, in spite of all odds, in order to gain victory.

Guide learners to consider their response to weariness and compare and contrast that response with what the Bible teaches (Day Four, activity 1, pp. 172-173).

Remind learners that God desires that we help others who are fatigued in doing His work. Brainstorm possible practical ways your class might help Christian workers who may have become weary.

Step 6. The Domino Effect

Call on a volunteer to read Judges 8:16-21, that describes Gideon allowing his divine mission to give way to personal vengeance. Tap over the first domino that you have set up, saying that the dominoes show how quickly Gideon fell away from his divine mission.

Draw attention to Day Five, activity 1 (p. 174-175) to stress the progression of Gideon’s malice. Guide learners to discuss how Gideon got to this point. If not raised by a learner, emphasize that Gideon’s relationship with God had broken down because he had not sought God’s guidance.

After brief discussion, point out Jesus’s unwavering relationship with God and how that relationship is a model for God’s people today.

Step 7. Practical Application – Live Out the Lesson

Close in prayer, asking God to guard the hearts of His people so that they will remain steadfast and not drift off into disobedience.

After the Session

1. If you know someone who may be drifting in his or her commitment to God, pray for that person.

2. Follow up on the possible mission outreach idea from the Step 5 discussion, perhaps assigning follow up responsibility to a learner.

