

**SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS**  
**Commentary by Michael Sigler**  
**July 24, 2011**

**A Majority with God**

Judges 7:2-4, 13-15 & Judges 8:22-25

**Key verse: “When Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, he worshipped; and he returned to the camp of Israel, and said, ‘Get up; for the Lord has given the army of Midian into your hand’” (Judges 7:15).**

Davy Troxel taught the story of Gideon one week in his Sunday School class for elementary-age kids. The following Sunday, he attempted to review the Gideon lesson by asking the class who remembered last week’s Bible hero. No one did.

“OK,” Davy said, “I’ll give you a clue: He fought a battle using only lamps, pitchers, and trumpets.” Still there was no response.

“Maybe you remember how this Bible hero used a fleece to learn God’s will,” said the teacher. He was answered by the sight of ten little blank faces staring back.

“One final clue,” Davy pleaded. “There are people today with the same name as this hero, who go around hotels putting Bibles in the rooms.”

An eager 8-year-old boy shot up his hand and said, “Oh! Oh! I know! It was *Hilton!*” (*Christian Reader*, 12/01/97).

The story of Gideon tells us some important truths about living for God: (1) We must always be careful not to take for ourselves the glory that rightly belongs to God. (2) God uses weak people. (3) An outnumbered few is a majority with God.

*1. We must always be careful not to take for ourselves the glory that rightly belongs to God.* God looked at Gideon’s army of 32,000 fighting men and reduced it down to only 300 (Judges 7:3-8). Why? God gave this reason to Gideon: “The troops with you are too many for me to give the Midianites into your hand. Israel would only take the credit away from me, saying, ‘My own hand has delivered me’” (7:2).

It is all too easy for us to take for ourselves the glory that rightly belongs to God. Success comes our way, and our attitude is: “My hard work achieved this. I deserve it.” “My creative genius is the reason for this success.” “I am smarter, stronger, more gifted.” We would do well to remember these questions: “Who gave you the health and strength to work hard?” “Who gave you that brilliant, creative mind?” “Who gave you the opportunities to use your smarts, strength, and gifts?”

God knew all too well the human tendency to take for ourselves the glory that rightly belongs to God. So God reduced Gideon’s army to such a small number that

it would be obvious to anyone—only God could give the victory. The story of Gideon reminds us that we must always be careful not to take for ourselves the glory that rightly belongs to God.

**2. God uses weak people.** When God first called Gideon to deliver Israel from the Midianites, here was Gideon's excuse: "But sir, how can I deliver Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family" (Judges 6:15). In spite of these perceived weaknesses, God used Gideon to deliver Israel.

God seems to take delight in doing His work through us in spite of our weaknesses. The apostle Paul prayed that God would remove his "thorn in the flesh," some type of personal weakness that plagued Paul. God's response to Paul was: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (1 Corinthians 12:9).

Paul not only accepted God's answer to him, but Paul received revelation as to why God often chooses to work through our weakness: "So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong" (1 Corinthians 12:9b-10).

Yes, Gideon was weak in many ways. God made Gideon even weaker by reducing the size of his army. Then, like a rolling cake of barley bread collapsing the enemy's tent (Judges 7:13), God used Gideon to deliver his people! The story of Gideon reminds us that God uses weak people.

**3. An outnumbered few is a majority with God.** Remember the dream of the barley cake (Judges 7:13-22)? Barley was considered an inferior grain and was worth only about half the value of wheat. So, barley was an appropriate symbol for Gideon's army, which was so inferior in numbers to the army of the Midianites.

Yet, through Gideon and his tiny army, God defeated the army of Midian. It reminds me of a story told by John Ortberg:

*Fifteen years ago I was walking in Newport Beach, Southern California with two friends. Two of us were on staff and one was an elder in the church I was involved with. We walked past a bar, and a fight had been going on inside the bar and had spilled out into the street, just like in an old western. Several guys were beating up on this one guy, and he was bleeding from the forehead. We knew we had to do something, so we went over to break the fight up.*

*I didn't have much experience in this kind of thing. I missed the class in seminary where we learned about how to break up fights in a bar; I don't think we were very intimidating. We went over to where the fighting was and said, "Hey, you guys cut that out." It didn't do much good.*

*Then, all of a sudden they looked at us with fear in their eyes, and the guys that had been beating up on the one guy stopped and started to slink away. I didn't*

*know why until we turned and looked behind us. Out of the bar had come the biggest man I think I've ever seen. He was like six feet, seven inches, maybe 300 pounds, maybe two percent body fat—just huge. We called him "Bubba"—not to his face, but afterwards when we'd talk about him. And Bubba didn't say a word. He just stood there and flexed; you could tell he was kind of hoping they would try and have a go at him.*

*All of a sudden my attitude was transformed and I said to those guys, "You better not let us catch you coming around here again!" I was a different person because I had a great big Bubba. I was ready to confront with resolve and firmness. I was released from anxiety and fear. I was filled with boldness and confidence. I was ready to help somebody that needed helping. I was ready to serve where serving was required. Why? Because I had a great Big Bubba....*

*How big is your God? One who is greater than Bubba has come, and you don't have to wonder whether or not He'll show up, because He's always there....You have a great big God, and He's called you to do something, so get on with it! (from a sermon by John Ortberg)*

The story of Gideon reminds us that an outnumbered few is a majority with God.  
(Contact Michael at [msigler@fumcfwb.com](mailto:msigler@fumcfwb.com).)