

Lesson 5: Gideon's Army

Theme: God uses little to bring about much.

Scripture: Selections from Judges 7

ICEBREAKER: Lightbulb jokes. Have the group share any lightbulb jokes. Here is also a list of jokes you can share with your group.

- **How many fatalists does it take to screw in a light bulb?** What does it matter? It's just going to go out again, anyway.
- **How many paranoids does it take to change a lightbulb?** Who wants to know?!?!
- **How many mystery writers does it take to screw in a lightbulb?** Two - one to screw it most of the way and the other to give it a surprise twist at the end.
- **How many kids with ADD does it take to change a lightbulb?** Let's go ride bikes!
- **How many over-eager personal assistants does it take to put in a lig... Done!**
- **How many grandmothers does it take to change a light bulb?** None. I'll sit in the dark. I'll be fine. Don't worry about me...
- **How many surrealists does it take to screw in a lightbulb?** Two. One to hold the giraffe, and one to fill the bathtub with brightly colored machine tools.
- **How many unemployed actors does it take to screw in a light bulb?** Six. One to screw it in and the rest to say they could've done it better.
- **How many dwarves does it take to change a lightbulb?** Twenty! One to change it and nineteen to stand on each other's shoulders.
- **How many bureaucrats does it take to put in a light bulb?** Two. One to assure everyone that everything possible is being done while the other inserts the bulb into the water faucet.
- **How many golfers does it take to screw in a lightbulb?** FORE!!!!
- **How many telemarketers does it take to change a lightbulb?** One, but they have to do it while you're eating dinner!
- **How many psychiatrists does it take to change a light bulb?** One but the light bulb really has to really want to change.
- **How Many folk singers does it take to change a light bulb?** Answer 10. 1 to change it and 9 to sing about how good the old one was
- **How many idiots does it take to screw in a light bulb?** 500, 1 to hold the light bulb and 499 to turn the house.
- **How many computer programmers does it take to change a lightbulb?** They can't do it, it's a hardware problem.
- **How many hardware engineers does it take to change a light bulb?** None. They tell programmers to code around it.
- **How many type A personalities does it take to screw in a light bulb?** Two. One to screw in the light bulb, and one to tell him he's doing it all wrong.

GOT TROUPS?

In Luke 14:31 Jesus asks the question, "Suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Won't he first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand?"

- What do you think Jesus is getting at with this question?

- What do you think this king's options are? What would be the motivation to keep going? What would be the motivation to seek alternative options other than battle?
- What would you choose to do?

READ & REVIEW

Judges 6: 34-35 The Spirit of the LORD came on Gideon, and he blew a trumpet, summoning the Abiezrites to follow him. 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.

- What do you remember about Gideon from last week's study?
- What does God ask Gideon to do?
- How did Gideon respond to God's call?
- How did God reassure Gideon during his time of uncertainty?

SERMON DISCUSSION: This week's sermon was on Gideon's Army and its ever decreasing number.

- What are some things you learned through this week's sermon?
- What are some questions you have or items you were confused about?
- What is your impression of Gideon's Army based on the sermon?
- How did this week's sermon help you understand the cycle of sin and redemption in the people of Israel?
- What did you learn about the cycle of sin and redemption in your life?

READ AND DISCUSS:

Read Judges 7:1-3

- What does God tell Gideon about his army?
- How would you feel if you were Gideon?
- Why does God tell him that his army is too large?
- How does he begin to thin out his army?
- Would you say or go?

Read the first five paragraphs of "**You Need Fewer Men,**" pages 81-82 (ending with "... victory that will come."), in *Judges For You*.

- Do you agree that as humans, "if there is the tiniest opportunity to boast in our own work, we will?" Provide examples?
- Why do we feel the need to boast and brag about ourselves? Why do we hope to achieve?
- Keller suggests that boasting "takes glory away from God" and that is "the greatest spiritual danger." What does he mean by that? Have you seen that happen in your life or the lives of others (share examples)?
- What is the lesson that we need to learn from this?

Read the next two paragraphs of "**You Need Fewer Men,**" on page 82, in *Judges For You*.

- Why does Keller suggest that it is good to send home the soldiers who were afraid?
- How disadvantageous does fear bring and how is it contagious?

Read Judges 4-8

- Gideon has ten-thousand men, yet God says that is still too much. What is the test that God gives for who will stay in Gideon's Army?
- Which many does Gideon keep and which does he send home?
- What does the way they drink say about them? Why do these men get selected?

- How do you think Gideon felt with only 300 soldiers remaining? How would you feel?

Read the remaining section of **“You Need Fewer Men,”** pages 83-84 in *Judges For You*.

- Why does God reduce Gideon’s Army to 300 men?
- Keller concludes that the reason is for them to remember that the victory is God’s and not theirs. Why is that a difficult lesson to learn? Why do we have to learn it over and over again?
- “My only part was to trust and obey.” Do you find it easy or difficulty to trust and obey in overwhelming circumstances? Why or why not?

Read Judges 6:16-20

- What is Gideon’s battle plan?
- How would you have reacted to hearing Gideon’s plan if you were one of the 300 soldiers? Why?
- What do you think the strategy behind this plan is?

Read the **“The Mighty Warrior,”** pages 90-91, in *Judges For You*.

- Keller suggests three ways that Gideon’s plan is brilliant. What are the three way and how does Keller’s insights help you understand the situation better?

Read Judges 6:21-23

- Imagine you were Midianite camp when Gideon’s plan is enacted, what do you think it would have been like?
- How did the Midianite respond to this plan & why?

Read the **“Victory,”** pages 91-912, in *Judges For You*.

- Keller says that “there is a wonderful circularity” about Gideon’s story. As a group discuss your initial impressions of Gideon, and how they have grown and changed over these two weeks.
- How has you seen Gideon grow over the past two weeks? What was the catalyst of this growth?
- Do you think Gideon has earned the nickname, Mighty/Valiant Warrior (Judges 6:12)? Why or Why not?

PERSONAL REFLECTION: Consider the Cost

Read Luke 14: 25-33

- How might the “large crowds” and the Jesus response be similar to Gideon and the initial army.
- What reason might people decide to not follow Jesus based on what he said.
- Those who choose follow Jesus are reminded to consider the cost of discipleship. What does this look like and what does it say about having to trust God even in uncertain times?
- Those who followed Gideon saw victory because they gave control over to God. Those who follow Jesus also experience victory through Jesus. Share stories of how your trust in Jesus has brought victory in unexpected ways.

Prayer Request: How can the group be praying for you? Where do you need God’s victory in your life?

Close in prayer: Spend time praying for each other in the group