

LESSON 22 Devotional

An Unconventional Approach

The Israelites had done it again! They had turned away from God to worship other gods, and it came with consequences. Year after year the Midianites and their peers would wait until the Israelites had begun harvesting their crops to sweep in and seize all the crops and livestock of the Israelites. God allowed the Israelites to be oppressed by the Midianites for a span of seven years.

Out of fear, the Israelites began hiding out in caves and in the mountains, and out of desperation, they began crying out to God for relief from the oppression. God heard their pleas and set in motion His plan, but it was a very unconventional plan.

God began with an unlikely leader, Gideon. The Angel of the Lord first found Gideon threshing *wheat* in a winepress. He was hiding out in hopes of sparing his wheat from the attacks of the Midianites. When the Lord informed Gideon that he had been selected to free the Israelites from oppression, Gideon was surprised.

In Judges 6:15 Gideon said, *“Pardon me, my Lord, but how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.”*

Gideon didn’t believe he was capable or worthy enough to accomplish God’s plan, but he forgot who was in charge. Throughout this passage we read repeatedly about Gideon’s doubts and fears, yet God chose to use him to free the Israelites. But God wanted Gideon to move forward in a very unconventional way, with a strategy that any warrior would declare as foolish.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

As a group read Judges 7:1-25 out loud.

1. Read Judges 8:10. How many soldiers did Gideon's army face in the beginning?

2. Why did God instruct Gideon to dramatically trim the number of soldiers? (verse 2)

- a. If you were in Gideon's shoes, discuss how you might have felt and how difficult it would have been to follow that directive from God.

- b. Has God ever directed you to implement an unconventional approach to a business or workplace problem? Describe how you felt and how you responded.

3. In Judges 7:10-11, God realizes that what He was asking of Gideon may have been frightening and overwhelming. How does God help Gideon overcome those feelings?

- a. Has God ever done something similar for you?

4. When the battle was over, how do you believe the unconventional victory impacted the lives of the Israelites, their future generations, and their relationship with God?

5. Discuss your thoughts on the degree to which God cares about your business and the strategy you use.

a. Discuss how open you would be to implement an unconventional strategy if God led you in that direction.
