

Calvary Chapel Cajon

Women's Bible Studies

Judges 6 to 8

Lesson 4

Judges 5 closes with the words, *So the land had rest for forty years*. Sadly, chapter 6 begins with the word *Then* – *Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD*. Thus, another cycle in the history of Israel began. This particular cycle includes God's provision of a deliverer, an unlikely deliverer – Gideon. Gideon's response was something like "O Lord, surely you don't mean me". Have you ever said those words? As you study Gideon's story may your faith be strengthened, not in your abilities, but in God's faithfulness to equip who He has called.

DAY ONE: Judges 6:1-10

1. Judges 6:1-11 gives us a step by step description of Israel's cycle of sin. Record the cycle by filling in the blanks.

verse

1 *The children of Israel did* _____

1 *The LORD* _____ *the hand of Midian*

2 *The hand of Midian* _____ *Israel*

6 *Israel was* _____ *because of the Midianites*

6 *The children of Israel* _____ *to the LORD*

8 *The LORD* _____ *of Israel*

11-18 *God called Gideon to deliver Israel*

2. How were the Israelites oppressed by the Midianites? verses 2-5
3. How did God respond to the cries of Israel? verses 6-10
4. Given the possibility that Israel represents the believer, Midian represents the enemy, and Gideon represents Jesus or the Holy Spirit, list some ways that this cycle is similar to the cycle of sin many Christians go through today.

DAY TWO: Judges 6:11-40

1. The LORD's response to the cries of Israel was to raise up an unlikely deliverer. What did the Angel of the LORD say to Gideon in Judges 6:12? Note: the Angel of the LORD is believed to be Jesus.

a. Gideon questioned God in two areas. According to verses 13 and 15, what were they?

1.) What are some questioning statements that you have made to the LORD?

2. God did not respond to Gideon's doubts by building him up with compliments. Rather, He turned the focus from Gideon to Himself. View His response in verses 14 and 16 and record the phrases that shift the focus onto God's abilities.

3. God's answer to our fears is the same as His answer to Gideon. Using the following verses, record God's response to our fears.

Deuteronomy 20:1

Deuteronomy 31:6

Joshua 1:9

Isaiah 41:10

a. God's remedy for our fears is His presence. Reflect upon this awesome fact and share some of your thoughts.

4. God's assurance of His presence was apparently not enough for Gideon. We see Gideon's first request for proof in Judges 6:17-24. A test of Gideon's faith followed that proof. He was commanded to tear down his father's altar to the idol Baal. Although his fear prevented him from tearing down the altar by day, Gideon and some of his servants *did as the LORD had said to him* (verse 27). Read Isaiah 44:6-12. On the left-hand side of the chart, record what these verses teach about idols. On the right-hand side of the chart, record attributes of God.

IDOLS	GOD

- a. We no longer worship *idols* today. However, we continue to look to other people or things to fill needs in our lives that only God can fill. Why do you think God's first command to Gideon was to remove the *idols*?

1.) How does this speak to you or challenge you?

Personal: If God were to speak to you, as He spoke to Gideon, what do you think He would have you *tear down*?

5. Judges 6 closes with Gideon's second and third requests for proof. We find them recorded in verses 36-40. Summarize what happened.

- a. What is good or bad about testing the Lord as Gideon did?

DAY THREE: Judges 7:1-8

1. Judges 7 opens with Gideon and *all the people who were with him* encamped, readying themselves for battle. Gideon had 32,000 men with him. What did God say to him? Judges 7:2,3

- a. What are some of the dangers of taking the credit for something God has done?

2. The first group to be eliminated were the *fearful and afraid* (verse 3). Read Deuteronomy 20:8 and record the effect of *fear*.

- a. Gideon also struggled with *fear*. What do you think was different about the way he handled his *fear*?

3. Eventually, the soldiers were narrowed down to 300. What reassurance did God give in verse 7?
 - a. What comfort have you discovered from God's promises, when all around you seems insufficient for the fight?

DAY FOUR: Judges 7:9-15

1. The Midianites were also encamped, clearly visible to Israel. According to Judges 7:12, how *numerous* was the enemy?
 - a. *As numerous as locusts, their camels were without number, as the sand by the seashore in multitude.* Clearly the odds were stacked against Israel. What did God promise Gideon in verse 9?
 - b. What did God observe about Gideon in verse 10?
 - 1.) Gideon was still *afraid*. What can we learn about God's patience towards us from this?
2. Gideon gets to see God prove his calling one more time. Read Judges 7:12-14 and summarize what Gideon overheard.
 - a. Record Gideon's confident response in verse 15.
3. Consider each time Gideon received affirmation from the Lord. His fear was expressed privately to God; His confidence publicly. What can we learn from this?
4. Our main source of confirmation is God's Word. Choose two of the following verses and record the confidence we can glean from them. Isaiah 43:2,25; Isaiah 46:4, Isaiah 49:15; Jeremiah 3:22; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:24; 2 Thessalonians 3:3.

Challenge: Do them all or record some of your own favorites

DAY FIVE: Judges 7:16-8:33

1. Israel pressed forth into battle obeying Gideon's unique battle plans. Record that plan as revealed in verses 19,20.

a. What was the result?

2. Judges 8:1-21 describes various victorious exploits of Gideon defeating those who had come up against him and Israel. The men of Israel were impressed. What does Judges 8:22 tell us they said to him?

a. Gideon's first response reflected humility, deflecting all the honor and glory to whom it belongs. What did he say? *verse 23*

3. All too often, we start out doing the right thing, and then all too soon, we allow the desires of our flesh to take over. What did Gideon *request* of them? *verse 24*

a. What did Gideon do with the earrings the people gave him? *verse 27* Note: an *ephod* was to be worn only by the priests and was used to seek God's will. However, sometimes it was misused as an idol, as was the case in Judges 8.

1.) Record the two results of setting up the ephod. *verse 27*

2.) In what ways can "things" become a *snare* to us?

a.) What steps should we take to prevent this from happening?

b.) How might 1 Corinthians 10:12 apply here?

4. Read Judges 8:33-35 and record the disturbing beginning of Israel's next cycle of decline.

DAY SIX: Review Judges 6-8

1. What did you learn from these chapters about faith?
2. Stepping out in faith requires us to take risks. When you consider this in your own life, what risks come to mind?
3. What did you learn about God's patience?
4. What did you learn that you can apply when you face a situation in your life that seems too big to handle?
5. What do you need to remember whenever you experience a success in your life? Isaiah 43:13

*Indeed before the day was, I am He;
And there is no one who can deliver out of My hand;
I work, and who will reverse it?
- Isaiah 43:13*

Judges, Chapter Six

¹Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD. So the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years, ²and the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel. Because of the Midianites, the children of Israel made for themselves the dens, the caves, and the strongholds which *are* in the mountains. ³So it was, whenever Israel had sown, Midianites would come up; also Amalekites and the people of the East would come up against them. ⁴Then they would encamp against them and destroy the produce of the earth as far as Gaza, and leave no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep nor ox nor donkey. ⁵For they would come up with their livestock and their tents, coming in as numerous as locusts; both they and their camels were without number; and they would enter the land to destroy it. ⁶So Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD. ⁷And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried out to the LORD because of the Midianites, ⁸that the LORD sent a prophet to the children of Israel, who said to them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'I brought you up from Egypt and brought you out of the house of bondage; ⁹and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of all who oppressed you, and drove them out before you and gave you their land. ¹⁰Also I said to you, "I *am* the LORD your God; do not fear the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell." But you have not obeyed My voice.' " ¹¹Now the Angel of the LORD came and sat under the terebinth tree which *was* in Ophrah, which *belonged* to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress, in order to hide *it* from the Midianites. ¹²And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him, and said to him, "The LORD *is* with you, you mighty man of valor!" ¹³Gideon said to Him, "O my lord, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where *are* all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, 'Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?' But now the LORD has forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites." ¹⁴Then the LORD turned to him and said, "Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you?" ¹⁵So he said to Him, "O my Lord, how can I save Israel? Indeed my clan *is* the weakest in Manasseh, and I *am* the least in my father's house." ¹⁶And the LORD said to him, "Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat the Midianites as one man." ¹⁷Then he said to Him, "If now I have found favor in Your sight, then show me a sign that it is You who talk with me. ¹⁸Do not depart from here, I pray, until I come to You and bring out my offering and set *it* before You." And He said, "I will wait until you come back." ¹⁹So Gideon went in and prepared a young goat, and unleavened bread from an ephah of flour. The meat he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot; and he brought *them* out to Him under the terebinth tree and presented *them*. ²⁰The Angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened bread and lay *them* on this rock, and pour out the broth." And he did so. ²¹Then the Angel of the LORD put out the end of the staff that *was* in His hand, and

touched the meat and the unleavened bread; and fire rose out of the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread. And the Angel of the LORD departed out of his sight. ²²Now Gideon perceived that He *was* the Angel of the LORD. So Gideon said, "Alas, O Lord GOD! For I have seen the Angel of the LORD face to face." ²³Then the LORD said to him, "Peace *be* with you; do not fear, you shall not die." ²⁴So Gideon built an altar there to the LORD, and called it The-LORD-*Is*-Peace. To this day it *is* still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites. ²⁵Now it came to pass the same night that the LORD said to him, "Take your father's young bull, the second bull of seven years old, and tear down the altar of Baal that your father has, and cut down the wooden image that *is* beside it; ²⁶and build an altar to the LORD your God on top of this rock in the proper arrangement, and take the second bull and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the image which you shall cut down." ²⁷So Gideon took ten men from among his servants and did as the LORD had said to him. But because he feared his father's household and the men of the city too much to do *it* by day, he did *it* by night. ²⁸And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, there was the altar of Baal, torn down; and the wooden image that *was* beside it was cut down, and the second bull was being offered on the altar *which had been* built. ²⁹So they said to one another, "Who has done this thing?" And when they had inquired and asked, they said, "Gideon the son of Joash has done this thing." ³⁰Then the men of the city said to Joash, "Bring out your son, that he may die, because he has torn down the altar of Baal, and because he has cut down the wooden image that *was* beside it." ³¹But Joash said to all who stood against him, "Would you plead for Baal? Would you save him? Let the one who would plead for him be put to death by morning! If he *is* a god, let him plead for himself, because his altar has been torn down!" ³²Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal, saying, "Let Baal plead against him, because he has torn down his altar." ³³Then all the Midianites and Amalekites, the people of the East, gathered together; and they crossed over and encamped in the Valley of Jezreel. ³⁴But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon; then he blew the trumpet, and the Abiezrites gathered behind him. ³⁵And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh, who also gathered behind him. He also sent messengers to Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali; and they came up to meet them. ³⁶So Gideon said to God, "If You will save Israel by my hand as You have said-- ³⁷look, I shall put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor; if there is dew on the fleece only, and *it is* dry on all the ground, then I shall know that You will save Israel by my hand, as You have said." ³⁸And it was so. When he rose early the next morning and squeezed the fleece together, he wrung the dew out of the fleece, a bowlful of water. ³⁹Then Gideon said to God, "Do not be angry with me, but let me speak just once more: Let me test, I pray, just once more with the fleece; let it now be dry only on the fleece, but on all the ground let there be dew." ⁴⁰And God did so that night. It was dry on the fleece only, but there was dew on all the ground.

Chapter Seven

¹Then Jerubbaal (that *is*, Gideon) and all the people who *were* with him rose early and encamped beside the well of Harod, so that the camp of the Midianites was on the north side of them by the hill of Moreh in the valley. ²And the LORD said to Gideon, "The people who *are* with you *are* too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel claim glory for itself against Me, saying, 'My own hand has saved me.' ³Now therefore, proclaim in the hearing of the people, saying, 'Whoever *is* fearful and afraid, let him turn and depart at once from Mount Gilead.' " And twenty-two thousand of the people returned, and ten thousand remained. ⁴But the LORD said to Gideon, "The people *are* still *too* many; bring them down to the water, and I will test them for you there. Then it will be, *that* of whom I say to you, 'This one shall go with you,' the same shall go with you; and of whomever I say to you, 'This one shall not go with you,' the same shall not go." ⁵So he brought the people down to the water. And the LORD said to Gideon, "Everyone who laps from the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set apart by himself; likewise everyone who gets down on his knees to drink." ⁶And the number of those who lapped, *putting* their hand to their mouth, was three hundred men; but all the rest of the people got down on their knees to drink water. ⁷Then the LORD said to Gideon, "By the three hundred men who lapped I will save you, and deliver the Midianites into your hand. Let all the *other* people go, every man to his place." ⁸So the people took provisions and their trumpets in their hands. And he sent away all *the rest of* Israel, every man to his tent, and retained those three hundred men. Now the camp of Midian was below him in the valley. ⁹It happened on the same night that the LORD said to him, "Arise, go down against the camp, for I have delivered it into your hand. ¹⁰But if you are afraid to go down, go down to the camp with Purah your servant, ¹¹and you shall hear what they say; and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp." Then he went down with Purah his servant to the outpost of the armed men who *were* in the camp. ¹²Now the Midianites and Amalekites, all the people of the East, were lying in the valley as numerous as locusts; and their camels *were* without number, as the sand by the seashore in multitude. ¹³And when Gideon had come, there was a man telling a dream to his companion. He said, "I have had a dream: *To my* surprise, a loaf of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian; it came to a tent and struck it so that it fell and overturned, and the tent collapsed." ¹⁴Then his companion answered and said, "This *is* nothing else but the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel! Into his hand God has delivered Midian and the whole camp." ¹⁵And so it was, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, that he worshiped. He returned to the camp of Israel, and said, "Arise, for the LORD has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand." ¹⁶Then he divided the three hundred men *into* three companies, and he put a trumpet into every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and torches inside the pitchers. ¹⁷And he said to

them, "Look at me and do likewise; watch, and when I come to the edge of the camp you shall do as I do: ¹⁸When I blow the trumpet, I and all who *are* with me, then you also blow the trumpets on every side of the whole camp, and say, '*The sword of the LORD and of Gideon!*' " ¹⁹So Gideon and the hundred men who *were* with him came to the outpost of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, just as they had posted the watch; and they blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers that *were* in their hands. ²⁰Then the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers--they held the torches in their left hands and the trumpets in their right hands for blowing--and they cried, "The sword of the LORD and of Gideon!" ²¹And every man stood in his place all around the camp; and the whole army ran and cried out and fled. ²²When the three hundred blew the trumpets, the LORD set every man's sword against his companion throughout the whole camp; and the army fled to Beth Acacia, toward Zererah, as far as the border of Abel Meholah, by Tabbath. ²³And the men of Israel gathered together from Naphtali, Asher, and all Manasseh, and pursued the Midianites. ²⁴Then Gideon sent messengers throughout all the mountains of Ephraim, saying, "Come down against the Midianites, and seize from them the watering places as far as Beth Barah and the Jordan." Then all the men of Ephraim gathered together and seized the watering places as far as Beth Barah and the Jordan. ²⁵And they captured two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb. They killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb they killed at the winepress of Zeeb. They pursued Midian and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on the other side of the Jordan.

Chapter Eight

¹Now the men of Ephraim said to him, "Why have you done this to us by not calling us when you went to fight with the Midianites?" And they reprimanded him sharply. ²So he said to them, "What have I done now in comparison with you? *Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer?*" ³God has delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb. And what was I able to do in comparison with you?" Then their anger toward him subsided when he said that. ⁴When Gideon came to the Jordan, he and the three hundred men who *were* with him crossed over, exhausted but still in pursuit. ⁵Then he said to the men of Succoth, "Please give loaves of bread to the people who follow me, for they are exhausted, and I am pursuing Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian." ⁶And the leaders of Succoth said, "*Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in your hand, that we should give bread to your army?*" ⁷So Gideon said, "For this cause, when the LORD has delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into my hand, then I will tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers!" ⁸Then he went up from there to Penuel and spoke to them in the same way. And the men of Penuel answered him as the men of Succoth had answered. ⁹So he also spoke to the men of Penuel, saying, "When I come back in peace, I will tear down this tower!" ¹⁰Now Zebah and Zalmunna *were* at Karkor, and their armies with them, about fifteen thousand, all

who were left of all the army of the people of the East; for one hundred and twenty thousand men who drew the sword had fallen. ¹¹Then Gideon went up by the road of those who dwell in tents on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah; and he attacked the army while the camp felt secure. ¹²When Zebah and Zalmunna fled, he pursued them; and he took the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and routed the whole army. ¹³Then Gideon the son of Joash returned from battle, from the Ascent of Heres. ¹⁴And he caught a young man of the men of Succoth and interrogated him; and he wrote down for him the leaders of Succoth and its elders, seventy-seven men. ¹⁵Then he came to the men of Succoth and said, "Here are Zebah and Zalmunna, about whom you ridiculed me, saying, 'Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in your hand, that we should give bread to your weary men?' " ¹⁶And he took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness and briers, and with them he taught the men of Succoth. ¹⁷Then he tore down the tower of Penuel and killed the men of the city. ¹⁸And he said to Zebah and Zalmunna, "What kind of men *were they* whom you killed at Tabor?" So they answered, "As you *are*, so *were* they; each one resembled the son of a king." ¹⁹Then he said, "They *were* my brothers, the sons of my mother. As the LORD lives, if you had let them live, I would not kill you." ²⁰And he said to Jether his firstborn, "Rise, kill them!" But the youth would not draw his sword; for he was afraid, because he *was* still a youth. ²¹So Zebah and Zalmunna said, "Rise yourself, and kill us; for as a man *is*, so *is* his strength." So Gideon arose and killed Zebah and Zalmunna, and took the crescent ornaments that *were* on their camels' necks. ²²Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, "Rule over us, both you and your son, and your grandson also; for you have delivered us from the hand of Midian." ²³But Gideon said to them, "I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; the LORD shall rule over you." ²⁴Then Gideon said to them, "I would like to make a request of you, that each of you would give me the earrings from his plunder." For they had gold earrings, because they *were* Ishmaelites. ²⁵So they answered, "We will gladly give *them*." And they spread out a garment, and each man threw into it the earrings from his plunder. ²⁶Now the weight of the gold earrings that he requested was one thousand seven hundred *shekels* of gold, besides the crescent ornaments, pendants, and purple robes which *were* on the kings of Midian, and besides the chains that *were* around their camels' necks. ²⁷Then Gideon made it into an ephod and set it up in his city, Ophrah. And all Israel played the harlot with it there. It became a snare to Gideon and to his house. ²⁸Thus Midian was subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted their heads no more. And the country was quiet for forty years in the days of Gideon. ²⁹Then Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and dwelt in his own house. ³⁰Gideon had seventy sons who were his own offspring, for he had many wives. ³¹And his concubine who *was* in Shechem also bore him a son, whose name he called Abimelech. ³²Now Gideon the son of Joash died at a good old age, and was buried in the tomb of Joash his father, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites. ³³So it was, as soon as

Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel again played the harlot with the Baals, and made Baal-Berith their god. ³⁴Thus the children of Israel did not remember the LORD their God, who had delivered them from the hands of all their enemies on every side; ³⁵nor did they show kindness to the house of Jerubbaal (Gideon) in accordance with the good he had done for Israel.