

Judges 7-8: Gideon's Victory and Defeat

Getting started: Give an example or explain how it is possible that victory can run side by side with defeat.

Read 7:1-12**God prepares Gideon's army**

1. What was wrong with Gideon's army? Why did 22,000 leave the camp? How did God reduce Gideon's army even further? Why did God want to reduce the army so much? (vv. 2-7)
2. How many were left to Gideon's army? Why did God send Gideon and his servant down to the camp of the Midianites? (vv. 10-11) Name the danger the Midianites and their friends posed to Israel (v. 12).

Read 7:13-15**God shares a Dream**

3. What was the dream about? What did it mean? (vv. 13-14) How did it encourage Gideon? (v. 15) What evidence, if any, do you have of God using dreams in people's lives today?

Read 7:16-25**God gives the victory**

4. What three things was every soldier given? What purpose(s) would the empty pitchers serve? Describe in your own words, how 300 men with trumpets could scare an entire army (vv. 16-18)

5. What else did God do to ensure the enemy suffered defeat? (v. 22) What did Israel do to complete the victory (v. 23-25)

Read 8:1-33**After victory, defeat**

6. Why did the Ephraimites complain? (8:1-3) How did Gideon help reduce their anger? (v. 21)
7. What did the city of Succoth refuse to do? (vv. 5-6) What did Gideon promise to do? (v. 7) How did the city of Penuel respond to Gideon's request? (v. 8)
8. When Gideon caught up with the fleeing Midianites at Karkor, how many were left? (vv. 10-12) What reason did Gideon give for killing the two kings of Midian he captured? (vv. 18-21)
9. How did Gideon punish the cities of Succoth and Penuel who refused to help him? (vv. 16-17) What character flaw does this reveal in Gideon? How can we avoid having a spirit of anger and revenge? (Romans 12:19; Ephesians 4:26)

Going Deeper

10. God gave Gideon a great victory with a handful of men, but Gideon also had feet of clay. Name the character deficiencies in the following verses (vv. 16-17, 24-27; 30-31). Explain how God could use a man fraught with so many problems.