

Sermon-Based Discussion Guide for Home Groups

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Big God: little me

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Scripture

Judges 6

11 The angel of the LORD came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites. **12** When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, “The LORD is with you, mighty warrior.”

13 “Pardon me, my lord,” Gideon replied, “but if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our ancestors told us about when they said, ‘Did not the LORD bring us up out of Egypt?’ But now the LORD has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian.”

14 The LORD turned to him and said, “Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian’s hand. Am I not sending you?”

15 “Pardon me, my lord,” Gideon replied, “but how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.”

16 The LORD answered, “I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites, leaving none alive.”

25 That same night the LORD said to him, “Take the second bull from your father’s herd, the one seven years old. ^[b] Tear down your father’s altar to Baal and cut down the Asherah pole ^[c] beside it.

26 Then build a proper kind of ^[d] altar to the LORD your God on the top of this height. Using the wood of the Asherah pole that you cut down, offer the second ^[e] bull as a burnt offering.”

27 So Gideon took ten of his servants and did as the LORD told him. But because he was afraid of his family and the townspeople, he did it at night rather than in the daytime.

28 In the morning when the people of the town got up, there was Baal’s altar, demolished, with the Asherah pole beside it cut down and the second bull sacrificed on the newly built altar!

29 They asked each other, “Who did this?”

When they carefully investigated, they were told, “Gideon son of Joash did it.”

30 The people of the town demanded of Joash, “Bring out your son. He must die, because he has broken down Baal’s altar and cut down the Asherah pole beside it.”

31 But Joash replied to the hostile crowd around him, “Are you going to plead Baal’s cause? Are you trying to save him? Whoever fights for him shall be put to death by morning! If Baal really is a god, he can defend himself when someone breaks down his altar.” **32** So because Gideon broke down Baal’s altar, they gave him the name Jerub-Baal^[f] that day, saying, “Let Baal contend with him.”

33 Now all the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples joined forces and crossed over the Jordan and camped in the Valley of Jezreel. **34** Then the Spirit of the LORD came on Gideon, and he blew a trumpet, summoning the Abiezrites to follow him. **35** 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.

36 Gideon said to God, “If you will save Israel by my hand as you have promised— **37** look, I will place a wool fleece on the threshing floor. If there is dew only on the fleece and all the ground is dry, then I will know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you said.” **38** And that is what happened. Gideon rose early the next day; he squeezed the fleece and wrung out the dew—a bowlful of water.

39 Then Gideon said to God, “Do not be angry with me. Let me make just one more request. Allow me one more test with the fleece, but this time make the fleece dry and let the ground be covered with dew.” **40** That night God did so. Only the fleece was dry; all the ground was covered with dew.
Judges 7

Judges 7 Gideon Defeats the Midianites

¹ Early in the morning, Jerub-Baal (that is, Gideon) and all his men camped at the spring of Harod. The camp of Midian was north of them in the valley near the hill of Moreh. ² The LORD said to Gideon, “You have too many men. I cannot deliver Midian into their hands, or Israel would boast against me, ‘My own strength has saved me.’” ³ Now announce to the army, ‘Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back and leave Mount Gilead.’” So twenty-two thousand men left, while ten thousand remained.

⁴ But the LORD said to Gideon, “There are still too many men. Take them down to the water, and I will thin them out for you there. If I say, ‘This one shall go with you,’ he shall go; but if I say, ‘This one shall not go with you,’ he shall not go.”

⁵ So Gideon took the men down to the water. There the LORD told him, “Separate those who lap the water with their tongues as a dog laps from those who kneel down to drink.” ⁶ Three hundred of them drank from cupped hands, lapping like dogs. All the rest got down on their knees to drink.

⁷ The LORD said to Gideon, “With the three hundred men that lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hands. Let all the others go home.” ⁸ So Gideon sent the rest of the Israelites home but kept the three hundred, who took over the provisions and trumpets of the others.

Now the camp of Midian lay below him in the valley. ⁹ During that night the LORD said to Gideon, “Get up, go down against the camp, because I am going to give it into your hands. ¹⁰ If you are afraid to attack, go down to the camp with your servant Purah ¹¹ and listen to what they are saying. Afterward, you will be encouraged to attack the camp.” So he and Purah his servant went down to the outposts of the camp. ¹² The Midianites, the Amalekites and all the other eastern peoples had settled in the valley, thick as locusts. Their camels could no more be counted than the sand on the seashore.

¹³ Gideon arrived just as a man was telling a friend his dream. “I had a dream,” he was saying. “A round loaf of barley bread came tumbling into the Midianite camp. It struck the tent with such force that the tent overturned and collapsed.”

¹⁴ His friend responded, “This can be nothing other than the sword of Gideon son of Joash, the Israelite. God has given the Midianites and the whole camp into his hands.”

¹⁵ When Gideon heard the dream and its interpretation, he bowed down and worshiped. He returned to the camp of Israel and called out, “Get up! The LORD has given the Midianite camp into your hands.” ¹⁶ Dividing the three hundred men into three companies, he placed trumpets and empty jars in the hands of all of them, with torches inside.

¹⁷ “Watch me,” he told them. “Follow my lead. When I get to the edge of the camp, do exactly as I do. ¹⁸ When I and all who are with me blow our trumpets, then from all around the camp blow yours and shout, ‘For the LORD and for Gideon.’”

¹⁹ Gideon and the hundred men with him reached the edge of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, just after they had changed the guard. They blew their trumpets and broke the jars that were in their hands. ²⁰ The three companies blew the trumpets and smashed the jars. Grasping the torches in their left hands and holding in their right hands the trumpets they were to blow, they shouted, “A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!” ²¹ While each man held his position around the camp, all the Midianites ran, crying out as they fled.

²² When the three hundred trumpets sounded, the LORD caused the men throughout the camp to turn on each other with their swords. The army fled to Beth Shittah toward Zererah as far as the border of Abel Meholah near Tabbath.

Engage

What first comes to your mind when you hear the word “God”?

Do you think of God as a very personal God or a God who directs things with a broad brush?

Discuss

1. Read the passage above. What things stand out about this story?
2. Do you believe God sometimes puts us in situations to help us realize how big and powerful He is? (2 Cor. 1:9 says “But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.”)
3. If God is a big God, my circumstances can change. Have you ever seen God work in your circumstances in a big way? How did that change your view of God?
4. What’s impossible for me is easy for God. He parted the Red Sea when the backs of His people were against it.
5. Before we experience big things from a big God, small gods must go. What gods do many people in America have in their lives? What gods do many believers have in their lives?

Why is it hard for us to be different.

6. What do you think about this statement... "Most of the time, believers do not need a special sign from God in order to know what to do."
7. Have you ever felt like you were the 300 fighting the thousands? Why did God allow that for Gideon? Can you feel victory in advance if you know God is on your side?

Your Next Step

What is your challenge this week? Is it a challenge God has led you to or are you there because of disobedience?

What is God calling you to do this week to be in full obedience to Him?

Children's Time

1. Ask the kids what they think about God or to describe Him. Listen for how big they describe God as being.
2. Tell a quick overview of Gideon's story and tell what the adults will be talking about.
3. Remind the children how important it is to be obedient to God and that He gives the victory when we follow His calling.

Other Passages Cited

2 Corinthians 1