

Help me understand your instruction, and I will obey it and follow it with all my heart.  
Psalm 119:34

## GIDEON OBEYED GOD



### LEADER BIBLE STUDY

#### CONTEXT AND COMMENTARY FOR PERSONAL STUDY AND PREPARATION

*(For age-appropriate language, use the Bible story on the following pages.)*

Christians often include Gideon as one of the heroes of the Bible, but his story serves as a stark reminder that God, not heroic people, brings victory and does the saving. God chose to work through Gideon to defeat the Midianites, not despite his weaknesses, but because of them. Gideon's family was the weakest in Manasseh, and Gideon was the youngest in his father's family. Gideon had nothing to boast about, no temptation to believe that he had brought about the victory himself. God made it obvious that He won the battle, not the small, weak army Gideon led.

Gideon's story was not the first or last time God worked this way. Throughout Scripture, we see God repeatedly use unlikely people to fulfill His plans. David was a youngest son and was still out tending sheep, not even considered a prospect among his family, when Samuel went to anoint the new king (1 Samuel 16:5-13). Moses was a fugitive with a speech impediment when God called him to lead the Israelites out of Egypt (Exodus 3-4). Rahab was a woman with questionable morals when God used her to protect the Israelite spies (Joshua 2). Mary was a young, unmarried woman of modest means when God blessed her with the miraculous pregnancy of Jesus (Luke 1:26-38).

God is the hero throughout the Bible, and He is still the hero today. When He works through you, despite your weakness, how do you respond? Are you tempted to commend yourself for your spiritual maturity and strength, or do you recognize that it is God at work within you, and that anything good in you comes from Him? When things are going well, our human nature tempts us to trust in our own qualifications, abilities, and strength instead of God's. When we face challenges, on the other hand, we are often tempted to focus on our lack of qualifications, rather than God's abundant power. Many of us shrink back in fear from something He is leading us to do.

Look at Gideon's responses to God's directives. What was Gideon most afraid of? What holds you back from walking in obedience? Do you shy away from gospel conversations because you are worried you are ill-equipped? Do you say no to a ministry opportunity because you do not feel qualified?

As you pray this week, ask God to give you the strength to trust Him instead of yourself. Ask Him to help refocus your mind to always give God the glory for the battles He wins.

#### LIFE POINT

People can choose to obey God

#### LEVEL OF BIBLICAL LEARNING

God asks me to honor Him by choosing to do what is right and reject what is wrong.

#### SCRIPTURE REFERENCE

Judges 6:11-7:22

#### BIBLE VERSE

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## **TELL THE STORY**

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### **INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY**

Encourage the kids to stand on the tape line while you stand at one end of the tape. Give the kids two options and assign each option to one side of the tape. For example: "The options are cats and dogs. If you choose cats, go to the left side. If you choose dogs, go to the right side." Repeat with different choices as time allows. Explain that the kids will learn about a choice they can make during today's Bible story.

### **BIBLE STORY: GIDEON OBEYED GOD**

The Israelites had sinned and turned from God. Because of this, for seven years the Midianites ruled over them, even though they were God's people. The Midianites attacked the Israelites and destroyed their crops. The Israelites hid in the mountains (Judges 6:1-4).

One day Gideon was threshing (beating) wheat in his hiding place when an angel of the Lord visited him. "The Lord is with you, mighty warrior!" the angel said. "You will save your people from the Midianites."

Gideon answered, "How can I save Israel? My family is poor. I am the youngest in my family."

"I will be with you," God promised. "You will strike down the Midianites as if they were only one man."

Gideon gathered 32,000 men, but God said, "You have too many soldiers. Tell those who are afraid to go home." Thousands of men left, and only 10,000 stayed to fight. God said, "There are still too many men. Take them down to the water and watch how they drink. Place in one group the men who scoop up water with their hands and lap it with their tongues like dogs. Place those who kneel to drink straight from the water in another group." Gideon obeyed God. Only 300 men drank with their hands to their mouths. God told Gideon, "I will defeat the Midianites with these 300 men. Send the rest home."

God helped Gideon know what to do. God told Gideon to give every man a ram's horn and an empty pitcher with a torch inside. Gideon directed the men to surround the enemy camp. When Gideon blew his trumpet, the men broke the pitchers, blew their ram's horns and shouted, "For the Lord and for Gideon!"

The Midianites were terrified. God confused the Midianites, who began to fight one another and run away. Gideon and the Israelites won the battle!



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## TELL THE STORY

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### REVIEW QUESTIONS

- Who called Gideon a mighty warrior? (an angel)
- What did Gideon think about himself and his abilities? (he thought he was poor and too young to lead)
- What did the angel say Gideon would do? (save his people, the Israelites, from the Midianites)
- Which men did God tell Gideon to keep for battle? (the ones who drank with their hands to their mouths)
- How many soldiers remained with Gideon? (300)
- What items did Gideon's men carry with them? (ram's horns, torches, and pitchers)
- What happened when Gideon and his men shouted? (God confused the Midianites, who began to fight one another and run away.)
- Who caused Gideon and the Israelites to win the battle? (God)



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## **BIBLE LEARNING ACTIVITIES**

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### **1.CUP STACKING**

Children will stack cups into a pyramid shape, and then put them back in a stack as quickly as possible. Say, “Just like the people in Gideon’s town built an altar to a false god, and Gideon obeyed God by taking it down, we will build something and take it down.”

### **2.FIREWORK ART**

Give each child a toilet paper roll with instructions to cut three slits at the top and fold them out. Put different colored paints on a paper plate and let them stamp their toilet paper roll into the paint and then on their paper to make fireworks for Fourth of July.

### **3.SURVIVE THE FALL**

Build a LEGO structure that will survive a fall. Say “Gideon trusted God by obeying and destroying the altar to a false god, even though his town got really mad at him!” Challenge kids to build a LEGO structure they can drop without it shattering, like the altar to the false god did when Gideon and his men broke it down. Challenge kids to drop it from heights of 1 inch, 6 inches, and 1 foot. Use a measuring tape. Keep adding a few inches and see whose structure can survive the biggest fall!

### **4.Battle Cry Memory Verse**

Write segments of the Bible verse on cups or blocks. Kids work together to stack them in order and say the verse aloud. After building the verse, children use toy trumpets or clap rhythms while repeating it together. Have kids share their chants with the class when they are finished!

### **5.Lapping Water**

Set out foam bowls and paper cups with a small amount of clean water. Give each child a bowl and cup and explain that Gideon watched how the soldiers drank water. Some soldiers knelt down with their faces close to the water, while others scooped water up with their hands.

Let kids try three fun methods:

- scooping water with their hand into their mouth
- using their tongue like a dog “lapping”
- carefully sipping from cupped hands

After everyone tries, talk about how God chose Gideon’s army in a surprising way. Explain that God was teaching Gideon to trust Him, not the size or strength of the army.