

JUDGES AND RUTH: FACING GROUP APOSTASY AS INDIVIDUALS

Part V: Developing From Weakness As God's Male Leaders

(Judges 6:1-7:25)

I. Introduction

- A. Last Sunday's lesson focused on the need for men to trust God to assume their Biblical leadership roles.
- B. However, if a man has become discouraged from being oppressed or criticized from without and feeling insecure within, assuming real oversight is a seemingly insurmountable task for him.
- C. The life and ministry of Gideon is a great case study in developing as God's male leader from weakness:

II. Developing From Weakness As God's Male Leaders, Judges 6:1-7:25.

- A. When Israel once again fell into faithlessness and with it, into deep sin, and God responded with corresponding judgment, the nation seemed fixed in a mire of defeatism, Judges 6:1-13:
 - 1. Like before, Israel relied on idols for help, so God allowed the Midianites to oppress them, 6:1; 2:1-3.
 - 2. So harsh was this state of affairs that the Hebrew, Gideon even doubted God's care, Judges 6:2-13:
 - a. The Midianites so oppressed God's people that they hid in mountain dens, caves and forts, 6:2.
 - b. When they sowed their fields, the Midianites would come in huge numbers with other nomads to take their harvest and all of their animals, 6:2-6; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, fn. to Judges 6:3.
 - c. When Israel cried unto God, He sent a prophet to say Israel's idolatry had led to this state, 6:7-10.
 - d. In fact, when the Angel of the Lord arrived to call Gideon to lead the people in triumph over their enemies, even he expressed doubt that God cared, thinking the Midianite oppression came from God's failure to sustain His people rather than judgment for Israel's sin, Judges 6:11-13.
- B. In **grace**, God **gradually** led Gideon to **trust HE could USE him to deliver Israel** in contrast to Israel's trust in false idols (as follows), Judges 6:14-7:25:
 - 1. God chose a man who had **no self-confidence** so he would **not** trust in **himself**, Judges 6:11, 15.
 - a. Gideon was the least significant son of an insignificant, poor father in a relatively insignificant tribe, the smaller tribe of Joseph, Manasseh, Judges 6:15. **He had no cause for confidence in his roots!**
 - b. Gideon so feared the Midianites, instead of threshing wheat on a mountain where it was usually done for the prevailing winds could blow the chaff away, he worked in a more hidden threshing floor by a lowland winepress, Judges 6:11. He was not confident in his abilities or works!
 - 2. God then **gradually** nurtured Gideon to trust in **GOD alone** to lead Israel to victory, Jud. 6:12-7:25:
 - a. **God** validated Gideon's call to lead by giving him the sign of accepting his sacrifice, Jud. 6:16-24.
 - b. **God** made Gideon assume bold leadership in his daily home life against idolatry in preparation for later leadership of the nation, Judges 6:25-32.
 - c. **God** then rewarded and further encouraged and equipped Gideon, filling him with His Holy Spirit to call the nation together for deliverance from Midian, Judges 6:33-35.
 - d. **God** next enhanced Gideon's faith in Him, getting him to trust him more by several more miraculous signs that verified his calling to lead Israel to victory, Judges 6:36-38, 39-40.
 - e. **God** called Gideon to trust Him even more by limiting the number of men with him God would use to deliver the Midianites into their hand, Judges 7:1-3, 4-8.
 - f. **God** gave Gideon a final sign of encouragement to trust in Him, a sign through the testimony of a man who belonged to the Midianite through himself, Judges 7:9-15.
 - g. Following these steps, in faith, **Gideon** led the men of Israel to victory over Midian, Judges 7:16-25.

Lesson: To overcome Israel's lack of faith in God, and its complication of a trust in idols coupled with such intense divine judgment that Israel doubted God's goodness, God took a man who realized his total personal **INABILITY** and **WORTH** and **GRADUALLY** taught him to trust **GOD ALONE** as **OPPOSED** to the **MAN HIMSELF** or **MAN'S IDOLS** for victory.

Application: For us men to develop as God's leaders, especially when we have been squelched as men, we need to (1) get to the **BOTTOM** where we no longer **DARE** trust in false idols or ourselves, and (2) then **GOD** leads us **GRADUALLY** to trust **ONLY** in **HIMSELF!** (3) Then we will achieve God's will in leadership that God assigns us in our generation!