



Lesson Three: Learning to Give God the Glory (Middle School/High School)

Lesson Theme

The ultimate purpose in a person's life is to bring glory to God, but because of our sinful nature we often fail to do this. Instead, we grasp for glory for ourselves. If we hope to be able to learn to give God glory in our lives, we will discover that is only possible through genuine repentance and complete dependence.

Theme Verse

¹⁰ For the kind of sorrow God wants us to experience leads us away from sin and results in salvation. There's no regret for that kind of sorrow. But worldly sorrow, which lacks repentance, results in spiritual death.
(2 Corinthians 7:10 NLT)

Inductive Bible Discussion Guide

Brief Explanation

- This discussion guide is designed for just that... discussion. When I lead discussion group Bible studies, I do not have answers anywhere in the material, nor do I use a leader's guide with all the answers written in.
- This is INTENTIONAL! I believe that the discipleship process should be an encounter with God, not just listening to someone else tell you what words to write down to fill in the blanks.
- Our goal is to help you facilitate discovery learning for your students. As the questions are asked, every participant (including the leader) is required to search God's Word to discover the appropriate morsel of truth. When facilitators are 'armed' with all the answers, they are less likely to allow the time needed for individuals to process the question and formulate an answer.
- Don't be afraid of silence! That discovery process is the key to the success or failure of this process. It is in those moments of silence that we stop teaching and the Holy Spirit takes over!
- We cannot forget what Jesus said in John 16:13: *“when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.”*
- A “Lesson Commentary” has been included with this packet. We encourage you to study the material contained in the commentary, but do not try to teach (aka lecture) your group from that material. Let it serve as a source of information for you to draw upon to help give context and perspective to the group discussion.
- For a deeper look at the issues presented herein, please look at the "Judges – Teacher's Guide" or listen to the corresponding sermons (www.templerogers.org/ministries/obe/judges_resources/)
- For a deeper discussion of how to lead an inductive style, Bible discussion group, please download the “Leading Small Group Bible Studies” resource by clicking [HERE](#).

Ice Breaker Questions

OPTION #1: WHAT MUST I DO?

- Give each person a sheet of paper. Ask them to write their answer to the following question: “What must I do to give God all the glory in my life?”
- Give each person a few minutes to write their answers. Once they have finished, ask them to fold up the paper and set it aside.
- At the end of the lesson, encourage each one to reconsider the answers to this question based on the study. Emphasize the need for genuine repentance and complete dependence.

OPTION #2: SYNONYMS FOR REPENTANCE

- You will need a white board or a large sheet of poster board and a marker for this activity. Ask them to tell you synonyms for the word repentance. Write these words on the board.
- After compiling a list of synonyms, explain that the word repentance comes from the Greek word *meta*, meaning to change (as in metamorphosis) and *noia*, which refers to the mind.
- The idea behind repentance is to literally “have a change of mind.
- Contrast a genuine change thinking and attitude with a superficial change in behavior without a change in heart. This will get right to the heart of true, biblical repentance.

OPTION #3: THROWING OUT YOUR SINS

- Items needed: small 3” x 5” cards or pieces of paper, pens or pencils, and a jar or box representing a trash can.
- Hand out the pieces of paper and pens to the students and ask everyone to write down at least one sin or worldly thing that takes them away from God.
 - This could be anything that person thinks is a vice in their lives.
 - Tell them that no one will ever see this piece of paper, but God will know what you have written.

- Invite them all to pray and ask that God give them the strength to let go of these sins.
- Now tell them to shred the papers into the smallest possible pieces and then place these pieces of paper into the container that will be passed around.
- After the container is filled take it up to the front and pray that God take these sins away for good and ask for God’s forgiveness.
- Afterwards throw away the trash in to a real trash can so that no one will ever be able to see those sins again.

Discussion Guide

The Cycle of Sin

Once again, we see the ‘Cycle of Sin,’ this time in Judges 6. Read verses 1-8. Identify the various steps of the cycle that are found in this passage?

- Sin – Judges 6:1a
- God’s Anger – Judges 6:1b
- Punishment – Judges 6:2-5
- Repent – Judges 6:6-8

Why did God send a prophet instead of a judge/deliver when the people cried out for help?

Genuine Repentance

What does it mean to repent? What can we learn about repentance from 2 Corinthians 7:8-10?

If the Israelites continually returned to a life of doing what was “evil in the sight of the Lord,” were they truly repenting each time God punished

them by a foreign oppressor? Or were they just sorry that they were experiencing the consequences?

Are there situations in your life where you find yourself in a cycle of sin?
Are you continually falling into the same pits of sin without any decrease in frequency or intensity? Remember what Paul said...

2 Corinthians 7:10 (NLT) – “¹⁰ For the kind of *sorrow* God wants us to experience *leads us away from sin* and results in *salvation*. There’s *no regret* for that kind of sorrow. But *worldly sorrow*, which lacks repentance, *results in spiritual death*.”

[At this point in the lesson, it might be appropriate to pause for a time of prayer—or even break into small groups to be able to share more detailed prayer requests with one another.]

Evidence of True Repentance

Read Judges 6:11-16, 25-32. What evidence is there that Gideon truly repented?

What “idols” have we erected in our lives that need to be torn down?

Trending toward Complete Dependence

Every leader who has a **goal** of being a **godly leader** will come to a place in his/her life when God will attempt to teach them a **lesson in dependence**. For some leaders, this is a lifelong learning process; for others, it is a condensed intensive course that impacts their life forever. Whether it is a lifelong process, an intensive time of testing, or a combination of both, **God's desire for leaders is to learn humility and learn to depend upon Him!**

What did God ask of Gideon to try to teach him dependence upon God?
(Judges 7:2)

What did God tell Gideon to do to reduce the number of soldiers? Why did God instruct Gideon to reduce the number of soldiers?

What was Gideon's battle plan for defeating the Midianites? (Judges 7:16-20) What was the result of this strategy? (Judges 7:21-23)

We learned in the previous lesson that God often uses the absurd and foolish things of the world to confound the wise (1 Cor. 1:26-31). How is this true in Gideon's battle against the Midianites?

Spend a few minutes in prayer asking God to reveal any places in your life where you are depending upon your own strength rather than God's. What do you need to do to be fully dependent upon God in those situations? Will you do it?

Application Activities

OPTION #1: REPENTANCE

- Sometimes we have our lives so full of trash or other things that we can't receive what God has for us. And we don't realize that what God has is so much better.
- Bring in some spaghetti pasta (you could use dry beans or something like that as well) and let all the kids taste the uncooked food.
- Then have them fill their hands with the pasta or beans.
- Show them a bag of M&M's or other candy and tell them to try to get some out of the bag without dropping the pasta or beans.
- You can even stick an M&M in their mouth and tell them, "Isn't that much better than what you have? This is what God has for you."
- The goal is that they will see they have to put down the things that they have in order to receive the good that God has!

OPTION #2: GLORIFYING GOD

- Divide your students into small group of 6-8.
- You will need a chalkboard, white board or poster board and one writing utensil for each group.
- Play quiet music while the students complete the following task.
- Pass the pen from person to person. As each person receives the pen, have them approach the board and write one or two words that he/she is thankful for (i.e. forgiveness). This process is continued until each person has finished writing their own public adoration.
- After every group is finished, allow the group as a whole to reflect upon what has been written—this way you can give your praises to God by meditating and thanking Him for what He has done.

Activity Sheets/Coloring Pages

- Download the Lesson 3 – Activity Sheets Packet for coloring sheets and other activities for your students!

Lesson Commentary

Judges 3:7-11

As we begin reading Judges 6, we see the telltale evidence that the Israelites are descending into yet another ‘cycle of apostasy.’ The first verse tells us that they “did what was evil in the sight of the Lord.” The phrase ‘did what was evil’ means that they have forgotten the Lord—who He is and what He has done—and have returned to worshipping idols (the Baals and Asherahs).

Notice the description of the beginning stages of this cycle of sin in **Judges 6:1-6**. God chose to use the Midianites this time to bring oppression upon Israel **(1)**. This was the worst oppression yet during the period of the judges. The Israelites were run out of their homes and forced to live in dens and caves in the surrounding mountains **(2)**. The Midianites were not just interested in political control—they wanted control of everything. They plundered all of Israel’s crops and livestock **(3-4)**—and they left “no sustenance in Israel and no sheep or ox or donkey.” As a result, the people of Israel were starving and the land of Israel lay in waste **(5)**. After reaching an all-time low, the Israelites finally “cried out for help to the Lord” **(6)**.

Up to this point, each time the Israelites cried out to God, He sent a deliverer; however, this time He first sent a prophet to proclaim the message from the Lord before sending a savior to deliver them from the hand of the Midianites. God decides that the people need to understand why they need rescuing before He sends them a deliverer. Through this unnamed prophet, God was trying to communicate two main things—what He has done and what they have done.

The Lord delivered the Israelites out of Egyptian slavery, sustained them in the Wilderness for 40 years and then drove out all the inhabitants of the Promised Land. How have they Israelites responded to God’s faithfulness? They have continually disobeyed Him. In 2 Corinthians 7:8-10, Paul distinguishes the difference between worldly sorrow and genuine repentance:

⁸ For even ***if I made you grieve*** with my letter, ***I do not regret it***—though I did regret it, for I see that that letter grieved you, though only for a while. ⁹ As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were ***grieved into repenting***. For you felt a ***godly grief***, so that you suffered no loss through us.

¹⁰ For ***godly grief produces a repentance*** that leads to salvation without regret, whereas ***worldly grief produces death***.

When we feel sorrow for our words or actions, we need to check what we are sorry about: the consequences of our sinful words and actions, or the sin itself; the loss of the pleasure that we get from the sin or the harm that has been done to our relationship with God. We need to be able to determine “the difference between normal lapses on the road to increasing Christian maturity and getting ‘stuck’—a repeated pattern of lapses which is a sign of no real progress. If you are continually falling into the same spiritual pit, and your falls are not decreasing in numbers or intensity, then you may be responding in regret rather than repentance.” (*Judges for You*, p 70)

Evidence of Gideon's Genuine Repentance (Judges 6:11-32)

After the Angel of the LORD convinced Gideon that he was to be the one that God would use to deliver the Israelites out of the Midianite oppression, Gideon obeyed God by destroying his father's altar to Baal and the Asherah pole beside it (25-26). Gideon accomplished this task overnight with the help of 10 men (or servants).

In a similar manner, before a believer is able to throw off the obvious oppressions in their life, he must first rid himself of the false idols he has propped up in his life. God will not deliver us from the struggles that this life has to offer until we remove the idols that we have propped up beside God and continue to worship against His will.

God Desires His People to Depend Upon Him

There is an attitude that is prevalent among God's people that sabotages the work of God in the life of a believer—it is a "Me First" attitude. Every leader who has a goal of being a godly leader will come to a place in his/her life when God will attempt to teach them a lesson in dependence. For some leaders, this is a lifelong learning process; for others, it is a condensed intensive course that impacts their life forever. Whether it is a lifelong process, an intensive time of testing, or a combination of both, God's desire for leaders is to learn humility and dependence upon Him!

As we continue to look into the life of Gideon, we find that God is teaching this lesson to him. Gideon has confirmed in his heart that God is sovereign over all creation—the incidents with the fleece—now God wants him to learn that God cares for him and has a plan for giving him victory.

You Need Fewer Men (Judges 7:1-8)

God told Gideon that he had too many men in his army. Gideon had done a good job recruiting soldiers for the battle. There were 32,000 men encamped with him beside the spring of Harod. God said there were too many because the Israelites would not have given Him the glory for the victory had they gone up against the Midianites with 32,000—or even 10,000—men.

We have already seen God deliver through thousands (Deborah and Barak) and we will see later how that God is able to deliver through just one (Samson). What God wants us to see is that deliverance always and only comes through Him!

So what did God tell Gideon to do to reduce the number of soldiers? Gideon told the people to go home if they were afraid of going into battle—22,000 of the 32,000 men were willing to publicly admit their cowardice and returned home as a result—but even with this vast reduction, God said, "The people are still too many" (7:4). God instructed Gideon as to how he would go about reducing

the number again. In verse 4, God said, “Take them down to the water, and I will test them for you there...” In verse 5, God gives Gideon the test, “Everyone who laps the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set by himself. Likewise, everyone who kneels down to drink.” There were only 300 men who used their hands to scoop up the water to drink. It was these 300 that God instructed Gideon to keep as his army—the rest were sent home.

God knew that if the 32,000 Israelites fought and defeated the Midianites then they would boast in what they had done rather than giving the glory to God. After the battle was over, God wanted the soldiers to say, “It was impossible for us to win—the only way we were able to be victorious was by the power of God.” It was God’s desire for them to give Him the glory of the victory!

Biblical Principle – ***God does not save in the way we expect—He saves through weakness!***

Brilliant Strategy for Defeating the Midianites (Judges 7:16-23)

What is Gideon’s battle plan for defeating the Midianites? Here is what he told his 300 men:

- Verse 16 – “he divided the 300 men into three companies and put trumpets into the hands of all of them and empty jars, with torches inside the jars.”
- Verse 17 – do what I do when I do it;
- Verse 18 – “When I blow the trumpet, I and all who are with me, then blow the trumpets also on every side of all the camp and shout, ‘For the LORD and for Gideon.’”
- Verse 19 – They would approach the camp and “attack” at the changing of the guard.

Timothy Keller give an excellent analysis of the battle plan:

First, it negates the size disparity between the armies. The Israelites appear and sound far greater in size than they really are. Second, it negates the difference in strength. It makes the camels a non-factor (in fact, they may have increased the confusion and mayhem in the camp). Third, it takes advantage of the time when the enemy are weakest. The night was probably divided into three watches of four hours each, a third of the army taking each watch. At the changing of the guard, one third of the army would have been walking back to their tents, while another third would have been asleep. So, when those who were asleep heard the noise and rushed out of their tents, they would have discovered their camp full of armed men walking towards them. In the dark, the truth that they were fellow Midianites would have been unclear until it was too late... The outcome of the battle, of course, is a foregone conclusion, since God has already announced its result (6:16; 7:7). Gideon’s plan works perfectly; all the Israelites need do is hold their position... In the end, even the three hundred kill no enemy soldiers! None of them could return home singing of what they had done, but only of what the Lord had done as they watched. (*Judges for You*, 90-91)