

Judges 7:1-8:35 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. v2 The LORD said to Gideon, "You have too many men for me to deliver Midian into their hands. In order that Israel may not boast against me that her own strength has saved her, v3 announce now to the people, 'Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back and leave Mount Gilead.'" So twenty-two thousand men left, while ten thousand remained. v4 But the LORD said to Gideon, "There are still too many men. Take them down to the water, and I will sift them 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." v5 So Gideon took the men down to the water. There the LORD told him, "Separate those who lap the water with their tongues like a dog from those who kneel down to drink." v6 Three hundred men lapped with their hands to their mouths. All the rest got down on their knees to drink. v7 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 other men go, each to his own place." v8 So Gideon sent the rest of the Israelites to their tents 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. v9 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. v10 If you are afraid to attack, go down to the camp with your servant Purah v11 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. v12 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. v13 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." v14 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." v15 When Gideon heard the dream and its interpretation, he worshiped God. He returned to the camp of Israel and called out, "Get up! The LORD has given the Midianite camp into your hands." v16 Dividing the three hundred men into three companies, he placed trumpets and empty jars in the hands of all of them, with torches inside. v17 "Watch me," he told them. "Follow my lead. When I get to the edge of the camp, do exactly as I do. v18 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.'" v19 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. v20 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!" v21 While each man held his position around the camp, all the Midianites ran, crying out as they fled. v22 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. v23 Israelites from Naphtali, Asher and all Manasseh were called out, and they pursued the Midianites. v24 Gideon sent messengers throughout the hill country of Ephraim, saying, "Come down against the Midianites and seize the waters of the Jordan ahead of them as far as Beth Barah." So all the men of Ephraim were called out and they took the waters of the Jordan as far as Beth Barah. v25 They also captured two of the Midianite leaders, Oreb and Zeeb. They killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb at the winepress of Zeeb. They pursued the Midianites and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon, who was by the Jordan.

v8:1 Now the Ephraimites asked Gideon, "Why have you treated us like this? Why didn't you call us when you went to fight Midian?" And they criticized him sharply.

v2 But he answered them, "What have I accomplished compared to you? Aren't the gleanings of Ephraim's grapes better than the full grape harvest of Abiezer? v3 God gave Oreb and Zeeb,

the Midianite leaders, into your hands. What was I able to do compared to you?" At this, their resentment against him subsided. v4 Gideon and his three hundred men, exhausted yet keeping up the pursuit, came to the Jordan and crossed it. v5 He said to the men of Succoth, "Give my troops some bread; they are worn out, and I am still pursuing Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian." v6 But the officials of Succoth said, "Do you already have the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna in your possession? Why should we give bread to your troops?" v7 Then Gideon replied, "Just for that, when the LORD has given Zebah and Zalmunna into my hand, I will tear your flesh with desert thorns and briers." v8 From there he went up to Peniel [1] and made the same request of them, but they answered as the men of Succoth had. v9 So he said to the men of Peniel, "When I return in triumph, I will tear down this tower." v10 Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor with a force of about fifteen thousand men, all that were left of the armies of the eastern peoples; a hundred and twenty thousand swordsmen had fallen. v11 Gideon went up by the route of the nomads east of Nobah and Jogbehah and fell upon the unsuspecting army. v12 Zebah and Zalmunna, the two kings of Midian, fled, but he pursued them and captured them, routing their entire army. v13 Gideon son of Joash then returned from the battle by the Pass of Heres. v14 He caught a young man of Succoth and questioned him, and the young man wrote down for him the names of the seventy-seven officials of Succoth, the elders of the town. v15 Then Gideon came and said to the men of Succoth, "Here are Zebah and Zalmunna, about whom you taunted me by saying, 'Do you already have the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna in your possession? Why should we give bread to your exhausted men?' " v16 He took the elders of the town and taught the men of Succoth a lesson by punishing them with desert thorns and briers. v17 He also pulled down the tower of Peniel and killed the men of the town. v18 Then he asked Zebah and Zalmunna, "What kind of men did you kill at Tabor?" "Men like you," they answered, "each one with the bearing of a prince." v19 Gideon replied, "Those were my brothers, the sons of my own mother. As surely as the LORD lives, if you had spared their lives, I would not kill you." v20 Turning to Jether, his oldest son, he said, "Kill them!" But Jether did not draw his sword, because he was only a boy and was afraid. v21 Zebah and Zalmunna said, "Come, do it yourself. 'As is the man, so is his strength.' " So Gideon stepped forward and killed them, and took the ornaments off their camels' necks. v22 The Israelites said to Gideon, "Rule over us--you, your son and your grandson--because you have saved us out of the hand of Midian." v23 But Gideon told them, "I will not rule over you, nor will my son rule over you. The LORD will rule over you." v24 And he said, "I do have one request, that each of you give me an earring from your share of the plunder." (It was the custom of the Ishmaelites to wear gold earrings.) v25 They answered, "We'll be glad to give them." So they spread out a garment, and each man threw a ring from his plunder onto it. v26 The weight of the gold rings he asked for came to seventeen hundred shekels, not counting the ornaments, the pendants and the purple garments worn by the kings of Midian or the chains that were on their camels' necks. v27 Gideon made the gold into an ephod, which he placed in Ophrah, his town. All Israel prostituted themselves by worshiping it there, and it became a snare to Gideon and his family. v28 Thus Midian was subdued before the Israelites and did not raise its head again. During Gideon's lifetime, the land enjoyed peace forty years. v29 Jerub-Baal son of Joash went back home to live. v30 He had seventy sons of his own, for he had many wives. v31 His concubine, who lived in Shechem, also bore him a son, whom he named Abimelech. v32 Gideon son of Joash died at a good old age and was buried in the tomb of his father Joash in Ophrah of the Abiezrites. v33 No sooner had Gideon died than the Israelites again prostituted themselves to the Baals. They set up Baal-Berith as their god and v34 did not remember the LORD their God, who had rescued them from the hands of all their enemies on every side. v35 They also failed to show kindness to the family of Jerub-Baal (that is, Gideon) for all the good things he had done for them.

Introduction

Last week we are looked the subject of **DISCOVERING THE WILL OF GOD**.

Today I want to look at:

THE RIGHT AND WRONG WAY OF DOING WILL OF GOD.

Gideon displays in his actions both a wonderful way to do God's will in a good and positive way and doing God's will in a wrong way. His initial actions in Chapter 7, portray a person who is in tune with God plans, to Chapter 8 where his success "in the Lord" goes to his head and he starts doing things in his own strength.

DOING GOD'S WILL IN GOD'S STRENGTH

DOING GOD'S WILL IN GOD'S STRENGTH

1. REQUIRES US TO REST IN GOD'S PROVISION.

Judges 7:1-7 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. v2 The LORD said to Gideon, "You have too many men for me to deliver Midian into their hands. In order that Israel may not boast against me that her own strength has saved her, v3 announce now to the people, 'Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back and leave Mount Gilead.' " So twenty-two thousand men left, while ten thousand remained. v4 But the LORD said to Gideon, "There are still too many men. Take them down to the water, and I will sift them 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." v5 So Gideon took the men down to the water. There the LORD told him, "Separate those who lap the water with their tongues like a dog from those who kneel down to drink." v6 Three hundred men lapped with their hands to their mouths. All the rest got down on their knees to drink. v7 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 other men go, each to his own place."

There is no significance in the number 300. Even the 32000 that Gideon had were small in comparison to Midianite army. In chapter 8:10 *Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor with a force of about fifteen thousand men, all that were left of the armies of the eastern peoples; **a hundred and twenty thousand swordsmen had fallen***

The point of the 300 men lies in *v5 So Gideon took the men down to the water. There the LORD told him, "Separate those **who lap the water with their tongues like a dog** from those who kneel down to drink."*

The Hebrew word for "LAP THE WATER - *yalok*" refers to the sound the men made when they drank the water for they sounded like dogs lapping water. These were not the "pick of the bunch".

This sounds like the message of Paul in

2 Corinthians 12:10 For when I am weak, then I am strong.

God can and has done great things when we rest in HIS provision.

DOING GOD'S WILL IN GOD'S STRENGTH

2. REQUIRES US TO WAIT FOR GOD'S TIMING.

v8 So Gideon sent the rest of the Israelites to their tents 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. v9 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. v10 If you are afraid to attack, go down to the camp with your servant Purah v11 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. v12 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. v13 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." v14 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."

God's timing can be one of the most frustrating aspects to deal with when it comes to God's Will. We all want God's Will, and we all want it NOW!!!

Friends God doesn't deal in seconds or minutes or hours or days.

GOD DEALS IN SEASONS!!! -

*2 Peter 3:8-9 But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: **With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.** v9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.*

Abraham - Waiting for a Promise to Be Fulfilled 25 Years

Joseph - Waiting in Prison for a Purpose – 2 Years

Moses – Waited 40 years to lead Israel

Jesus – Waited 30 years before he began

God's ways are not our ways AND GOD'S TIMING IS NOT OUR TIMING

Frustration with buying house at the back

DOING GOD'S WILL IN GOD'S STRENGTH

3. REQUIRES US TO DO EXACTLY AS GOD DIRECTS.

v15 When Gideon heard the dream and its interpretation, he worshiped God. He returned to the camp of Israel and called out, "Get up! The LORD has given the Midianite camp into your hands." v16 Dividing the three hundred men into three companies, he placed trumpets and empty jars in the hands of all of them, with torches inside. v17 "Watch me," he told them. "Follow my lead. When I get to the edge of the camp, do exactly as I do. v18 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.' " v19 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. v20 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!" v21 While each man held his position around the camp, all the Midianites ran, crying out as they fled.

It is very tempting to divert from God's PLANS. God's people have been doing so for many years, most often with disastrous consequences, BUT NEVER IN DERAILING THE PLANS OF GOD.

Let me give you a few well know examples:

Abraham and Sarah – Thought they could do the work of God in providing an Heir for Abraham – but resulted in Ismael – the archenemy of Israel.

The spies into the Promised Land – Thought it was impossible to enter the Land, resulting in a 40-year detour – YET ENTERED THE PROMISED LAND

Ananias, together with his wife **Sapphira**, thought they could rob God from what they had promised – YET GOD GOT IT ALL

Friends, let us never forget this:

GODS PLAN WILL PREVAIL.

Not in a fatalistic sense, that we don't have any free will.

GODS PLAN WILL PREVAIL. BECAUSE HIS WILL IS PERFECT AND BEST

Proverbs 19:21 Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails.

Isaiah 46:9-11 Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. v10 I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please. v11 From the east I summon a bird of prey; from a far-off land, a man to fulfill my purpose. What I have said, that will I bring about; what I have planned, that will I do.

Isaiah 55:8-9, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

DOING GOD'S WILL IN GOD'S STRENGTH

4. REQUIRES US TO LET GOD DO HIS THING.

*v22 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. v23 Israelites from Naphtali, Asher and all Manasseh were called out, and they pursued the Midianites. v24 Gideon sent messengers throughout the hill country of Ephraim, saying, "Come down against the Midianites and seize the waters of the Jordan ahead of them as far as Beth Barah." So all the men of Ephraim were called out and they took the waters of the Jordan as far as Beth Barah. v25 They also captured two of the Midianite leaders, Oreb and Zeeb. They killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb at the winepress of Zeeb. They pursued the Midianites and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon, who was by the Jordan.*

As Gideon let's God do what God does best, **GOD WINS THE VICTORY!!!**

It's not that Gideon does not have a part to play. Once God starts the ball rolling, Gideon called upon others to be part of the battle as well.

Jesus often required that those that wanted something from him, do something to show that they were putting their trust in God.

John 5:8 *Then Jesus said to him, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk."*

John 6:5-6 *When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" v6 He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.*

John 9:6-7 *Having said this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. v7 "Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam" (this word means Sent). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.*

John 11:38-40 *Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. v39 "Take away the stone," he said. "But, Lord," said Martha, the sister of the dead man, "by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days." v40 Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?"*

DOING GOD'S WILL IN GOD'S STRENGTH

5. REQUIRES US TO LET GOD GET THE GLORY.

v8:1 Now the Ephraimites asked Gideon, "Why have you treated us like this? Why didn't you call us when you went to fight Midian?" And they criticized him sharply. v2 But he answered them, "What have I accomplished compared to you? Aren't the gleanings of Ephraim's grapes better than the full grape harvest of Abiezer? v3

God gave Oreb and Zeeb, the Midianite leaders, into your hands. *What was I able to do compared to you?" At this, their resentment against him subsided.*

Paul make it clear in **1 Corinthians 10:31 whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.**

UNLESS GOD GET'S THE GLORY IT'S NOT GOD'S WILL!!!

CONCLUSION

So what have we learned

DOING GOD'S WILL IN GOD'S STRENGTH

1. REQUIRES US TO REST IN GOD'S PROVISION.
2. REQUIRES US TO WAIT FOR GOD'S TIMING.
3. REQUIRES US TO DO EXACTLY AS GOD DIRECTS.
4. REQUIRES US TO LET GOD DO HIS THING.
5. REQUIRES US TO LET GOD GET THE GLORY.

Mark Batterson, Play the Man: Becoming the Man God Created You to Be, Baker Books, 2017.

Are Churches Like Zoos?

A decade ago I spent an unforgettable week in the Galapagos Islands. This archipelago of islands off the coast of Ecuador hasn't changed much since Charles Darwin sailed there on the HMS *Beagle* in December 1831 and studied fifteen species of finches. The Galapagos may be the closest thing to the Garden of Eden left on Earth!

My son and I saw a two-hundred-year-old turtle weighing in at nearly a thousand pounds. We came face-to-face with giant iguanas that weren't the least bit intimidated by humankind. We watched pelicans that looked like prehistoric pterodactyls dive into the ocean and come back up with breakfast in their oversized beaks. And we went swimming with sea lions, which we later learned isn't altogether safe!

A few weeks after returning home, our family went to the National Zoo in Washington, DC. The National Zoo is a great zoo, but zoos are ruined for me. Looking at caged animals isn't nearly as exhilarating as witnessing a wild animal in its natural habitat—it's too safe, it's too tame, and it's too predictable.

As we walked through the ape house, the four-hundred-pound gorillas looked so bored, so emasculated, behind protective plexiglass. That's when a thought fired across my synapses: *I wonder if churches do to people what zoos do to animals.*

I don't think it's intentional. In fact, it's well-intentioned. But I wonder if our attempts to *help* people sometimes *hurt* them. We try to remove the danger, remove the risk. We attempt to tame people in the name of Christ, forgetting that Jesus didn't die to keep us safe. Jesus died to make us dangerous.

I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.

That doesn't sound safe, does it? That's because it's not. The will of God isn't an insurance plan. The will of God is a dangerous plan. It takes tons of testosterone, and it produces high levels of holy adrenaline.