

*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 briars." v8 From there he went up to Peniel 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 briars. 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 began to look at the subject of **THE RIGHT AND WRONG WAY OF DOING THE WILL OF GOD.**

We discovered that **THE RIGHT WAY OF DOING THE WILL OF GOD IS:**  
**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.**

Today I want to look at the **SECOND** part of the message:

## **THE RIGHT AND WRONG WAY OF DOING THE WILL OF GOD.**

His initial actions in Chapter 7, portray a person who was in tune with God plans.

In Chapter 8 his success goes to his head, and he starts doing things in his own strength.

## **WHEN WE TRY TO DO GOD'S WILL IN OUR OWN STRENGTH**

### **WHEN WE TRY TO DO GOD'S WILL IN OUR OWN STRENGTH**

#### **1. We BEGIN TO THINK WE ARE DOING GOD'S WORK FOR HIM.**

*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.*

After the initial WORK OF GOD, the Eastern nations of the Midianites and Amalekites start running away. Till this point Gideon and his men did nothing other than blow trumpets, wave burning torches and shout, "*A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!*".

As Gideon begins to face resistance and opposition he begins to make statements WITHOUT CONSULTING THE LORD.

He acts as if he is God himself. He says in verse 7 & 9

*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."*

*v9 So he said to the men of Peniel, "When I return in triumph, I will tear down this tower."*

There may be times, when we are working for God, that we may act as if our words or actions are the words and actions of God.

In recent years you may have heard some preachers even say that because they are "THE LORD'S ANNOINTED", they are above correction.

Friend, WE MUST NEVER TRY TO DO GOD'S WORK WITHOUT GOD'S LEADING.

### ***Only One Life, 'Twill Soon Be Past* by C.T. Studd**

Charles Thomas Studd, better known as C. T. Studd, was a British missionary. He was born on December 2, 1860, in Spratton, United Kingdom, into a family of wealth and privilege. In 1883 he graduated from Trinity College, Cambridge, and in 1885 entered the missions field with Hudson Taylor in China.

C.T. Studd spent his life in dedicated service to the Lord, serving in China, India, and Africa. In 1913 he formed the World Evangelisation Crusade (now WEC International) which operates to this day

Two little lines I heard one day,  
Traveling along life's busy way;  
Bringing conviction to my heart,  
And from my mind would not depart;  
**Only one life, 'twill soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last.**

Only one life, yes only one,  
Soon will its fleeting hours be done;  
Then, in 'that day' my Lord to meet,  
And stand before His Judgement seat;  
**Only one life, 'twill soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last.**

Only one life, the still small voice,  
Gently pleads for a better choice  
Bidding me selfish aims to leave,  
And to God's holy will to cleave;  
**Only one life, 'twill soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last.**

Only one life, a few brief years,  
Each with its burdens, hopes, and fears;  
Each with its clays I must fulfill.  
living for self or in His will;  
**Only one life, 'twill soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last.**

When this bright world would tempt me sore,  
When Satan would a victory score;  
When self would seek to have its way,  
Then help me Lord with joy to say;  
**Only one life, 'twill soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last.**

Give me Father, a purpose deep,  
In joy or sorrow Thy word to keep;  
Faithful and true what e'er the strife,  
Pleasing Thee in my daily life;  
**Only one life, 'twill soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last.**

Oh let my love with fervor burn,  
And from the world now let me turn;  
Living for Thee, and Thee alone,  
Bringing Thee pleasure on Thy throne;  
**Only one life, 'twill soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last.**

Only one life, yes only one,  
Now let me say, "Thy will be done";  
And when at last I'll hear the call,  
I know I'll say "twas worth it all";  
**Only one life, 'twill soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last.**

Only one life, 'twill soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last.  
And when I am dying, how happy I'll be,  
If the lamp of my life has been burned out for Thee.

## **WHEN WE TRY TO DO GOD'S WILL IN OUR OWN STRENGTH**

### **2. We THINK WE KNOW WHAT GOD'S WILL IS FOR OTHERS.**

*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.*

Gideon tries to get his own son to do what he was meant to do.

According to Jewish Law, a family member had the right to "avenge" the death of a close family member, if that family member was killed unlawfully.

Gideon tells his oldest son, Jether, to kill Zedah and Zalmunna, because they had killed Gideon's own brothers. However, as the closest relative, Gideon had the responsibility of carrying out the Justice. Anyone else, would not be justified in the execution.

It's a sad reality, that many children of "Religious" people have rejected the faith of their parents because their parents "forced" them to go to church, while the parents were living a hypocritical life at home.

The only thing we can do as parents or as Christian Leaders is lay a foundation and leave the rest to God. The more legalistic the practice of our faith, the greater the likelihood of our children rejecting our Faith.

**WE CAN GUIDE, BUT WE CAN NEVER FORCE.**

#### **THE THREE CHAIRS: EXPERIENCING SPIRITUAL BREAKTHROUGHS** by Bruce Wilkinson

Every Christian needs to be challenged to become what Bruce Wilkinson calls "first-chair Christians." First-chair Christians walk daily with God and desire that others share their level of commitment. Christians can experience spiritual breakthroughs no matter what chair they are sitting in!

## **WHEN WE TRY TO DO GOD'S WILL IN OUR OWN STRENGTH**

### **3. We THINK WE ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN OTHERS.**

*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."*

When you read verses 21-23, it seems as if Gideon is a very humbly person. After all, he declares, "THE LORD WILL RULE OVER YOU" until you get to VERSE 31, which says.

*v31 His concubine, who lived in Shechem, also bore him a son, whom he named Abimelech.*

It sound fine when you read it in English, until you look closely at the name.

Ab = Abba – My Father, and Melech = King

**WHILE HE SAID GOD WOULD RULE, HE CALLS HIMSELF "KING".**

## WHEN WE TRY TO DO GOD'S WILL IN OUR OWN STRENGTH

### 4. We BEGIN TO REPLACE GOD WITH OURSELVES.

*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.***

An EPHOD – The Sacred Garment worn by Jewish priests as they represented the people before GOD!!!

Gideon not only wants to be the King, HE WANTS TO BE THE PRIEST AS WELL. And there is ONLY ONE WHO IS BOTH KING AND PRIEST, JESUS, as foreshadowed in the OT character, Melchizedek.

## WHEN WE TRY TO DO GOD'S WILL IN OUR OWN STRENGTH

### 5. We DRIFT BACK INTO WORLDLY WAYS AGAIN.

*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"*

How sad this story ends. Many say, "IT'S NOT HOW YOU START THAT IS IMPORTANT, BUT HOW YOU END!!!"

Gideon did not end well

## 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.

## **WHEN WE TRY TO DO GOD'S WILL IN OUR OWN STRENGTH**

- 1. We BEGIN TO THINK WE ARE DOING GOD'S WORK FOR HIM.**
- 2. We THINK WE KNOW WHAT GOD'S WILL IS FOR OTHERS.**
- 3. We THINK WE ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN OTHERS.**
- 4. We BEGIN TO REPLACE GOD WITH OURSELVES.**
- 5. We DRIFT BACK INTO WORLDLY WAYS AGAIN.**

**Only one life, 'twill soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last.**