

Judges: Broken Heroes/Faithful God
JUDGES 8
Win the War, Lose the Victory

We lose the victory when we exchange God's mission for our own--PRIDE. 8:1-25

- **Pride desires revenge (vv. 4-21)**

⁴ Gideon and his three hundred men, exhausted yet keeping up the pursuit, came to the Jordan and crossed it. ⁵ He said to the men of Sukkoth, "Give my troops some bread; they are worn out, and I am still pursuing Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian."

⁶ But the officials of Sukkoth said, "Do you already have the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna in your possession? Why should we give bread to your troops?"

⁷ 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."

⁸ From there he went up to Peniel and made the same request of them, but they answered as the men of Sukkoth had. ⁹ So he said to the men of Peniel, "When I return in triumph, I will tear down this tower."

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. ¹¹ Gideon went up by the route of the nomads east of Nobah and Jogbehah and attacked the unsuspecting army. ¹² Zebah and Zalmunna, the two kings of

Midian, fled, but he pursued them and captured them, routing their entire army.

¹³ Gideon son of Joash then returned from the battle by the Pass of Heres. ¹⁴ He caught a young man of Sukkoth and questioned him, and the young man wrote down for him the names of the seventy-seven officials of Sukkoth, the elders of the town. ¹⁵ Then Gideon came and said to the men of Sukkoth, “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?’”

¹⁶ He took the elders of the town and taught the men of Sukkoth a lesson by punishing them with desert thorns and briers. ¹⁷ He also pulled down the tower of Peniel and killed the men of the town.

¹⁸ 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.”

¹⁹ 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.” ²⁰ 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.

²¹ 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.

- **Pride accepts the credit for what God has done (vv. 22-24).**

22The Israelites said to Gideon, “Rule over us—you, your son and your grandson—because you have saved us from the hand of Midian.”

23But Gideon told them, “I will not rule over you, nor will my son rule over you. The Lord will rule over you.” 24And 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.)

We lose the victory when we don't acknowledge God's kingship in word and deed--HYPOCRISY. (vv. 23-32)

Deuteronomy 17:14-20

¹⁴ When you enter the land the Lord your God is giving you and have taken possession of it and settled in it, and you say, “Let us set a king over us like all the nations around us,” ¹⁵ be sure to appoint over you a king the Lord your God chooses. He must be from among your fellow Israelites. Do not place a foreigner over you, one who is not an Israelite.

¹⁶ The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them, for the Lord has told you, “You are not to go back that way again.” ¹⁷ He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray. He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold.

¹⁸ When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the Levitical priests. ¹⁹ It is to be with him, and he is to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the Lord his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees ²⁰ and not consider himself better than his fellow Israelites and turn from the law to the right or to the left. Then he and his descendants will reign a long time over his kingdom in Israel.

Judges 8:23-32

23But Gideon told them, “I will not rule over you, nor will my son rule over you. The Lord will rule over you.” 24And 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.)

25They answered, “We’ll be glad to give them.” So they spread out a garment, and each of them threw a ring from his plunder onto it. 26The 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.

27Gideon 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. 28Thus Midian was subdued before the Israelites and did not raise its head again. During Gideon’s lifetime, the land had peace forty years. 29Jerub-Baal son of Joash went back home to live.

30He had seventy sons of his own, for he had many wives. 31His concubine, who lived in Shechem, also bore him a son, whom he named Abimelek. 32Gideon son of Joash died at a good old age and was buried in the tomb of his father Joash in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

- Hypocrisy is self-deceptive (vv. 23-24, 30)
- Hypocrisy seeks to manipulate God (v. 27)
- Hypocrisy leads to Idolatry (v. 27)
- Hypocrisy leads others to sin (v. 27)