

**Main Passage:** Judges 6:11-16

**Purpose:** To understand that God will equip His followers, despite their inadequacies, to be His disciples.

**Session Snapshot:** As disciples, we must fully surrender to a Gospel-centered life. Everything we do and say should be aimed at living out the Gospel in our lives. This session looks at the life of Gideon and gives us a glimpse of a man who felt inadequate to serve God in the way God was calling him. After this lesson, men should be reassured that if God calls you to a task, the only way that task will be accomplished is through His strength, not ours.

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## GETTING STARTED

*Kick off your time together by checking in and/or reviewing what you did in the last session.*

FIRST, remind your group that this is week three of their video series looking at the necessity of disciples living a Gospel-centered life. As a reminder, this section is part of a larger series on defining discipleship called *Be Disciples*.

THEN, if you want to start with asking men for prayer requests, checking in on how their weeks have gone, or any other housekeeping tasks, do so.

FINALLY, if there are no questions or other input, transition into the *Digging In* section of your leader's guide.

## DIGGING IN

*Jump into the session by watching this week's video.*

FIRST, play the video. You can access the video by logging into your Iron Hill Press account.

THEN, when the video is over, lead men in a short discussion based on what Rick covered. Feel free to come up with your own questions, or consider asking some similar to those below:

- **Give a few examples in your own words of what it looks like to live a Gospel-centered life.**
- **How does the Gospel affect your relationships: with your wife, co-workers, children, people at the coffee shop?**
- **When we live out the gospel, what should change about the way we speak, act, and how we treat people?**
- **What are some barriers to living out the Gospel?** (If nobody mentions it, suggest that feelings of inadequacy might be a barrier. It will help segue to the next question.)
- **Every man has feelings of inadequacy. What is a situation where you felt like you weren't good enough?** (It might be in a dating relationship, a task at work, parenting, etc.)
- **Why do men feel inadequate when it comes to discipling others?**

- **What does this fear tell us about our view of the Lord's work?** (Try to get the men to understand that fear of inadequacy comes from thinking it is all about us and our abilities rather than God's ability.)
- **What can we learn from the fact that God uses flawed men to do His work?** (Guide them to something along the lines of it's not about our strength, but God's.)
- **The first sentence in Rick Warren's wildly popular book, *Purpose Driven Life*, is "It's not about you." What is a practical way to remind yourself that discipleship and life, in general, is not about you?**

FINALLY, transition into the *Opening the Word* portion of your time together by saying something like the following:

- **When we think of great leaders in the Bible, Gideon comes to mind. However, he wasn't free from feelings of inadequacy. Let's dive into the passage a little more to see what God's word can teach us about focusing on God and not ourselves.**

## OPENING THE WORD

*Spend time going deeper into a specific concept Rick introduced in the video.*

FIRST, explain that you're going to take a more in-depth look at Judges 6:11-16. As Rick stated in the video, we must understand that we are all inadequate to serve God. All of us have shortcomings, but the power of God, the power of the Holy Spirit, working through us accomplishes the tasks God has entrusted to us. In this passage, Gideon is reminded of that very fact.

We must make sure your people have a good understanding of the context of the passage you'll be studying. Provide the context for the passage using the following bullet points:

- **Author:** Judges is one of several books in the Bible where the author is not definitively known. Church history holds Samuel as a potential author. But, most scholars concede that there is no solid textual evidence to strongly support that viewpoint.
- **Time frame:** The events of the book of Judges took place over a two to three hundred year time frame between Joshua's death and the rise of Samuel and Saul. The writing of the book is hard to pin down. One school of thought has it being mostly completed by the time David is king, while the second holds that it was completed around the time that Babylon conquered Judah.
- **Purpose:** The purpose of Judges was to highlight what un-godly leadership did (and can do) to God's people. And yet, it also served to show that the people would rally to godly leadership. As much as anything, it highlights the fickle nature of Israel and her leaders and how quickly the people forgot all that God had done for them.

THEN, read or have a volunteer read Judges 6:11-16. Lead the group in a brief discussion. Ask something like:

- **What does the angel of the Lord say to Gideon when he appears to him?**
  - *Answer:* The Lord is with you.
- **Why is it important to understand that the Lord is with Gideon?**
  - *Answer:* Because he is about to command Gideon to do something difficult.
- **How does the angel of the Lord address Gideon? What does he call him?**
  - *Answer:* Mighty warrior.
- **Why is it important that Gideon was addressed this way?**

- *Answer:* Gideon wasn't a warrior at the time. He was threshing wheat and hiding it from the Midianites. The LORD saw past what Gideon currently was to what Gideon could be with the strength of God. Men need to know that God looks past what they currently are and can see what you could be if you just followed Him. For Gideon, that was a mighty warrior. For you, it might be that God looks past what you have been able to do on your own and can see what you could be with His help: a man of integrity, a faithful husband, or a present father.
- **Have someone read verse 14. What does the LORD mean when he says, "Go in the strength you have..."?**
  - *Answer:* He is telling Gideon that he has the strength of God behind him because God will be with him.
- **The second part of that verse is key. "Am I not sending you?" What does this tell us about God and the power available to us when asked to complete a task?**
  - *Answer:* It was not Gideon's strength alone that would overcome the Midianites, but God's. When God calls us to do something, His power completes the task.
- **If God does the work, why does He include us?**
  - *Answer:* We are invited to participate in God's good works. Our obedience to God is how God works throughout history. He uses us, who are weak, to do things that only He can do so that only He can get the glory.
- **Have someone read verse 15. What does Gideon do here?**
  - *Answer:* He starts making excuses and tells God all the reasons why he is inadequate to do what God is asking him to do.
- **What is the LORD's response in verse 16?**
  - *Answer:* "I will be with you and YOU will strike down all the Midianites."
- **Why did the LORD respond in this way?**
  - *Answer:* He was reminding Gideon that it wasn't about him. Although Gideon felt inadequate and had a list of reasons why he wasn't the man for the job, God knew that when He asked him. The things Gideon thought disqualified him for service to God were the very things that qualified him in God's eyes.
- **Why does God use the weak, unqualified, and inadequate to do His work?**
  - *Answer:* Rick said it in the video, "Many times God chooses people like you and me so that when he moves, everybody knows it was God."

Ask if there are any questions and if there are none, transition into *Accepting the Challenge*.

## ACCEPTING THE CHALLENGE

*Focus your group's attention on one key takeaway from your time together.*

FIRST, explain that you want to challenge the group to focus on the main takeaways from this session. Consider starting this portion of your session by asking your group what they think are the main application points from your session. Allow discussion to go until there are no more suggestions.

Then, if necessary, supplement your discussion with the following application points. Say something like:

- **One key application is for men to fight the feeling that doing God's work is about their own ability and strengths. When we're called to do God's work, we fully rely on God's strength to complete it in us.**

- When you start feeling inadequate about leading your home, your wife, your children, your job, and your church, remind yourself of this phrase, “It’s not about me.”
- **Second, relying on God’s strength doesn’t exempt us from action. Just like Gideon, we still have to go into battle, but we rely on God’s strength for victory.**
  - God invites us to participate in His work. Throughout the Bible, God called men to action, but the results were always God's responsibility. When we answer the call to act, we show our obedience and trust in God. Failure to act reveals our disobedience and mistrust of God.
- **Third, trusting that God will be with us doesn’t exempt us from preparing for the task that God has called us to perform.**
  - When we disciple others, we are still responsible for studying God’s word, walking with God, devoting ourselves to prayer, and living a Gospel-centered life. Yes, we rely on the Holy Spirit, but we also share the responsibility and privilege of growing closer to God through His Word. Just like God saw Gideon as a mighty warrior before he had become a mighty warrior, God sees what you can become if you trust Him. How are you preparing your heart for the man God sees inside of you?

If it feels appropriate, allow some discussion about the kind of processing they find themselves doing.

FINALLY, encourage men to process these questions in the week to come. Challenge them to listen to what God is trying to tell them and respond accordingly. If there are no more questions or input, close your time together in prayer.