

Trust

Session 10 • Judges 7:1-8,19-23



ENGAGE

PREPARE: Display **Pack Item 2** (*Poster: Outlines of Joshua, Judges, Ruth*) and **Pack Item 5** (*Map: The Judges of Israel*). Make copies of **Pack Item 9** (*Handout: Praying Scripture in Joshua, Judges, Ruth*).

INTRODUCE: Enlist a volunteer to read the opening paragraph on page 85. Lead a brief discussion of “Cinderella stories.” Allow adults to share times they have seen a “Cinderella story” take place.

DISCUSS: Why do stories of people rising from humble circumstances to achieve success resonate so strongly with us? (p. 85)

REVIEW: Direct attention to **Pack Item 2** (*Poster: Outlines of Joshua, Judges, Ruth*). Highlight Gideon on the list of judges. Remind adults about God’s call of Gideon from the previous session.

- “Judges 7:1–8:21 recounts Gideon’s victory over Midian. He began with thirty-two thousand men, but God reduced the number to three hundred. This was to ensure that Israel knew the victory was by God’s power, not their own strength. In the aftermath of victory over Midian, the Israelites wanted to make Gideon king.

- But he refused, saying God would be their king (Judg. 8:22-23). Though there was peace in Israel for forty years until Gideon died, Gideon himself led all of Israel to worship an idol in his hometown. When Gideon died the Israelites began worshiping the Baals again (8:24-32).” (p. 85)

TRANSITION: *Gideon’s call was unlikely; but, as we’ll see today, the way God provided deliverance for the Israelites was even more unlikely.*

EXPLORE THE TEXT

ASK: When has anyone ever asked you to do something that seemed outrageous and not doable?

READ: Invite a volunteer to read aloud **Judges 7:1-3** as the group listens for the unexpected directions from God.

DISCUSS: On the board or a large sheet of paper, write 32,000. Explain that this was the original number of fighting men Gideon had recruited from the tribes of Israel. Lead a brief discussion about why God said that number was too big. Summarize this content:

- **(7:2-3)** Though massively outnumbered already, God said that Gideon had “too

many troops” for the battle. The phrase “for me to hand the Midianites over to them” again highlighted God’s role in bringing the victory to His people. The Lord wanted to make sure His people wouldn’t mistakenly think they defeated the Midianites in their own strength. He stated clearly that the Israelites would have no reason to “elevate themselves.” To downsize the army, the Lord instituted a two-pronged reduction plan. The first stage was straightforward. God told Gideon to announce to his troops that whoever was fearful at the prospect of fighting the Midianites could leave.

ASK: In what ways might we try to do God’s work by our own might and for our glory? (p. 87)

PRAY: Distribute copies of **Pack Item 9** (*Handout: Praying Scripture in Joshua, Judges, Ruth*) and encourage adults to use Judges 7:2 as a prayer prompt. Urge them to consult the **Explore the Bible Prayer Guide** (QR code on p. 63).

TRANSITION: *Gideon lost two thirds of his soldiers in a matter of minutes. The worrisome discrepancy between the armies had grown larger—but God wasn’t done yet.*

READ: Call for a volunteer to read aloud Judges 7:4-8, directing the group to listen to how God downsized Gideon’s army again.

ASK: When have you been part of a “trust fall” exercise? What is the purpose of this kind of activity?

DISCUSS: Allow adults who have been part of a trust fall to share their experiences.

Compare the feelings of a trust fall to what Gideon may have been feeling as his men drank the water.

RECAP: Review what happened after God told Gideon that he still had too many troops:

- **(7:4-8)** Even after two thirds of the soldiers went home because they were afraid, God still told Gideon that he had “too many troops.” So, the Lord devised an unusual plan to reduce the number even more. God told Gideon to lead his soldiers “down to the water” so He could “test them.” The test involved how a soldier drank from the pool. God said a man who “laps water . . . like a dog” should be separated from one who “kneels to drink.” Of the ten thousand men who drank at the spring, only three hundred scooped up the water and drank it from cupped hands. The Lord told Gideon He would save Israel using these three hundred men.

SHARE: Note that in a short amount of time, God had reduced Gideon’s army by more than ninety-nine percent. Emphasize that He had put them in a position where they had no choice but to trust Him and to give Him the glory for the victory He provided.

ASK: When have you had to trust God despite not understanding what He was doing or asking? (p. 87)

READ: Call for a volunteer to read Judges 7:19-23, leading the group to listen for how God miraculously delivered the Israelites from the Midianites.

RECAP: Review God’s “battle plan” for Israel and its results:

- **(7:19-23)** “Gideon divided his men into three groups of one hundred in each company. He equipped each man with a ram’s horn in one hand and an empty pitcher with a torch inside of it in the other hand. They had dispersed themselves all around the camp. . . . First, they blew their horns. Second, they smashed their jars. Third, they held up their lit torches that had been concealed in the jars. In a normal nighttime military maneuver, only someone at the front of a company would have been carrying a lit torch. Gideon’s three hundred men appeared to be three hundred companies surrounding the Midianites. Finally, they shouted, ‘A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!’ . . . There was so much chaos that the Lord caused all of the Midianites to begin attacking each other.” (p. 90)

ASK: How should knowing that God acts in unpredictable ways impact how we live? (p. 87)

DISCUSS: Lead the group to discuss how these events and actions would bring God glory. Encourage them to consider how they can allow God to move and do things His way in their lives.

CHALLENGE

SUMMARIZE: Review these points from this week’s Bible passage:

- Believers dishonor God when they seek the glory that belongs to Him alone.

- Believers need to trust that God’s way of doing things is always best.
- Believers should pray for God to do what only He can do.

REFLECT: Encourage the group to read and reflect on the **Apply the Text** activity on page 87. Urge them to list two or three ways they can glorify God in the margin of their book.

PRAY: Enlist a volunteer to read Joshua 7:2 aloud. Point out that this is the memory verse for this session. Challenge them to continue using **Pack Item 9** (*Handout: Praying Scripture in Joshua, Judges, Ruth*) to pray through this verse during the week. Close the session in prayer, thanking God that His ways of working are always the best ways. Pray that the group would be aware of God’s work for His glory around them.

AFTER THE SESSION

Reinforce the session by sending a text or email to the group. Include the text for Judges 7:2 and ask: **Where have you seen God at work this week?** Encourage the group to “reply all” with their responses as a way to encourage one another. Explain that the next session will focus on the final leader mentioned in the book of Judges: Samson. Suggest they read Judges 13–16 to prepare for the session.