

# Lessons from Gideon (Part 4): Pride Can Be Our Downfall

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Text: Judges 8

This is the final lesson in our series on Gideon. He was a hero of faith (Hebrews 11:32) who helped deliver the Israelites from the Midianites. Yet he certainly had his faults. In this lesson, we will see how he was an illustration of the wise man's warning: "Pride goes before destruction" (Proverbs 16:18). For all of the good things Gideon did, he later allowed himself to be puffed up with pride, which led him to do things he should not have done. This is a warning for us because we can do the same.

## *Pride can be our downfall*

### **The Pride of Gideon**

- He took vengeance against those who would not help him (Judges 8:4-9, 15-17) – the leaders of Succoth and the men of Penuel refused to help him as he pursued the kings of Midian
- He refused to rule as king, but still "taxed" the people of their spoil (Judges 8:22-26)
- He made an ephod, which became a snare to Gideon and his household (Judges 8:27) – it was essentially a "trophy of war" (Zerr); but "Israel played the harlot with it there," which means they used it in idol worship
- He had many wives and at least one concubine (Judges 8:30-31) – Abimelech, the son of the concubine, killed Gideon's sons (except the youngest) and made himself king

### **Pride Leads Us to Seek Vengeance**

- Gideon did this against the leaders of Succoth and the men of Penuel
- We will face various injustices and offenses from others – yet we are not to seek our own revenge (Romans 12:17); vengeance belongs to God (Romans 12:19)
- We need to be willing to forgive others (Matthew 6:14-15) – we may even need to do this multiple times (Luke 17:3-4)

### **Pride Leads Us to Feel Entitled**

- This led Gideon to take the spoils of war and marry multiple women
- This sense of entitlement is about thinking that we should have more than God allows us to have
- We need to reject the message of society that we are "entitled" to everything – instead, we need to learn contentment (Philippians 4:11-12)
- We are also to reject society's call to abandon God's plan for marriage and other relationships – God has a plan for marriage (Matthew 19:4-6), and we cannot alter it

to suit our desires; some friendships must be avoided because of their negative influence (1 Corinthians 15:33; 2 Corinthians 6:14-17)

### **Pride Leads Us Away from God**

- This happened with Gideon when he made the ephod and allowed it to become an idol
- Just because WE do something does not make it right – we are not the standard (1 Corinthians 4:4); God’s word is true no matter what we say (Romans 3:4)
- Faithfulness on one point does not excuse unfaithfulness on another (Revelation 2:18-20) – if we are guilty in one point, we are guilty of all (James 2:10)

### **Conclusion**

- We can do many good things in the cause of Christ – yet pride could cause us to fall from grace
- We need to remain humble – recognize our place before God and our need of His grace and mercy
- Then continue serving God to the best of our abilities – not because that makes us something great, but because He is great and is worthy of our faithful obedience