

The Fuel and the Flame

Lesson 1—Gideon

OVERVIEW

Background Bible Passage: Judges 6:11-24

Key Verse: Matthew 28:18-20

BEFORE CLASS

Preparation: *Your preparation will determine the direction your class will go.*

- On a scale of 1 to 10, how willing are you to surrender to God's leadership?
- To what extent are you prepared to be the "fuel" for what God wants to do in your life, family, church, and elsewhere?
- Study and prepare your lesson so that you are familiar with the teaching outline.
- Pray for each student by name.
- Use the Contact 1-2-3 system to the right to follow up on students who have recently missed on Sunday morning.

CONTACT 1-2-3 SYSTEM

CONTACT 1--The first time a student is absent, give him a call.

CONTACT 2--Following the second absence, send him a postcard.

CONTACT 3-- The third week he is absent, pay him a visit.

THINK ABOUT IT: What does it say to a students when they miss multiple weeks in a row and are never contacted? It says, "It really doesn't matter if you're here or not." Small things communicate great messages. Let the three "small" things above communicate that you care and miss your students when they are absent.

OPENING ACTIVITY

Opening Questions

- *Who are your favorite Bible characters and why?*
- *When you read about the people God used in the Bible, how does it make you feel? Do you wish you could be like them? Do you think there is anything different between you and them?*

SAY: Throughout the Bible we find God's desire to move in people's lives, in their nation and beyond and we get to see a photo gallery of the people God used (*i.e., Abraham, Moses, David, Elijah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, etc.*) and we also get to see the lives through which God did not move (*Ham, Cannan, King Saul, King Ahab, Judas, etc.*) And through it all we can gain a picture of the kind of person that God uses.

- *Do you think there are specific things that God desires to do in **your life**? What do you think some of these things are?*

- *Do you think there are specific things that God desires to do in **your family**? What do you think some of these things are?*
- *Do you think there are specific things that God desires to do in **your church**? What do you think some of these things are?*
- *What are some other areas where you think God wants to do a special work?*
- *How can you be a part of God's working in all of these areas? What does it take to truly make a difference for Christ?*
- *Have you ever tried to light logs on fire without a fuel? What happened? (It usually takes time. Even in a fireplace many people use newspaper or fire-starters to help "get the fire going" and many people now use pre-prepared logs because they are easily lit.)*

SAY: In the Christian life there is a fuel that will ignite your life for Christ. Willingness is the fuel—willingness to sacrifice, willingness to surrender, willingness to be used by God. When this fuel is combined with the fire of God's presence, there is an effect of God's using and moving in every area of your life.

BIBLE LESSON—part 1

Choose a volunteer to read—Read Judges 6:11-24

- *What is the first thing the Angel of the Lord said to Gideon? ("The Lord is with you, mighty warrior.")*
- *How would you feel if God said that to you?*
- *What was Gideon's response?*

*SAY: He answers with "us" statements. It's as if he looked over his shoulder to see who else the Lord was talking to, as if his thought was, "Surely he's not talking to *me*." Count how many times in verse 13 that he says "us." But God isn't talking about "us," He's talking about "you." Look at God's response in verse 14: "Go in the strength *you* have..."*

SAY: Now Gideon catches on and he realizes that God is specifically calling him.

- *Now what is Gideon's response? (He makes excuses. See verse 15.)*

SAY: But God answers his excuses with more "you" statements:

- *What was God's promise to Gideon in verse 16? ("I will be with you.")*

SAY: This is the key for the people God used in the Bible and the key for you to live an effective life for Christ today: It's the fuel and the flame, a combination of a person's willingness with the fact that God is with them and desiring to do a specific work. But

even with God's promise, Gideon was hesitant. He asked for a sign and again in the next chapter, he asks for two more signs. It's as if he just couldn't accept the idea that God wanted to use him.

KEY VERSE

- *Who are some other people that God called and used in great ways that were hesitant at first or gave excuses?*

(1) Moses at the burning bush tries to explain to God why he can't be used...I am slow of speech, what if they won't believe me, "*Please, Lord, send someone else...*" (Exodus 3-4). And what was God's response to him as soon as he began giving excuses: "*I will certainly be with you*" (Ex. 3:12).

(2) When God called Jeremiah he "*protested, 'Oh no, Lord God. Look, I don't know how to speak since I am only a youth*" (Jer. 1:6). But what was the Lord's promise to him, "*I will be with you*" (Jer. 1:7).

- *What are some excuses you might have given God? What are some common excuses that Christians give to God?*

- *How does the idea that God is with you affect these excuses?*

SAY: Most excuses center around two things:

- (1) Our abilities--i.e., "I can't speak well." "I'm young and I don't know a lot." Etc. But being used by God is "not about you" or what you can or can't do. It's all about Him and what He can do.
- (2) Our unwillingness--i.e., "I just don't want to."

SAY: God created you for a reason. He has great plans for you life, but just like a car without fuel, you'll go no where until you are willing to let God have His way in your life. He is willing and ready and He has already promised to be with you but He won't move in and through you until you move beyond excuses and are willing to surrender.

- *Where in the Bible has God promised you His presence in your life? Where is your "I will be with you" statement?*

Choose a volunteer to read—Read Matthew 28:18-20

SAY: This is just like what God gave Gideon and Moses and Jeremiah. He gave them a call with a promise to be with them.

- (1) This is your call: *To go and make disciples.*
- (2) This is His promise: "*I am with you always, to the end of the age.*"

BIBLE LESSON—part 2

- *What happened next in the story of Gideon?*

SAY: He brought an offering of a goat and unleavened bread. The Angel of the Lord told him to put it on a rock and fire came up out of the rock and consumed it. This is a picture of God's plan for you:

- (1) Gideon brought an offering: Bring your life as an offering to God. (Romans 12:1 says to "*present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God...*")
- (2) He put the offering on the rock: Build your life on the Rock, who is Christ. (1 Peter 2:6-7 says that Jesus is "*a chosen and valuable cornerstone, and the one who believes in Him will never be put to shame...The stone that the builders rejected—this One has become the cornerstone.*" The cornerstone is the most important part of the building. It was the beginning point from which everything else is built and centered and although the Jews rejected Christ, He is the cornerstone on which our lives are built and patterned.)
- (3) Fire consumed it: Let Jesus consume your life. (Hebrews 12:28-29, says, "*Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us hold on to grace. By it, we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire.*")

SAY: When something is consumed it is totally swallowed up and changed. Let your life be consumed by Jesus. Let him burn away anything that doesn't belong so that you may live a life that is pleasing to Him and it all begins with your willingness.

Think about it:

- *How willing are you to surrender everything in your life to Jesus today—Are you willing to say, "Yes" to Him even before you know what He is calling you to do?*
- *Are you willing to be used by Him?*
- *Are you willing to surrender all to Him?*
- *Are you willing to lay your life as a sacrifice to Him?*

WRAP IT UP

Prayer Time

SAY: Spend some time thinking this week about God's call for you, about why He created you. Take a look at how willing your heart is and consider the idea that once all of you is consumed, all that is left is Him and His promise of "I will be with you." Think about what this means for your life.

Pray specifically today that your students will be willing to be the fuel to be used by God however, whenever, wherever and in whatever way He desires.

List prayer requests below and on the back of this page and pray for your students throughout the week. *Ask if any of your students want to pray today.*

Prayer Requests