

What Does Pride Have to Do With It? - A lesson from the life of Gideon!

Let's Think About It.....

- Think of a time when you did something really awesome ... (maybe a sports or academic achievement, maybe helped a child or senior adult in your neighborhood, or maybe lead someone to Christ) ... how did it make you feel?
 - What went through your mind when you were recognized?

And/or...

- Describe a time when you won an award (or describe a hypothetical time, i.e. Academy Award; American Idol winner; Nobel Peace Prize) ...
 - Write your acceptance speech and be prepared to share with others (if setting and time permits)
 - Who did you thank?? And why??

Focus on the truth

Background passage – Judges 6-8

Focal passage – Judges 22-27

Background Info recap ...

During a time when the Israelites had strayed from God and were worshipping false gods the Lord called Gideon to be the one that would save Israel from the Midianites. Gideon was humbled that the Lord had chosen him since he was from a poor family. Yet the Lord had told Gideon He would be with him. In his own insecurities, Gideon wanted a sign from the Lord to assure him that he was truly the one the Lord wanted to save the Israelites from the hands of the Midianites. Therefore, Gideon put out a fleece to test the Lord. The Lord led Gideon through the process of reducing his army to keep them from believing they won over the Midianites due to their own strength. Once the army was reduced to 300 soldiers, the Lord gave the Midianites into Gideon's hands.

Application from Gideon's life ... (the rest of the story)

- The Israelites were pleased with the success Gideon had in saving them out of the hand of Midian
- They asked Gideon to “rule over us”
- Gideon refused saying “the Lord will rule over you.”
- However, he had one request, that each one of them give him an earring from their share of the plunder that was received.
- He received a total of seventeen hundred shekels (roughly 43 pounds of gold), not counting the pendants and the purple garments worn by the kings of Midian or the chains on the camels' necks.
- Gideon made the gold into an ephod.
 - According to the International Standard Bible Dictionary: The ephod was a priestly garment and/or an item of worship. The same holds good of the ephod made by Gideon, and which became an object of idolatrous worship in Israel (Judges 8:27).
- The Israelites “prostituted” themselves by worshipping the ephod.
- It became a “snare” to Gideon and his family.

And what does this mean for me...

In thinking about those times of special rewards or recognition, have you ever forgotten the purpose?

It is very possible that Gideon got caught up in the moment and unintentionally forgot who REALLY delivered the Midianites into the hands of the Israelite army. Gideon was a good warrior, humble before the Lord with the best of intentions. But...he really seemed to like the recognition that came following the defeat of the Midianites.

What's pride got to do with it???

- Pride can cause us to forget our mission and goal.
- We sometimes forget who really led that mission trip. (Even if you were the team leader, God is in control)

Look at the following verses and talk to God about keeping personal pride out of the picture:

1 Corinthians 10:31 – So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

Colossians 3:23 – Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men.

1 Peter 4:11 - If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

Prayer –

God give me the strength to pursue you and serve you without any recognition or praise coming to me. May all I do be to your glory; may you be seen in me. Amen.