

Gideon's Greatest Strength

Judges 6

Question: What is it about your _____ that can only be explained by the supernatural work of God? You know beyond a shadow, that God and God alone has done and is doing a supernatural work in and through you!

Are you like me, highly impressed with what humans can do? God's not impressed—He created human ability—but we are. However, in the realm where our work on earth eternally lasts, human ability and what humans do with human ability is _____ at all amazing.

James Truslow Adams is credited with coining that phrase “American Dream” in 1931. Those who buy into it as a philosophy of life, place their entire faith in their own ability. David Platt wrote on this subject in his book **Radical**: “As far as the American Dream goes, we [in America] can do anything that we set our minds to accomplish. There is no limit to what we can accomplish when we combine ingenuity, imagination, and innovation with skill and hard work. We can earn any degree, start any business, climb any ladder, attain any prize and achieve any goal...and [even Christians] are drawn toward such thinking.”

Human ability is amazing. But a dangerous assumption of the American-Dream-mindset is this: *our greatest asset is our own _____*. Actually, if your dream is to make a lot of money and get ahead in this life, then, yes, it is your greatest asset. But what if you have instead the competing Heavenly Dream of going to heaven when you die immeasurably rich toward God, having lived a life that pursued pleasing and glorifying Him rather than seeking your own self-gratification and glory? What if God, Heaven, and His glory are your goals? What if being holy and obedient is your present pursuit? What if you desire above all else to be spiritually effective, fruitful, and pleasing to God by being a blessing and benefit to His people?

John 15:5: "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing." When we desire to know spiritual and eternal powerfulness,

effectiveness, and fruitfulness, it is ever true: _____ *from you abiding in Jesus Christ and Him abiding in you, apart from His spiritual life and power flowing in you and through you, you can do nothing*—nothing—not even one thing! Suddenly we realize that our human ability without Christ’s abiding power and grace amounts to nothing.

Consequently, God intentionally puts us in situations where we come face to face with our desperate need for Him. And in the end, we exalt in our inability, we cling to the Vine, and He makes much of His own name in and through us. So, do you know what it is to desperately need and depend on Him? Gideon did.

Gideon’s call to be God’s deliverer from oppression:

- 1. The _____ of Israel’s cycle (1-6).**
- 2. The critical _____ for the upswing to begin (7-10).**
- 3. Meet Gideon in a _____ (12-14).**
- 4. The reason God _____ Gideon (15-23).**

Gideon so doubted himself, God, and God’s call on his life that he put the Lord to the test a couple more times. You’ll remember the two tests of “the fleece” beginning in verse 36. So, when God finally restored Gideon’s broken faith to the point where he agreed to be God’s man to deliver Israel from the Midianites, Gideon became the leader of a 32,000-man army. But God whittled that number down to 300, saying to Gideon in **Judges 7:2...**

To make a long story short, the Lord defeated the vast Midianite army... How vast? (**7:12**). The Lord defeated the Midianites and their allies with 300 men who blew trumpets, smashed jars, held up torches, and cried out, “A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!” (**7:20**).

God exalted Gideon’s inability, intentionally putting him in a place where he came face to face with his desperate need for God. And in

that kind of situation, God is able to make much of His own name, even in a man like Gideon! And even in someone like _____!

When Israel came to Gideon and said, "Rule over us...*for you have saved us from the hand of Midian,*" Gideon made this great statement: "**I will not rule over you...the LORD will rule over you**" (8:23), knowing that it was God alone who delivered them from oppression. Doesn't that sound like what the Christian life and Christian ministry is all about?

Maybe we ought to pray about it!

Imagine having to depend on God because of an inability... God has given me a great _____. When I knew God was calling me into pastoral ministry, I knew that I had no intrinsic ability to be an effective, fruitful pastor who shepherds God's people to God's glory. I was more like Gideon than I wanted to admit. "Lord, look at me! Are you sure I can do this ministry?" It is *the Gideon-complex*: "Behold, I'm the least in Manasseh!" My greatest asset: _____.

For those of you who have great human ability, learn from the naturally gifted apostle Paul. God gave him a painful thorn in the flesh *to keep him from exalting himself*. Paul needed to know that his human ability *alone* counted as nothing in God's kingdom. So after imploring the Lord three times to remove the thorn, the Lord said to him, "No, for My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in _____ weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9). And the lights came on! Fully enlightened, Paul responded, "Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me." And in the end, Jesus made much of His own name through Paul's ministry.

And now coupled with His supernatural divine might, even our limited ability is no longer an issue. Finally, He is able to make much of His name through our inadequacy. May spiritual lights come on for you! Then the only explanation for all that you are and do will be His presence and power in you.