

Gideon's Mistake

Judges 8:24

Yet Gideon said to them, "I would request of you, that each of you give me an earring from his spoil." (For they had gold earrings, because they were Ishmaelites.)²⁵ They said, "We will surely give *them*." So they spread out a garment, and every one of them threw an earring there from his spoil.²⁶ The weight of the gold earrings that he requested was 1,700 *shekels* of gold, besides the crescent ornaments and the pendants and the purple robes which *were* on the kings of Midian, and besides the neck bands that *were* on their camels' necks.²⁷ Gideon made it into an ephod, and placed it in his city, Ophrah, and all Israel played the harlot with it there, so that it became a snare to Gideon and his household.

Here in the book of Judges our beloved brother Gideon has gone in the power of the Spirit and strength of the LORD and defeated the kings of Midian. Wow! That must have been a glorious victory celebration! Most of us have read the story about how Gideon won this battle with 300 men against a great host of Midianites.

I read in earlier verses that there were two kings of Midian. Midian means strife and contention. Were these men representing strife and contention? I believe that is exactly what these men represent. Gideon fought against much strife and contention. By the Spirit of the LORD, he prevailed. Are any of you battling against these guys? These are not actual people today, but evil spirits sent by our enemy. He sends these spirits to us so that we will put our focus on them instead of the great commission.

How did Gideon defeat these evil men? He followed the directions that God gave him. He had a 300-man army that God selected for him. Then he was instructed to take only a trumpet, a pitcher, and a lamp. What does this mean? How can you defeat the kings of strife and contention in your life?

The trumpet is the shofar of your spirit—your voice. Use your voice to sound the battle cry. Use your voice to shout to the LORD. The Israelites blew the shofar of their spirits when they shouted down the walls of Jericho. Shout from the north, south, east and west. Shout! Where are the intercessors who will cry aloud and weep for God's people? Where are those who will pour out their hearts like water before the LORD with weeping and wailing?

The pitcher is the vessel of your body. When Gideon's army surrounded the Midianites, they broke their vessels and created a great noise. When was the last time you broke your vessel? If you want to defeat the strife and contention in your life, you must break your own vessel. Have you fasted? Have you prayed? Have you offered up a sacrifice of praise unto the LORD? Or like most people do you stay focused on the strife and contention? Our brother Paul said that if we mortify or kill the deeds of the flesh we shall live. We must put to death every earthly desire and fleshly intention. Only those with clean hands AND a pure heart shall come to the Holy Hill of the LORD. Break your vessel.

What happened when the vessels were broken? It made a great noise that confused the enemy. Can we as a body, break our vessels and confuse the enemy? Can we die-to-self long enough to win this battle of contention and strife in our Father's house? There is an enemy encamped in the land our Father gave us—His land. Let's face it. There is strife and contention in the church. Not only strife and contention but hosts of other ungodly, unholy spirits as well.

The light or lamp that Gideon took is a picture of the Holy Spirit and the Light of God's Word. We must not fight with our own words, sending ourselves, but fight with the Word of God. The light confused the darkness and where the light is, the darkness must flee! Are things a little dim around you? Get more oil in your lamp and light it up! Let the Light arise and shine forth! Are you lighting up the darkness? Does the room brighten up when you walk in? Are you penetrating the darkness with the light that is within you? Can they see your light? If you are contentious or have strife in your heart, you are a part of the darkness. Darkness and light have no fellowship.

The enemy awoke out of their sleep to an explosion of sound, light and movement coming at them from every side. Strife and contention thought they were surrounded by an army even bigger than they were! Even though Gideon's army was just a few, they followed the directions of the Holy Spirit and prevailed. The purple robes of royalty that rested upon the shoulders of strife and contention were stripped and laid at the feet of their conquerer.

What was the error of Gideon's ways? He erected a monument or a memorial to remember the battle. He should have built an altar and offered up a sacrifice of praise, but instead he chose to remember what was behind. The Israelites began to worship the emblem of the battle instead of the Deliverer. God's directions for building an altar are simple—make a pile of rocks and sacrifice there. The focus is not to be on the altar, but on the receiver of the sacrifice. Let's keep our focus totally on HIM! Do not get caught up in the past—move on to your future in God!