

Chapter 8 Lessons and Principles:

1. Don't covet recognition for yourself, rather than expressing joy accomplishing a task for the Lord. The **men of Ephraim** seem to have cared more about recognition than the overall good of Israel. Instead of being jealous about the recognition that others received, they should have been happy that God's people were rescued and that had some part in the victory. Jealousy often hinders the work of God.
2. Use of diplomacy and tact, can accomplish more than anger and harsh words. (Proverbs 15:1) *A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger.* Like Gideon's response to the Ephraimites jealous criticism of Gideon for not calling them to the original battle.
3. If we give ourselves wholly to God's work, we will never get tired of it, though we may often get tired in it. I remind you of the comment by Charles Spurgeon - "If you, dear brethren and sisters, will give yourselves wholly to God's work, although you will never get tired of it, you will often get tired in it. If a man has never tired himself with working for God, I should think he never has done any work that was worth doing." (Spurgeon)
4. When we set out to do the Lord's work, often the resistance we face is from our friends or family. We can't allow this to hinder or discourage our work. Remember the people of Peniel and Succoth, refused to give aid to Gideon and his men. They didn't want to give aid to Gideon until they knew for sure he was the victor, so they were in essence allying themselves against God. So, when someone is called by God to do a task or mission, we should never discourage them, but encourage them.
5. If we detour or compromise just ever so slightly from what God's Word allows, we are headed for trouble. Gideon made the ephod from the spoils, probably solid gold ephod, maybe to mimic the one worn by Aaron and to remind to people to worship God, but it didn't turn out that way – they began to worship the image instead of God. Artistic beauty has a way of impressing us and giving a sense of awe, but it is not necessarily a godly impression or awe. Many times, it can distract our focus from the LORD. In contrast to this ephod, God commanded that His altars be made of unfinished stone (Exodus 20:25), so that no one's attention was focused on the beauty of the stone carver's work
6. It isn't enough for us to begin well with God. We must continue on throughout our whole Christian life and finish strong. Gideon, in his later years, had to *look back* to see anything done for God. All those works were in the past.