

Three Forgotten Faces

Have you ever noticed how much community work is done by volunteers? Much of the work in our congregation is done by volunteers. In fact, if it were not for so many hard working members, our congregation would be in bad shape! But just as community organizations and churches actively seek volunteers, God also recruited those willing to serve Him. Judges 3:8-31 tells of three judges or leaders who were used by God at a time when they were most needed.

First, there was Othniel, the "reusable judge". Many people hit a certain age and think that their work is done for the Lord. They often "retire" without the Lord ever telling them to retire. There are others, however, who are reusable. They have been used by God in the past, but keep on volunteering until they are no longer able. Othniel had been used by the Lord earlier and was a proven conqueror (Joshua 15:17-19; Judges 1:9-15), and he was used again, as mentioned in this passage. Older members can be such an asset to a congregation when they are optimistic and peaceable. They leave such a good and godly heritage. This is not so with the pessimistic and contentious brother or sister! Their "usableness" has disappeared.

Second, there was Ehud, the "reflective judge". Serving the Lord often takes thought. A congregation needs a plan in order to get the job done. Ehud developed a plan that used his job of delivering money to the king, his being left-handed, his locking some doors, and calling together Israel to fight. It was a successful plan because God was in it, and it was a well-thought plan. Churches benefit so much from having good plans and proper goals. Members should diligently help the congregation both to set and to accomplish goals for future growth and spiritual development.

Third, there was Shamgar, the "resourceful judge". Shamgar's name is only mentioned twice in the Bible, but he teaches us an important lesson. We should use what we have in order to volunteer for God's service. Shamgar used an ox goad, an instrument used to prod oxen, in order to defeat 600 Philistines and deliver Israel. Sometimes we do not have everything we want, but we must make do with what we have. We may not get to teach everyone we would like under the best circumstances, but we do what we can.

God expects us to use what we have in order to serve Him. This is called proper stewardship (1 Peter 4:10). Every congregation must have brethren who are devoted to the task of being the best stewards possible. When we

all practice good stewardship, even those who cannot do much can really be a great help to the Lord's work.

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