Teen Connect
First Presbyterian Church Sarasota

God's Strange Playbook

July 20, 2025 // Judges 7:1-8, 16-23

Case Study: The 300

The Situation: Gideon, now leading Israel, gathers a massive army of 32,000 soldiers. They're outnumbered, but it's a respectable force.

The Twist (Judges 7:2-8): God tells Gideon, "You have too many men." He worries that if they win, they'll claim the victory for themselves instead of giving God the credit. So, God has Gideon shrink the army. First, anyone who is afraid can leave—22,000 men go home. Then, God has him take the remaining 10,000 to the water for a final test. Only those who lap water from their hands like a dog (staying alert) are chosen. The final number? 300 men.

The Plan: God's battle plan is even stranger than His team selection. The 300 men are armed with trumpets, empty clay pots, and torches. They surround the enemy camp at night. On signal, they blow the trumpets, smash the pots, reveal the torches, and shout. The enemy army panics, turns on itself, and flees in chaos. The victory is total, and totally God's.

Rank It

When facing a major challenge, rank what you trust most (1 = most, 3 = least).

— **Your own talent, logic, and strength.**

— **The advice and support of a large group of your friends/peers.**

— **A plan that feels illogical but you believe is from God.**

Unconventional Tools

God used trumpets and torches instead of swords and shields. What's an "unconventional" gift, talent, or personality trait you have? (e.g., being a good listener, having a weird sense of humor, being really organized). How could God use that in a surprising way?

The "Trust the Play" Challenge

This week, when you face a problem (an argument, a tough assignment, a conflict), your instinct might be to use overwhelming force—argue louder, study longer, try to control the situation.

The challenge is to **pause and ask, "What is God's 'foolish' way to handle this?"** This could mean choosing kindness over winning an argument, taking a break instead of grinding to exhaustion, or admitting you don't have control. Try it once and see what happens.

Key Takeaway:
God's power is most visible when our strength is out of the picture.