



# MEN OF COURAGE

BIBLE STUDY OF JOSHUA & GIDEON



This series we're looking at the lives of two men who took bold steps for God and changed the lives of the Israelites, in spite of the fear they felt – Joshua and Gideon.

Both realised that in their own strength they were ill-equipped to fulfil the assignment God gave them and so relied heavily on God to succeed. Yes, mistakes were made and they had to be encouraged over and over not to be afraid even as they moved forward. Very normal people like you and I, so we have a lot to learn from them.

I pray this study blesses you and positively impacts every aspect of your life.



## Day 1

### The Assignment

Moses the leader of Israel has died and it's now Joshua's responsibility to take the children of Israel across the Jordan into the promised land. How did Joshua even get here? Let's go back a few chapters to when Moses anointed Joshua.

'So the Lord said to Moses, "Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit of leadership, and lay your hand on him. He is to stand before Eleazar the priest, who will obtain decisions for him by inquiring of the Urim before the Lord . At his command he and the entire community of the Israelites will go out, and at his command they will come in."  
Numbers 27:18,21

Even though Moses had two sons, neither of them was made his successor even though they may have been the logical options. Joshua was just his assistant (Joshua 1:1). But Joshua was the one who stood at the entrance of the tent when Moses went in and came out. Joshua was the one who climbed the mountain with Moses and waited for him to return from communing with God. God saw all that Joshua did quietly and took note of him.

When it was time to select the successor to Moses, God Himself picked Joshua. When it's time for God to select someone for an assignment, He doesn't look at the outward things, but the state of the person's heart.

**Reflect:** Whose assignment are you completing – yours or the Lord's? If it's God's assignment, know for a fact that He chose you specifically and has equipped and guaranteed your success, provided you make your decisions based on His instructions.

## Day 2

### Strength and Courage

The Lord's choice of words in His encouragement of Joshua in Chapter 1 gives us an indication of how He wants us to approach life – with strength and courage. But how?

"Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. ' Joshua 1:7-8

God has built in success in every area of our lives in His word. Therefore, His expectation of us is not rely solely on our head knowledge, training, skill sets, social network, etc. It's possible to have all these and more and still lack the courage to move forward in life.

Courage is not the absence of fear, it's moving in faith, taking action and walking in obedience in spite of the fear. Joshua was clearly very afraid, and God showed him that his success in military exploits and leading the people didn't lie in having a good military strategy, but in following His laws.

God's word brings strength, favour, direction, clarity, sound counsel and so much more into our lives. Yes, we should exercise our brains and plan and have strategies and goals, but we should also recognise that the power to succeed in whatever we have planned comes from God and God alone.

**Prayer:** Let's pray as David did in Psalm 121 – I lift up my eyes to the hills from where shall my help come? My help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth.

## Day 3

### Take Action

When it was time to survey the land they were to take possession of, the Israelites were given refuge by a prostitute called Rahab (Joshua 2:2), who took a huge risk in sheltering the men as it was a treasonable offence punishable by death.

Her courage to take such a risk came from the fact that she recognised all that the Lord had done for Israel and she acknowledged that the Lord had given Israel the land and it was a matter of time before they took possession. So she wisely negotiated protection for herself and her family (Joshua 2:9-13).

The remarkable thing about Rahab's act of faith isn't just that she shielded the Israelites and diverted the men pursuing them. As soon as the men left her house, she immediately tied the scarlet cord in the window as agreed with the men. This act of faith showed two things:

- One is that she really believed Jericho would fall to the Israelites
- Second is that the belief spurred her to immediate action.

She didn't wait for the battle to start before tying the cord, Rahab had received a revelation of God that spurred her to take immediate action. Her act of faith earned her a mention in the lineage of Jesus ('Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab, Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth, Obed the father of Jesse...' Matthew 1:5). She's mentioned again in James 4:25 'Likewise was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way?'

**Question:** What revelation have you received and what action have you taken based on it? Courage is not an end in itself, it must lead you to take action.

## Day 4

### Unfamiliar Territory

When the time came to cross the Jordan river, God instructed that the Ark go ahead of the Israelites because the Ark was to set the pace and direction for them to follow.

'Do not come near it, that you may know the way by which you must go, for you have not passed *this way* before' (Joshua3: 4b)

Everyday represents a new way we have not passed before, a new journey through life. While we may have some clarity about yesterday, we can't know by ourselves what today and the future will hold. Fear of the unknown paralyses so many people because they have built so much fear into the future. Their minds have calculated everything that could possibly go wrong, and they have convinced themselves that it will go wrong.

But God hasn't given us a spirit of fear, but of power, love and a sound mind (2 Tim:1:7). We can only have complete assurance and confidence in the future when we let God lead us. He is the Alpha and Omega, there's nothing that's going to happen to you (even your mistakes and missteps) that He hasn't already seen and created a path of success for.

Our courage doesn't come from our being perfect, but in trusting the Lord to lead us along the best pathways for our lives (Ps 32:8).

**Reflect:** What are you trusting your future in? And if you've stopped hoping for the future, can you go through God's word and believe Him again? Ask the Holy Spirit to help you trust Him.

## Day 5

### Seen and Unseen

The Lord said to Joshua that He would begin to exalt him (Joshua) as he led the Israelites across the Jordan. Oftentimes the breakthrough we're looking for comes in the form of a challenge, which is really an opportunity for God to exalt us in disguise.

Nether Joshua nor the Israelites had passed this way before, yet Joshua was responsible for giving them specific instructions on how to cross successfully. Once Joshua obeyed what God had told him to do, the miraculous began. We're told that this crossing occurred during the time the Jordan was at flood stage, so the water was even higher than normal.

In our current day this could represent a more challenging than normal situation in your life. Things are just tighter than usual, you're more stretched than ever. Yet, behind the scenes God was at work.

'Now the Jordan is at flood stage all during harvest. Yet as soon as the priests who carried the ark reached the Jordan and their feet touched the water's edge, the water from upstream stopped flowing. It piled up in a heap a great distance away, at a town called Adam in the vicinity of Zarethan, while the water flowing down to the Sea of the Arabah (that is, the Dead Sea) was completely cut off. So the people crossed over opposite Jericho.' Joshua 3:15-16

As soon as the priests' feet touched the water's edge, the miracles started. While the Israelites were taking steps of faith, God was sorting things out a great distance away so they would cross safely on dry ground. At the time God gave Joshua the instruction to cross the Jordan, He didn't go into specifics as to how He would help them cross, but Joshua trusted God and moved.

There is a lot God does behind the scenes when we begin to take steps of faith. Let's be encouraged by this to not move back into fear just because we don't immediately see God's hand at work. He is always working things out for our good.

**Reflect:** And we know that in *all things* God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28)



## Day 6

### Remembrance

'For the Lord your God dried up the Jordan before you until you had crossed over. The Lord your God did to the Jordan what he had done to the Red Sea when he dried it up before us until we had crossed over. He did this so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the Lord is powerful and so that you might always fear the Lord your God.'" (Joshua 4:23-24).

God understands that we can be quick to forget what He's done for us, especially in the face of ongoing challenges. That's why He had the Israelites set up a memorial, not just for themselves, but so their descendants would also know what God had done for them.

Think about whatever issue(s) you are facing right this minute. Now think back to what you considered your challenges this time three years ago. I am certain that you are not facing the exact same issues today. Now ask yourself – "If God was able to deliver me from those issues then, why will He not be able to do so now?" The truth is in life there will always be challenges. That's why Jesus tells us in John 16:33 that in this world we will have trouble, but we should be courageous because He has overcome the world.

One of the tools to remain courageous is to do what the Israelites did and remember what God has done for you in the past. Recall all the past victories, big and small and realign your perspective: God is the same yesterday, today and forever. Your challenges don't surprise or limit Him in any way.

**Action Step:** Make a conscious effort to document all God has done for you in the past, and at the end of each day/week/month also journal what He's doing for you now. Whenever you're feeling overwhelmed or fearful, go through your journal and remind yourself of who your God is.



## Day 7

### Consecration

After the Israelites crossed the Jordan, the Lord asked them to circumcise the Israelites – the men who left Egypt were circumcised, but those born in the wilderness hadn't been. Circumcision was a condition of the covenant God made with Abraham and this generation had to fulfil it in order to enter the land promised to them.

Through the act of circumcision, God rolled away the reproach of Egypt (Joshua 5:9). Note also that once the Israelites ate the food from the land, manna stopped coming (Joshua 5:12), also signalling the beginning of a new season for them. There are many things we may be asking God to either bring us out from or take us into just like the Israelites.

Today God is asking that we circumcise our hearts – intentionally cutting off the parts of our lives, character and behaviour patterns that are not pleasing to Him. We know where we have issues, and God is asking that we lay these at His feet and walk in obedience, so He can fulfil His covenant to us.

In Joshua 5:14-15 we see a remarkable thing after Joshua had acted in obedience to all the instructions he'd received from God. He receives a visitation from the Commander of the Lord ready to battle on Israel's behalf. When we walk in obedience, God begins to move mightily on our behalf – whether we're aware of it or not.

**Reflect:** “Then Samuel said: Does the LORD take pleasure in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the LORD? Look: to obey is better than sacrifice, to pay attention is better than the fat of rams.” (1 Samuel 15:22 CSB)

## Day 8

### Lesson in Obedience

'Then the Lord said to Joshua, "See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men. ' Joshua 6:2

When Joshua and his men laid siege on Jericho, they were fighting from the vantage point of victory because God had already delivered Jericho to them. All they needed to do was obey God's instructions. I am sure it would have been tempting to follow their own battle strategy – after all God had already given them the land right?

But this was a lesson for Israel, not in battle strategy, but in unity and obedience to God's word. For 6 days no one uttered a word while they marched round Jericho's walls. And then on the 7<sup>th</sup> day, the story changed.

'When the trumpets sounded, the army shouted, and at the sound of the trumpet, when the men gave a loud shout, the wall collapsed; so everyone charged straight in, and they took the city. ' Joshua 6:20

Shouting men and blasting trumpets led to falling walls – a divine response to an act of obedience.

Oftentimes God gives us the victory, but He doesn't tell us how He will carry it out. This is because He expects us to seek Him for the strategy and obey the instructions He gives us whether they make sense to us or not. Remember He sees the end from the beginning and he will not share His glory with anyone. Do not ever make the mistake of thinking you have God all figured out, but be open to trusting and obeying.

**Reflect:** Do you actively take time to seek God's instructions in all things, not just when you're faced with a challenge? Do you obey the instructions you receive?

## Day 9

### Deceptive Appearances

“He (Joshua) is to stand before Eleazar the priest, who will obtain decisions for him by inquiring of the Urim before the LORD.” Numbers 27:21a

“The Israelites sampled their provisions but did not inquire of the LORD. Then Joshua made a treaty of peace with them to let them live, and the leaders of the assembly ratified it by oath” Joshua 9:14-15

When Joshua was anointed to lead Israel, God’s instruction to him was very clear: Joshua was get direction from God for ALL decisions. In Joshua 9 we see how the Gibeonites put together a very elaborate ruse to protect themselves from being attacked by Israel. The deception was so convincing that not only did Israel make a treaty with them, it was ratified by the leaders – which means everybody was deceived. A few days later the deception was discovered, but it was too late to do anything about it at this point – they had sworn an oath to protect the Gibeonites.

Just like the Israelites, how often have we been deceived by what seemed to be one thing but turned out to be something else? People who act in one way, but their motives are really something else. People who present a part of a picture, without telling us the entire story. Based on what we see, hear, we make decisions and by the time we find out the truth, it is often too late to extract ourselves from the situation.

God didn’t design our lives to be a guessing game. In John 14:26, Jesus tells us, “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.”

The Holy Spirit is available to us as God’s children to teach us ALL things. Even when things aren’t as they appear, the Spirit that knows all things will direct us accordingly, but only if we ask Him to guide us and actually do what He says.

**Action step:** Commit to inquiring of God before you make any decisions – from something as ‘small’ as what to do with your day, to larger decisions. Commit to making this a lifestyle so it becomes second nature to inquire of God for everything. It’s the safest thing to do.



## Day 10

### The Silent Victories

There are so many battles God fights for us that we're not even aware of – some we may eventually get to know about, most we will not.

In Joshua 10, 5 kings had gathered together to attack Gibeon for aligning with Israel. This was really Gibeon's battle, but Israel was called in to protect Gibeon because of the treaty they made with them. As we discussed yesterday, we need to be careful what alliances we get ourselves into because the price of such an alliance may not be immediately apparent to us.

Nevertheless, when Israel rose to defend Gibeon the Lord confirmed His support, promising them victory (Joshua 10:8-10). This was the Lord's battle, so the miraculous happened:

"The LORD threw them into confusion before Israel" (Joshua 10:10a)

"...the LORD hurled large hailstones down on them, and more of them died from the hail than were killed by the swords of the Israelites." (Joshua 10:11a)

'So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, till the nation avenged itself on its enemies, as it is written in the Book of Jashar. The sun stopped in the middle of the sky and delayed going down about a full day. ' (Joshua 10:13)

When God is fighting for you, there's no human intellect that can fathom how the victory will occur. But you must be in a position that will let God fight on your behalf. Recall how the Israelites were defeated in the battle against Ai because one of the Israelites had disobeyed God's instructions (Joshua 7). Victory only came after the sin had been dealt with.

**Reflect:** Before you ask God to move on your behalf examine yourself – where have you gotten it wrong, where are you walking in disobedience to God's instructions. Come to God in true repentance, ask for forgiveness and walk away from the sins He highlights to you. Then see how God will move mightily on your behalf.

## Day 11

### Giants to Grasshoppers

In Joshua 11:6, God told Joshua He had given Israel victory and gave specific instructions for the battle against the kings of Northern Canaan. This was important because the armies coming against Joshua was “a huge army, as numerous as the sand on the seashore.” (Joshua 11:4). Yet God told the Israelites not to be afraid, because He knows that there’s no power that can withstand him. When the Israelites received their victory as promised, Joshua did exactly what God instructed him to do (Joshua 11:9).

Compare this with when Moses asked the Israelites to spy out the land of Canaan, they brought back a bad report also saying, “We saw the Nephilim there (the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim). We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them.” Numbers 13:33

In Joshua 11 however, we see that because Joshua trusted in God and followed His instructions, he defeated the same Anakites that had caused so much fear. 'At that time Joshua went and destroyed the Anakites from the hill country: from Hebron, Debir and Anab, from all the hill country of Judah, and from all the hill country of Israel. Joshua totally destroyed them and their towns. No Anakites were left in Israelite territory; only in Gaza, Gath and Ashdod did any survive. ' Joshua 11:21-22

We must realise that if God has asked us to do something, we shouldn't rely on ourselves for the strategy to get it done. Between the multitude of armies and giants, it's so easy to lose faith and cower in defeat. But if God has given you the land, rest assured that you will have your victory.

**Action step:** What challenge are you facing now that looks like a giant before you? Bring it before God and ask Him for His strategy – what is His will concerning the matter and what would He have you do about it? Then follow His instructions – that's the only place where the victory is.

## Day 12

### No Time to Waste

In recounting the victories Israel won under Joshua's leadership in Joshua 12 we see that 31 kings in all were defeated. However, Joshua 13 opens with an interesting comment from God: 'When Joshua had grown old, the Lord said to him, "You are now very old, and there are still very large areas of land to be taken over. ' Joshua 13:1

Joshua was too old to command the armies to take over the remaining portions of the land so God said, "I myself will drive them out before the Israelites." (Joshua 13:6b). from this point on Joshua's responsibility was to share the land allotted to the various tribes of Israel. In spite of all his zeal, commitment and obedience, Joshua got to the point where he was simply too old to be effective on the battle field. He won many battles but there was still much left undone, and he didn't have the physical capacity to battle effectively anymore.

This should be a lesson to us that there's really no time to waste. Whatever it is we have been putting off until later – I will get more serious about God when I finish school/start work/get married/have kids/; when the kids are older and finish school; when I retire. We need to realise that even if we have the gift of life and good health at this point, we may just be physically or mentally incapable of fulfilling our full potential by the date we're postponing to.

Whatever needs to be done start today. The less you do now, the more you'll be leaving undone in your latter days.

**Prayer:** Teach me Lord to number my days that I may obtain a heart of wisdom.

## Day 13

### Take the Land

When Joshua was distributing the land to the tribes of Israel, 85-year-old Caleb stepped up, 'Now give me this hill country that the Lord promised me that day. You yourself heard then that the Anakites were there and their cities were large and fortified, but, the Lord helping me, I will drive them out just as he said.' Joshua 14:12

The daughters of Zelophehad also stepped up, 'They went to Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun, and the leaders and said, "The Lord commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our relatives." So Joshua gave them an inheritance along with the brothers of their father, according to the Lord 's command. ' Joshua 17:4

When it came to the people of Joseph, they complained that they were more numerous than their allotment, 'The people of Joseph replied, "The hill country is not enough for us, and all the Canaanites who live in the plain have chariots fitted with iron, both those in Beth Shan and its settlements and those in the Valley of Jezreel." ' Joshua 17:16

"If you are so numerous," Joshua answered, "and if the hill country of Ephraim is too small for you, go up into the forest and clear land for yourselves there in the land of the Perizzites and Rephaites." But Joshua said to the tribes of Joseph—to Ephraim and Manasseh—"You are numerous and very powerful. You will have not only one allotment but the forested hill country as well. Clear it, and its farthest limits will be yours; though the Canaanites have chariots fitted with iron and though they are strong, you can drive them out." Joshua 17:17-18

Contrast the two initial responses with that of the people of Joseph. While Caleb and the daughters of Zelophehad were focused on taking the land, the people of Joseph were more focused on the challenges they'd face.

It got to the point where Joshua had to say to the Israelites: "How long will you wait before you begin to take possession of the land that the Lord, the God of your ancestors, has given you? ' Joshua 18:3

**Question:** What are you waiting for before you move forward this year? How long will you wait before you begin to make this year productive? Time waits for no one....

## Day 14

### Choose Whom to Serve

'You yourselves have seen everything the Lord your God has done to all these nations for your sake; it was the Lord your God who fought for you. ' Joshua 23:3

“Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. 'Joshua 1:7

As Joshua gave his farewell message to the leaders of Israel, he echoed the very words God spoke to him when he first began the journey of taking over the promised land. “Be very strong; be careful to obey all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, without turning aside to the right or to the left. ' Joshua 23:6

He had seen first-hand that God is faithful to keep His promises and He had given Israel victory in taking over Canaan. As such, he could encourage the leaders and all of Israel from the perspective of having experienced God’s faithfulness and mighty power to deliver.

He further admonishes Israel to choose to serve the Lord, reminding them of His benefits, and the consequences of disobedience. 'But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord .” ' Joshua 24:15

Joshua lived for 110 years, during that time he saw what God did for Israel in delivering them from Egypt, preserving them in the wilderness and giving them the victory in taking possession of the promised land. So when he spoke, it was from a place of experience of walking closely with God.

The God that fought the many battles for Israel and delivered them miraculously is the same yesterday, today and forever. The benefits of obedience to Him and consequences for disobedience remain to this day. The choice is ours.

**Reflect:** Choose this day who you will serve.



## Day 15

### Israel after Joshua

'When the Israelites cried out to the Lord because of Midian, he sent them a prophet, who said, "This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: I brought you up out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. I rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians. And I delivered you from the hand of all your oppressors; I drove them out before you and gave you their land. I said to you, 'I am the Lord your God; do not worship the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you live.' But you have not listened to me." Judges 6:7-10

When Joshua and the generation of men who were with him when the Lord delivered Canaan into their hands died, the Bible records that the subsequent generation didn't have any knowledge of God or what He had done for Israel (Judges 2:10).

In Judges 6 we see that Israel had turned to idolatry and so God delivered them into the hands of the Midianites: those they should have driven out of the land began to oppress them heavily, ravaging Israel's harvests, leaving them nothing to live on. (Judges 6:3-6). It was a dire situation.

The generations that came after Joshua's death had walked away from God and entered idolatry. They simply didn't know what God had done for their forefathers, which means very few people made the effort to consistently share the knowledge of God with the younger generations. Those who had experienced God's might first hand didn't enforce the importance of obedience to His word to future generations.

**Reflect:** It may be easy for us to chastise the Israelites for forgetting all the miracles that God worked for them. But before we do, think back to all the things God has done for you, as far back as you can remember. Now ask yourself: "Have I been as faithful to God as He has been to me?"

Also ask yourself: "How diligent have I been in sharing God's goodness, mercy, love and forgiveness with those around me?" If we don't tell them, how will they know?

## Day 16

### Gideon's Call

'The angel of the Lord came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites. When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he said, "The Lord is with you, mighty warrior."  
'Judges 6:11-12

We're introduced to Gideon while he threshed wheat in the winepress in order to hide it from the Midianites. Traditionally Israelites had an open threshing floor for wheat, but because the Midianites always stole their crops, Gideon threshed his wheat in a closed environment so it wouldn't be seen easily.

It's in this state of hiding that the Angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, telling him that the Lord was with him and calling him a 'mighty warrior' (Joshua 6:12). This was confusing to Gideon because looking at his present circumstances it didn't look like God was with him, and looking at his lineage, there was nothing mighty about it. In fact, he identifies his clan as the weakest and himself as the least of his father's house (Judges 6:15). So why would God choose him of all people to deliver Israel?

But Gideon was yet to realize that God has the power to bring to pass what He has said. So if God called Gideon mighty, it means that God Himself had placed might and valour in Gideon – whether or not Gideon knew it.

This discussion between Gideon and the Angel is very similar to that which Moses had with the Lord at the burning bush in Exodus 4:1-14 – both gave every reason possible for not being able to fulfil the assignment given to them. This shows us clearly that people who do great things are not necessarily without doubts, shortcomings or fears. They make a decision to step into what they've been called to do in spite of these.

**Reflect:** Courage is not the absence of fear, neither does it mean all circumstances are ideal. Courage is taking God at His word and stepping out in faith regardless of your present circumstances and capacity. Can you take a step of faith today?

## Day 17

### The First Step

'That same night the Lord said to him, "Take the second bull from your father's herd, the one seven years old. Tear down your father's altar to Baal and cut down the Asherah pole beside it. Then build a proper kind of altar to the Lord your God on the top of this height. Using the wood of the Asherah pole that you cut down, offer the second bull as a burnt offering." ' Judges 6:25-26

Gideon had just received his divine assignment as Israel's deliverer from the Midianites. That same night, he was given an instruction to destroy his father's altar and prepare a sacrifice to the Lord. Gideon was afraid because he could be put to death by the townspeople for destroying the altar, so he followed the instructions at night – but he did it.

Three things happened when he took that first step. One is that his actions showed the impotence of the idol to defend itself, leading his father to call him Jerubbaal – "Let Baal plead". The second is that his obedience opened the door for the Spirit of the Lord to come upon him to lead the battle against their enemies the next time Midian and others came against them. The third is that the backdrop was now set for God to step in and fight on Israel's behalf working through Gideon as he became the man summoning other territories to come together against their oppressors.

All while still afraid – we know this because Gideon still asked God to confirm that he would really be the one to be used to save Israel (Judges 6:36-40).

**Reflect:** When taking steps of courage, you will need to burn some bridges to the past. Some old relationships, thought patterns, habits and practices will have to go for the new thing God wants to do to come in. Are you ready to move forward? Then ask God to reveal to you what you need to let go of so you can move.

## Day 18

### God's Unique Methods

“The Lord said to Gideon, “You have too many men. I cannot deliver Midian into their hands, or Israel would boast against me, ‘My own strength has saved me.’” Judges 7:2 NIV

Gideon had moved forward in the midst of his fear and summoned an army to take on the Midianites. Then God did a strange thing, He asked Gideon to reduce the number of men he was going into battle with so it would be clear that they didn't get the victory by their own strength.

Imagine what would have gone through Gideon's mind when He received this instruction. He was going against an army that already far outweighed his in number and now God was now further reducing his military strength. First the numbers were reduced from 22 thousand to 10 thousand, then God shocked him further:

“The Lord said to Gideon, “With the three hundred men that lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hands. Let all the others go home.”” Judges 7:7 NIV

300 against a mighty, innumerable army!! We have the benefit of knowing the outcome of the battle. At this point however, Gideon didn't have a clue how things would turn out, yet he moved on in faith.

There will be things that God will ask you to do this year that will have you scratching your head - “How Lord? Why Lord?” Just like Gideon, we may not see the full picture at the time and just have to trust God to see us through.

Gideon's obedience was not because he knew exactly how the battle would be won, but because he knew the God who gave the instructions. It was the same God that had delivered His people from the Egyptians and given them the land of Canaan, so surely He had a track record of keeping His promises.

**Action step:** When next we're confused by God's instructions, look beyond yourself into the Bible to see what He's done in the lives of others, then look within and recall what He has done in your life. His ways are certainly not our ways, but God is faithful and can always be trusted.

## Day 19

### Overcoming Fear

“If you are afraid to attack, go down to the camp with your servant Purah and listen to what they are saying. Afterward, you will be encouraged to attack the camp.” So he and Purah his servant went down to the outposts of the camp.” Judges 7:10-11

God sees our weaknesses and fears, so He creates circumstances to provide encouragement. In spite of the direct instructions Gideon received, he was still afraid to launch the attack - understandably so. So the Lord encouraged him by giving him an opportunity to hear for himself what was going on in the enemy camp. Two miraculous things happened here:

1. Gideon and his servant approached and left the enemy outpost unnoticed.
2. God had orchestrated the timing so perfectly that it was at the exact moment Gideon arrived that the Midianites were discussing a dream and its interpretation.

“His friend responded, “This can be nothing other than the sword of Gideon son of Joash, the Israelite. God has given the Midianites and the whole camp into his hands.” When Gideon heard the dream and its interpretation, he bowed down and worshiped. He returned to the camp of Israel and called out, “Get up! The Lord has given the Midianite camp into your hands.”” Judges 7:14-15 NIV

This was exactly what Gideon needed to hear and he moved into action immediately, giving his men instructions and the strategy for taking over the Midianite camp.

God knows us better than we know ourselves. He knows exactly who to send to us, where to send us to, what to do with us and in us to remove whatever fear we may be facing. There are over 50 references to not being afraid in the Bible, so God clearly knows fear is something that needs to be dealt with.

We said earlier in this series, courage isn't the absence of fear, it's moving forward in spite of the fear you may feel. God doesn't intend for us to operate fearfully though, so He equips and enables us as only He can through the Holy Spirit to rise above the fear and move forward in boldness.

**Reflect:** What are you afraid of today? Bring the issue(s) before God and ask Him to help you to remove the fear as only He can. If He did it for Gideon and Joshua, He will do it for you.



## Day 20

### Hold Your Position

“While each man held his position around the camp, all the Midianites ran, crying out as they fled. When the three hundred trumpets sounded, the Lord caused the men throughout the camp to turn on each other with their swords. The army fled to Beth Shittah toward Zererah as far as the border of Abel Meholah near Tabbath.” Judges 7:21-22

When Gideon launched the attack, he and his men hadn't even entered the Midianite camp before the Lord made their enemies turn on one another and flee. It must have been quite a sight to behold: the Midianites attacking their own people and fleeing as fast and as far as they could.

What happened? It clearly wasn't the strength of the few men that Gideon had with him that caused this response from the Midianite army. Jeremiah 1:12 (NLT) says this, “And the LORD said, “That's right, and it means that I am watching, and I will certainly carry out all my plans.”” God watches over what He has said to make it happen the way only He can.

The Lord knew from the start that He would work out the victory for Gideon in a way that would make it very clear to both Israel and Midian that this was no ordinary battle.

Could it be that we don't see the Lord working in our lives as often as we should because we have a fixed mindset on how He should respond to our prayers and requests? And because of the picture we have in our heads, when we get an instruction from God that doesn't seem to make sense to us or align with our expectations, we tend not to do it. Not knowing that by disobeying we have truncated God's work in our lives.

Imagine if Gideon had kept his thousands of men rather than follow God's strange instruction? How would things have turned out?

**Reflect:** Don't short circuit what God is willing and able to do in your life by being rigid in how you believe your prayers will be answered - that's God's prerogative.

## Day 21

### Keep On Moving

“Gideon and his three hundred men, exhausted yet keeping up the pursuit, came to the Jordan and crossed it.” Judges 8:4

There will be times in the journey of life that you’ll be exhausted because different things will come up that will take your energy and attention. But Gideon gives us a wonderful template to follow - don’t give up, keep moving.

“But the officials of Sukkoth said, “Do you already have the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna in your possession? Why should we give bread to your troops?”” Judges 8:6

“From there he went up to Peniel and made the same request of them, but they answered as the men of Sukkoth had.” Judges 8:8

Sometimes we will get encouragement and support along the way, other times those we expect to help us won’t do so. We shouldn’t be discouraged if this happens. Gideon kept his eyes on what the Lord had said and continued his pursuit because he knew victory was guaranteed. For us to succeed we need to consciously and purposefully keep our eyes fixed on what the goal is. Yes, there will be mistakes and yes there will be distractions. However, we have to keep on moving.

The biggest mistake we can make is to stop pursuing our God given goals just because we’re tired or we feel no one will help us. When we get into those seasons, we need to be like David who “strengthened himself with trust in his God.” (1 Samuel 30:6 MSG), taking our eyes off people and circumstances and focusing on God’s word.

**Question:** What are you fixing your eyes on - what your goal is? Or how people haven’t helped you along the way? Can you be dogged like Gideon and keep pursuing your goal in spite of your circumstances? Can you be like David and strengthen yourself with trust in God?

## Day 22

### Remember the Promise

“The Lord turned to him and said, “Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian’s hand. Am I not sending you?” “Pardon me, my lord,” Gideon replied, “but how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.””  
Judges 6:14-15

Gideon who could not see himself as the one to save Israel from the Midianites had gone ahead to do exactly what he was sent to do, following God’s plan. He stepped out in fear and received courage on the way through a series of events only God could have orchestrated. And now not only did Gideon save Israel, he was now being asked to rule over them.

“The Israelites said to Gideon, “Rule over us—you, your son and your grandson—because you have saved us from the hand of Midian.” But Gideon told them, “I will not rule over you, nor will my son rule over you. The Lord will rule over you.”” Judges 8:22-23

Quite the turn of affairs compared to when he couldn’t see himself doing what he had been sent to accomplish. Now he was being given an opportunity not just for himself, but also for his future generations to rule over Israel. But Gideon knew better. He knew the only reason he was successful was because God was with him, so he didn’t fall into the trap of thinking he’d achieved success by his own hand. He recognised God’s role in the story and made sure the Israelites knew this. He also understood that his assignment was to deliver Israel from the Midianites and not to rule over them. So, he wasn’t swayed by the accolades of the Israelites or tempted to step into what he hadn’t been called to do.

When you succeed in your endeavours - whatever they may be - don’t make the mistake of thinking you did it all by yourself. Recognise the guidance and grace of God, remember the One who gave you the ability to be successful and return the glory to Him. The last thing you want after receiving courage is to end up where God didn’t intend for you to be, because His provision accompanies His assignment, and His assignment must be completed according to His plan.

**Reflect on what God said to Joshua:** “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.” Joshua 1:8



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