

# I WANT TO KNOW MY BIBLE

## Modern Day Gideons

TEXT: Judges 6 - 8

Introduction: Each of us can become a modern day Gideon.

### I. GOD CAN AND WILL GROW OUR FAITH.

#### A. Gideon began as a very ordinary man.

1. Israel needed a leader, a judge, to deliver them from the oppression of the mighty Midianites.

Judges 6:1-7 <sup>1</sup> Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD. So the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years, <sup>2</sup> and the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel. Because of the Midianites, the children of Israel made for themselves the dens, the caves, and the strongholds which are in the mountains. <sup>3</sup> So it was, whenever Israel had sown, Midianites would come up; also Amalekites and the people of the East would come up against them. <sup>4</sup> Then they would encamp against them and destroy the produce of the earth as far as Gaza, and leave no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep nor ox nor donkey. <sup>5</sup> For they would come up with their livestock and their tents, coming in as numerous as locusts; both they and their camels were without number; and they would enter the land to destroy it. <sup>6</sup> So Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD.

<sup>7</sup> And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried out to the LORD because of the Midianites,

2. Gideon began with more doubt than faith.

Judges 6:11-13 <sup>11</sup> Now the Angel of the LORD came and sat under the terebinth tree which was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress, in order to hide it from the Midianites. <sup>12</sup> And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him, and said to him, "The LORD is with you, you mighty man of valor!"

<sup>13</sup> Gideon said to Him, "O my lord, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, 'Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?' But now the LORD has forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites."

3. Gideon was from the weakest of the clans.

Judges 6:15 So he said to Him, "O my Lord, how can I save Israel? Indeed my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house."

4. **He was the youngest son.**
5. **He required a sign to believe the Lord.**

Judges 6:17, 19-22 <sup>17</sup> Then he said to Him, "If now I have found favor in Your sight, then show me a sign that it is You who talk with me.

<sup>19</sup> So Gideon went in and prepared a young goat, and unleavened bread from an ephah of flour. The meat he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot; and he brought *them* out to Him under the terebinth tree and presented *them*. <sup>20</sup> The Angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened bread and lay *them* on this rock, and pour out the broth." And he did so.

<sup>21</sup> Then the Angel of the LORD put out the end of the staff that *was* in His hand, and touched the meat and the unleavened bread; and fire rose out of the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread. And the Angel of the LORD departed out of his sight.

<sup>22</sup> Now Gideon perceived that He *was* the Angel of the LORD. So Gideon said, "Alas, O Lord GOD! For I have seen the Angel of the LORD face to face."

Gideon's faith grows to the size of a mustard seed! God gives Gideon a task with which to exercise his new found faith.

Judges 6:25-26 <sup>25</sup> Now it came to pass the same night that the LORD said to him, "Take your father's young bull, the second bull of seven years old, and tear down the altar of Baal that your father has, and cut down the wooden image that *is* beside it; <sup>26</sup> and build an altar to the LORD your God on top of this rock in the proper arrangement, and take the second bull and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the image which you shall cut down."

6. Judges 6:27 So Gideon took ten men from among his servants and did as the LORD had said to him. But because he feared his father's household and the men of the city too much to do *it* by day, he did *it* by night.

**When he tore down the altar of Baal, he did it at night because he was afraid.**

So Gideon starts gathering an army, every man he can get. But he is still very uncertain about whether God is going to come through with His promise. And now we come to the best known part of the account of Gideon.

Judges 6:36-40 <sup>36</sup> So Gideon said to God, "If You will save Israel by my hand as You have said— <sup>37</sup> look, I shall put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor; if there is dew on the fleece only, and *it is* dry on all the ground, then I shall know that You will save Israel by my hand, as You have said." <sup>38</sup> And it was so. When he rose early the next morning and squeezed the fleece together, he wrung the dew out of the fleece, a bowlful of water. <sup>39</sup> Then Gideon said to God, "Do not be angry with me, but let me speak just once more: Let me test, I pray, just once more with the fleece; let it now be dry only on the fleece, but on all the ground let there be dew." <sup>40</sup> And God did so that night. It was dry on the fleece only, but there was dew on all the ground.

7. **Gideon's fleece was not an act of faith; it was an expression of doubt.**

**8. It was actually an act of disobedience to the commandment of the Lord.**

Deuteronomy 6:16 (ESV) "You shall not put the LORD your God to the test, as you tested him at Massah.

**9. God had patience and mercy with Gideon, as He so often does with us.**

**10. Gideon was very much like us.**

**11. We are very much like Gideon!**

**B. God grew the faith of Gideon to cause him to become one of the heroes of the faith listed in Hebrews 11.**

1. We think that those heroes had something we do not.
2. That is not true. Each of the men and women of heroic faith listed here in Heb. 11, were just boys and girls, men and women just like you and me, with problems, and weaknesses, and sins, and frailties.

**C. Gideon began very ordinary; God made him extraordinary.**

**D. God does the same transforming work in the lives of all who surrender to Him in faith.**

**E. Notice the points in Gideon's journey so far.**

1. **Gideon acted on his faith while it was still infinitesimally small.** He asked for a sign, but He acknowledged the Angel of the Lord as God by presenting an offering.
2. **While Gideon was scared to death to do so, he obeyed the Lord's command.** God said, tear down your father's altar to false gods, and Gideon tore them down.
3. Do you feel like Jesus often says to you, "Oh, ye of little faith."? Do not despair. God can and will grow your faith. With the little faith you possess, just obey what the Lord is telling you to do right now.
4. **Every step we take in obedience is a step God uses to grow our faith.**
  - a. When I answered God's call to preach in my senior year of high school, my Sunday school teacher asked me to go with him to the rescue mission and preach. I was scared to death. After I arrived, I was even more scared. But I preached. And my dear friend, as a result of that single sermon, revival did not break out in the city. In fact, revival did not break out in the rescue mission. In fact, as far as I know, nobody got saved that night. In fact, I will have to wait until I get to heaven to know what significant thing God did that night that he had me preach one of my first and probably one of my worst sermons. But I know this much. God used that step of obedience to help me take the next step and the next.
  - b. Almost immediately after I surrendered to the call to be an Acts 1:8 pastor, I had an opportunity to go to Brazil. I had no particular affinity for Brazil. I did not even know a Brazilian. But I had told the Lord I would go, so I went. Eleven years, more than 30 trips later, God has let us be a part of starting over 30 new churches, not because I had great faith, but because God took what tiny bit of faith I had and began to grow it with a single step of obedience.
  - c. Got a little faith? Then use it!

What's God urging you to do right now?

- 1) Is God telling you to start to work in the Center of Hope?
- 2) Is the Lord telling you to get involved with the mission in Baltimore?
- 3) Is God telling you to get your passport because He wants you to go to India, Ghana, Mexico, or Brazil?
- 4) Is God telling you to start trusting Him with your finances and start to regularly give Him the tithe instead of just trinkets on a hit or miss basis?
- 5) I don't know the particular step God is convicting your heart about right now, but you do!

**6) Don't say, "Oh I'm just no Abraham or David or Daniel!"**

**Be a Gideon!**

**Any of us can be a Gideon.**

**God can and will grow your faith if you will just take little baby steps of obedience.**

## II. GOD GROWS OUR FAITH AS WE LEARN WHO TO TRUST.

### A. Gideon's army had to be properly sized.

Judges 7:1-7 Then Jerubbaal (that *is*, Gideon) and all the people who *were* with him rose early and encamped beside the well of Harod, so that the camp of the Midianites was on the north side of them by the hill of Moreh in the valley.

<sup>2</sup> And the LORD said to Gideon, "The people who *are* with you *are* too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel claim glory for itself against Me, saying, 'My own hand has saved me.' <sup>3</sup> Now therefore, proclaim in the hearing of the people, saying, 'Whoever *is* fearful and afraid, let him turn and depart at once from Mount Gilead.'" And twenty-two thousand of the people returned, and ten thousand remained.

<sup>4</sup> But the LORD said to Gideon, "The people *are* still *too* many; bring them down to the water, and I will test them for you there. Then it will be, *that* of whom I say to you, 'This one shall go with you,' the same shall go with you; and of whomever I say to you, 'This one shall not go with you,' the same shall not go."<sup>5</sup> So he brought the people down to the water. And the LORD said to Gideon, "Everyone who laps from the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set apart by himself; likewise everyone who gets down on his knees to drink."<sup>6</sup> And the number of those who lapped, *putting* their hand to their mouth, was three hundred men; but all the rest of the people got down on their knees to drink water. <sup>7</sup> Then the LORD said to Gideon, "By the three hundred men who lapped I will save you, and deliver the Midianites into your hand. Let all the *other* people go, every man to his place."

**1. Midianite soldiers numbered 135,000.**

**2. Gideon started with 32,000.**

3. **God sent the fearful home. Down to 10,000.**
  4. **God sent the cautious home.** Kept the guzzlers; sent sippers home. **Down to 300.**
  5. **God said, "Now that's about right."**
- B. All talent and ability and every resource is from God.**  
**But God does not want us depending upon the resources.**  
**God wants us to depend upon Him.**
- C. God may or may not call you to serve using the talents and gifts you know you have.**
1. Don't wait to serve until you see it is a match.
  2. If God is leading you to serve in a particular way, just say yes.
  3. He will work out the way your gifts and abilities will be used.
  4. When God called me into the ministry, I wondered, "Well why did God give me some ability to do math and a love for doing it. Why does a preacher need math?" But God has used it in ways I could have never imagined, and always to my pleasant surprise.
  5. **God does not want us trusting our abilities or even our spiritual gifts. God wants us to trust Him, and Him alone.**

### **III. GOD GIVES VICTORY HIS WAY, NOT OUR WAY.**

- A. God's weapons: a torch, pitcher, and trumpet for every man.**
- B. "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon"**

CONCLUSION: My friend, do you know the very best thing about this story of Gideon, this true story about a man named Gideon?

Gideon's story can be your story.

God can and will take you where you are, little faith and all.

**If you will just trust Him enough to obey Him one little step at a time, God will grow your faith,** just like He did the faith of Gideon.

If you will do that, after a while of taking those little baby steps of obedience, you will be able to look back and say, "My what the Lord has done. I never thought God would let me be a part of something like that."