

HEROES OF FAITH
VOLUME 1



OLAYEMI EMMANUEL

HEROES OF FAITH

Volume 1

GIDEON

Olayemi Emmanuel

Olayemi Emmanuel
Heroes of Faith
A study on the life of *Gideon*

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"But whatever I am now, it is all because God poured out His special favour on me... 1 Corinthians 15:10 (NLT)

Olabisi, my dear wife, thank you for your immense support.

I am forever grateful to you for making life and ministry easy.

Attah Goodness, thank you for your immense contributions and commitment towards the success of this book. God bless you!

To my Pastor, Pastor Odunayo, RCCG Fountain of Life, Braintree, thank you for carefully and thoroughly reading this book to ensure that it comes out well. To everyone who played a part in the success of this project, thank you!

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FOREWORD

The book “*Gideon*” explores the timeless insights and priceless lessons to be gleaned from the life of Gideon. The author portrays Gideon as an ordinary man who dared to trust God to use him to deliver his people from the oppression they suffered at the hand of their enemy. There is a lot to learn from Gideon's journey of faith and personal transformation that can empower us to live an impactful life that pleases God and benefits mankind.

Emmanuel Olayemi captures a picture of how Gideon was called, his fears, struggles, doubts, trust, boldness, Leadership skills, success, vulnerabilities, and failures that resonates with readers across different culture. In this book, you will learn what God is looking for in whom He chooses to use, the vital lessons of knowing your vulnerabilities, and how to deal with your successes so that you don't become a failure after being used mightily by God.

This is a book you want to read. Enjoy!

Pastor Odunayo Ayo-Ajala
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Kingdom.

INTRODUCTION

After the death of Joshua, the great leader who brought the Israelites into Canaan and allocated lands to the different tribes, the children of Israel drifted from God. They began to worship Baalim, which made God very angry. God sent a messenger, an angel, as the King James version puts it, to warn them of their disobedience, and they repented for a while but soon returned to serving other gods. (**Judges 2:1 -11**).

Whenever they began to serve other gods, God punished them by allowing them to fall into the hands of their enemies. Whenever they realised their wrongdoings and repented, He raised Judges to deliver them from their enemies. (**Judges 3:12, 4:1, 10:6, 13:1**).

"Nevertheless, the Lord raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them." (Judges 2: 16).

Gideon was one of such Judges raised by God to deliver the Israelites from their enemies. In the Book of Judges, there were twelve judges - Othniel (Judges 3:9), Ehud (Judges 3:15), Shamgar (Judges 3:31), Deborah (Judges 4:4), Gideon (Judges 6), Tola (Judges 10:1), Jair (Judges 10:3), Jephthah (Judges 12:7), Ibzan (Judges 12:8), Elon (Judges 12:11), Abdon (Judges 12:13) and Samson (Judges 16:30-31). Gideon was the fifth judge, and God raised him to deliver the Israelites from the hands of the Midianites.

This book is an exposition of Gideon's life, call, and mission. Read it with an open heart, and let it teach you more about the ways of the Lord and the part you have to play in establishing God's kingdom on earth.

Shalom.

Chapter 1



**BEFORE
GIDEON**

BEFORE GIDEON

*"The Israelites did evil in the Lord's sight..." Judges 6:1a
(NLT)*

Deborah, the fiery warrior and prophetess, who collaborated with Barak to defeat Jabin, the Canaanite King, was dead. For forty years, the Israelites had peace and rest from their enemies.

*"Thus let all Your enemies perish, O Lord! But let those who love Him be like the sun When it comes out in full strength." So the land had rest for forty years. Judges 5:31
NKJV*

Chapter 1

However, they didn't learn their lesson just like in previous times. They soon began to worship other gods, and they did evil in the sight of the Lord. They worshipped Baal, the Canaanite god. They were so comfortable that they no longer saw any reason to serve God.

The Israelites were always quick to forget the faithfulness and deliverance of God. They were also quick to forget their sufferings at the hands of their brutal enemies.

The rest and peace they enjoyed for forty years made them relaxed, so they soon returned to their old ways. They allowed their comfort to take them away from God.

It was common for the Israelites to run to God when in trouble, and as soon as things became comfortable for them, they forgot the one who made the comfort possible.

Chapter 1

Before I got my first car, I loved trekking, and I often trekked for 1 hour, 2 hours, and even more. Walking for me was always an opportunity to pray. Unfortunately, I couldn't continue my regular prayer walk after getting my first car, and I had to create another way to revive it intentionally.

Before you got that phone, you never missed your morning devotions, but now that God has blessed you with a phone, it has become a distraction-it has become the first thing you pick up every morning.

When you prayed and trusted God for that new job, you didn't miss church services; you were always in attendance. You were committed and dedicated to everything in your local church. But now that you have a job, the church has become a distraction. You now skip services and rest on Sundays to stay fit for the same job God gave you.

Chapter 1

This attitude isn't right, and you can still change your ways.

The Psalmist said that we should not forget God's benefits. (**Psalm 103:2**). He said this because it is part of human nature to forget the good things God has done.

When we forget what God has done, we become ungrateful. And just like the Israelites, we repeat past mistakes.

It is essential to ensure that God's blessings do not lead you away from Him. Do not let the blessings in your life become distractions. Let them not be a cause for God to regret blessing you. Instead, strive to bring Him joy and make Him rejoice over you, knowing that His blessings will inspire you to seek Him even more.

After the Israelites forgot God and began to worship strange gods, God, in a bid to correct them, gave them over to the Midianites, who tormented them for seven years.

Chapter 1

JUDGES 6:1b-5 (NKJV)

1b - So the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years,

2 - 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 that are in the mountains.

3 - So it was, whenever Israel had sown, Midianites would come up; also Amalekites and the people of the East would come up against them.

4 - 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.

5 - For they would come up with their livestock and their tents, coming in as numerous as locusts; both they and their camels were [a]without number; they would enter the land to destroy.

Chapter 1

The Midianites were so cruel that the Israelites became impoverished. They attacked their economy and made them hide in dens and caves. Every time the Israelites planted crops, the Midianites and Amalekites came against them to destroy their harvest. They ensured the children of Israel had no food and killed their livestock. They did every year for seven good years. As soon as the Israelites harvested their crops, the Midianites would steal all their produce, rob them of their valuable stuff, and leave to return the following year. Israel couldn't fight them as they didn't have the sophisticated weapons the Midianites had then.

Imagine collecting your hard-earned salary at the end of the month, and then someone comes to take all the money from you, including the things you use to make money. And this goes on every single month for seven years! That's exactly how it was for the Israelites and even more.

Chapter 1

Things became very bad for the Israelites. Their sins opened the door for the enemy to waste their hard work and labour. They lived in constant fear, and their economy plunged downward because of their idolatry. This bondage and oppression were an act of God's mercy because He wanted the Israelites to return to Him.

There are always consequences for our sins. In **Romans 6:23 KJV**, Paul said, "***For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.***"

When we sin, God, in His great mercy, allows us to face the consequences of our sins so that we can repent.

The prophet Haggai called the attention of the Israelites to the fact that their financial and economic troubles resulted from abandoning God's house. He asked them salient questions that God is asking many people today.

Chapter 1

"This was the Lord's message. You seem to think that it is right for you to live in expensive houses. But you still have not built my temple." Haggai 1:4 Easy English Version.

After making them realise how wrong it was to abandon God while focusing on their ambitions and self-interests, he called them to repentance. He told them that the restoration of their dwindling businesses and economy depended on returning to build God's house. (Haggai 1:6-11)

A young lady once thought the world was at her feet because of her beauty. She lived a reckless and immoral life and didn't care about her future. She had numerous sexual partners and committed countless abortions. She was on the fast lane to destruction until she fell ill. What she thought was a brief illness turned out to be full-blown AIDS, and it was on her deathbed that she accepted Jesus as her Lord and Saviour. Her infirmity was the tool that eventually brought her to her senses and made her run back to her Creator.

Chapter 1

A failing business, health, or economy can sometimes result from unrepented sins. God is not the cause of these evil occurrences, but sin limits the full expression of God's power in a person's life, family, and society.

That you are getting away with that sin you keep committing does not mean you will forever get away with it. Repent now. We don't always have to learn the hard way. However, if we insist on going our route, the consequences of our disobedience could teach us grievous lessons.

God is merciful, and often, His mercy involves judgment so that men may repent of their evil ways.

"For when Your judgements come upon the earth, the world's inhabitants learn righteousness." (Isaiah 26:9b ISV)

Poverty, lack and trouble can make a man turn to God, which is precisely what happened to the Israelites. The wickedness of the Midianites caused them to cry unto God.

Chapter 1

They had to wait till they were overshadowed with troubles before they turned to God.

Judges 6:6 (NLT)

"So Israel was reduced to starvation by the Midianites. Then the Israelites cried out to the Lord for help."

Their cry for help was not because they were genuinely sorry for their sins. The Israelites' impoverished state made them cry out to God, and this was evident because after God delivered them from the Midianites, they immediately went a whoring after the next god that came their way: Gideon's ephod. (Judges 8:27). They also returned to serve Baalberith after Gideon's death. (Judges 8:33).

Previous stories also confirm their shallow repentance. The four judges before Gideon (Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar and Deborah) were God's rescue agents to a nation that had returned to their vomit. (Judges 2,3,4). After each judge died, the Israelites left God to serve idols.

Chapter 1

"And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned, and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way." Judges 2:19

Since they refused to learn how to serve God in seasons of peace, they had to go through the school of hardship to learn this.

They lifted their voices and cried unto God from their hiding places in dens and caves. The consequences of their sins had become too heavy to bear, and prayer was their last resort.

"When He slew them, then they sought Him; And they returned and sought earnestly for God."

Chapter 1

Psalms 78 34 NKJV

When we sin against God, He wants us to repent genuinely. God does not want us to feel sorry because we got caught or because of the troubles our sins have put us in. He wants genuine remorse and repentance from us. He also wants our cry for mercy to be backed up with the desire and determination to change. True repentance is when we are sorry for hurting God with our bad choices and decisions, and it always leads to 180 degrees of turnaround.

It always leads to a change in the positive direction. It is also essential that we do not make prayer a last resort after trying every other thing. God wants to occupy the first place in our lives at all times.

The cry of the Israelites got to God's ears, and He responded by sending a prophet to them. This nameless prophet reminded them of all that God had done for them.

Chapter 1

JUDGES 6: 7- 10 (NKJV)

7 - "And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried out to the Lord because of the Midianites,

8 - that the Lord sent a prophet to the children of Israel, who said to them, "Thus says the Lord God of Israel: 'I brought you up from Egypt and brought you out of the house of [b]bondage;

9 - and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of all who oppressed you, and drove them out before you and gave you their land.

10 - Also I said to you, "I am the Lord your God; do not fear the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell." But you have not obeyed My voice."

The Prophet that God sent to the Israelites took them down memory lane to Egypt and reminded them of how God delivered them from Pharaoh.

Chapter 1

He also told them about God's past miracles of driving the Canaanites before them so that they could inherit the land. The prophet came to them with a call to genuine repentance and made them realise that their sufferings resulted from disobedience and that God wanted them to obey His voice.

This prophet reminded them of God's great love in times past. He was preparing their heart to receive God's deliverance from their enemies by redirecting their focus. He made them realise that the Midianites were not their problem; they were their worst enemy. Their disobedience was the reason for their oppression. ***"But you have not obeyed my voice."*** Judges 6:10b

God often sends prophets to turn people to Him. Apart from Deborah, this is the only other prophet mentioned in Judges, and his message was a call to repentance.

Just as the prophet did, true prophets make people realise their evil ways.

Chapter 1

They also help people see where they have missed it in their walk with God.

The Israelites' cry made God send a prophet first to convict them of their sins. Often, when we cry to God, He sends prophets our way to show us where things have gone wrong.

God always wants to give us lasting and permanent deliverance, so He ensures we address our problems from their roots.

Many people who seem to have problems and are hopping from mountain to mountain have probably not met a true prophet to tell them the truth, or they have chosen to despise the message of the prophet God sent to them.

Also, God is looking for people who will preach the message of repentance to others without mincing their words. God wants fearless prophets like John the Baptist who will call men to repentance without fear.

Chapter 1

One of the primary assignments of prophets in the Bible is to turn men back to God. Prophets like Haggai, Zechariah, Isaiah and John the Baptist consistently preached the message of repentance. They rebuked God's people for their evil doings and gave them the message of the blessings that awaited them when they repented. Just like these prophets, God wants us to sound the alarm of repentance to those around us. As we, through the help of the Holy Spirit, tell others where they have missed it, we must also carefully reveal God's love and mercy to them.

On the other hand, you should also listen to the prophets God has sent your way. If you listen to a prophet regularly and never feel the need to stop the sins you commit and turn to God, you are with the wrong person.

This prophet can be your spiritual leader, pastor, other believers, and even your spouse. God can use anyone to show you where you have erred.

Chapter 1

We all need a prophet who will keep us on our toes and speak God's judgment in love. A prophet doesn't necessarily mean someone who has been called to the prophet's office, as Paul revealed in Ephesians 4:11. In this context, it means someone who stands in a place of authority over you and can tell you the truth.

You are, of course, the first prophet of your life and one of the duties of the Holy Spirit is to convict you whenever you sin. He reproofs the world of sin, righteousness and judgement. (John 16:8). God also places people in your life to help you stay on the right course. No matter how spiritually mature you become, you will never outgrow the need to submit to someone else. God's word is sweet, and it is also bitter. If your only experience of God's word with your prophet, whoever that might be, is the sweet part, then you should consider changing your prophet!

Revelations 10:9.

Chapter 1

"So I went to the angel and said to him, "Give me the little book." And he said to me, "Take and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but it will be as sweet as honey in your mouth."

Revelation 10:9 NKJV

It is interesting to see that the first person God raised for the children of Israel in response to their cry for help was a prophet.

The goal of the prophet was to;

1. Remind the people of God's benefits
2. Preach the message of repentance to them.

As soon as the prophet's job was done and the children of Israel acknowledged their sins, God sent a leader to deliver them from the hands of their oppressor.

Every nation needs prophets and leaders, among other critical spiritual offices. God has made believers kings and priests on earth, and to an extent, we are prophets and leaders in our various spheres of influence. (Revelations 1:6 NKJV). However, God has called certain people to oversee a territory or nation. God told Jeremiah that He had ordained him to be a prophet to nations. (Jeremiah 1:5).

Chapter 1

Every office in the fivefold ministry is pivotal to the church's success, and whatever happens to the church affects the nation. (Ephesians 4: 11-16). As stated above, the prophet's goal is clear, and the leader's goal is strategically guiding the people out of their difficulties. We will learn about the leader God sent in the next chapter.

QUESTIONS AND REFLECTIONS

1. The easiest way to always remember God's faithfulness in your life and to have a consistent heart of gratitude is to maintain a gratitude journal. Do you have one? Start using it. If you don't have one, get one and start writing down God's kindness. Every time God does something you've always wanted, write it down. Keep a gratitude journal from today.

Chapter 1

2. Read Deuteronomy 8:10 - 18. This passage would minister to you. What lessons can you draw from these verses?

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3. Why were the Midianites able to oppress the Israelites?
4. For how many years did the Midianites torment the Israelites?
5. The Midianites destroyed three of Israel's properties; mention the three.
6. How many Judges do we have in the book of Judges?
7. How long did it take for the children of Israel to cry out to God for help?

Chapter 1

8. Read Haggai 1:6 - 11.

Write out three lessons from this passage.

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9. Read Isaiah 26:9. Read the last part slowly.

10. What is the name of the ONLY prophet mentioned in the book of Judges?

11. Read Romans 6:23 loudly as many times as you can.

12. Read 2 Corinthians 7:10.

13. Do you need help to stop a particular sin that has been tormenting you for years? Reach out to us here to assist you.

Chapter 1

14. Can you focus on preaching the message of repentance to at least one person in the next 30 days? If you have chosen to do this, contact us here to assist you. Write the name of at least two people you can preach to.

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15. If you attend a church and have never felt the need to grow spiritually and change your sinful acts, you should prayerfully consider changing that church.

Chapter 1

CONFESSION

Father, help me to always fix my eyes on You. I don't ever want to replace You with Your blessings. I receive grace never to forget Your benefits in my life in Jesus' name.

I ask for Your mercy in every area I have gone astray. (Mention them). Please help me not to learn the hard way. Help me to be quick to repent, always in Jesus' name.

Lord Jesus, search my heart and purge me of every insincerity in my repentance. Let my godly sorrow for sin lead me to genuine repentance. Let my cry for mercy be honest and birth the change You desire to see in me. Help me to make You first in everything in Jesus' name.

Lord Jesus, help me speak your word with boldness. Please help me not to shy away from calling men to repentance. Let my words of repentance be seasoned with grace and comfort in Jesus' name. Amen.
Amen.

Chapter 2



THE CALL OF GIDEON

Chapter 2

THE CALL OF GIDEON

JUDGES 6:11 (NKJV)

“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.”

After sending the prophet to prepare the hearts of the people, God then sent an angel to a man named Gideon. Gideon, which means hewer, was busy threshing wheat when he had this divine encounter.

Usually, wheat was threshed in open and vast spaces, but because of the Midianites, Gideon was threshing it in a confined space; a winepress.

Chapter 2

He was doing it here to hide it from the Midianites. While he was busy with this duty, an angel came to him.

It is important to note that God did not send His angel to an idle man. Even though Gideon looked like a coward trying to hide, he was on duty when God's messenger arrived.

God saw a leader's potential in Gideon and sent his angel to reveal His plan of deliverance to him. Throughout the Scriptures, we see that God always reveals Himself to those who are engaged in their duty post-He always chooses the hardworking, not the idle, busybodies.

He chose David while he was tending his father's flock in the wilderness. (1 Samuel 16:1-14). After Saul, the first king of Israel, misbehaved by disobeying God's instruction to destroy the Amalekites (1 Samuel 15), God sent Samuel to Jesse's house to choose another person to replace him.

Chapter 2

When Samuel arrived, David was absent because he was on the field. After God rejected David's elder brothers, Samuel insisted that nobody sit until David arrived.

"And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all your children? And he said, There remains yet the youngest, and behold, he keeps the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he comes here."

1 Samuel 16:11 KJV.

After Samuel anointed David, he returned to his duty of tending his father's sheep until Saul summoned him to the palace. (1 Samuel 16:18-19).

He appeared to Moses when he was busy managing his father-in-law's sheep company at the back side of the desert. (Exodus 3; 1).

He also called Peter and his brother when they were fishing and beckoned to James and John as they were mending their nets. (Mark 4:18-22).

Chapter 2

God appeared to Paul as he rode to Damascus to do his duty of persecuting the Christians. (Acts 9:1-3)

God always engages the diligent and dutiful. He never recruits lazy people for Kingdom assignments. He is always looking for men who will go and those who will make up the hedge, and the first characteristic He seeks in these men is diligence in whatsoever their hands find to do. (Ecclesiastes 9:10). Only when you are faithful in little does God commit more to your hands. (Luke 16:10).

Do well at work first, pass your exams, graduate with a good result, work hard and smart, and be diligent; then, God, who sees how faithful you are with earthly assignments, will commit even greater and more rewarding assignments to your hands. The devil makes work for idle hands.

When the angel appeared to Gideon, he engaged him in a conversation. The way the angel addressed Gideon was surprising because Gideon did not feel that he fit into that description. .

Chapter 2

JUDGES 6:12 (NKJV)

"And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him, and said to him, "The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valour!"

The angel called him a mighty man of valour and declared that the Lord was with him.

The way the angel addressed Gideon defied what he and the Israelites had experienced in recent times. They felt God was far away from them and that they had no might or strength to stand against the Midianites. The angel's opening speech refuted all these claims as he revealed things the way God saw them.

What you think about yourself or your background does not matter as long as they do not contradict what God thinks about you.

Anybody who saw Gideon hiding would have labelled him a coward, but God saw a mighty man of valour. We are who God says we are, not what we think we are or what people call us.

Chapter 2

Moses believed he was a stutterer who would never have an impact, but God recognized in him a formidable leader who would lead the Israelites out of Egypt.

But Moses said to the Lord: O Master, I cannot speak well. I could not speak well before. And I cannot speak well now, since you have spoken to me. I speak slowly and I speak with difficulty—Exodus 4:10 Easy English Version.

Jeremiah saw himself as a young boy with no prospects, but God saw a mighty prophet. God always calls us by what He has created us to be. (Jeremiah 1:1-7).

Then said I, Ah Lord God! Behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child. Jeremiah 1:6 KJV.

We might harbour inferior thoughts about ourselves, and others might think lowly of us, but God's opinion about us alone should stand. You must come to the point where nothing else matters outside God's opinion, thoughts and plans for your lives.

Chapter 2

It is also important to note the sequence of how the angel spoke. He told Gideon that the Lord was with him before calling him a mighty man of valour. This means that whoever we are and whatever we can successfully achieve is because God is with us. God's presence made Gideon a mighty man of valour. I pray that the Lord will help you begin seeing yourself the way God sees you, in Jesus' name. Amen.

After the angel announced Gideon's identity to him, like many of us, Gideon launched into a commentary of all the wrong things happening in Israel.

He questioned the reality of God's presence when the Israelites were experiencing the opposite of that reality. He questioned the past miracles of God and ended up with a lamentation about how God had forsaken them.

Chapter 2

JUDGES 6:13 (NKJV)

"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."

Gideon's complaints were legitimate, and they revealed how limited he was as a human to see God's mercy in all the happenings around him. Yet, they also revealed the huge burden he carried for Israel.

If you had a chance to see an angel and he asked you to make a request, you'd probably be telling the angel your problems and not the problem of others, let alone the problem of a whole nation.

Gideon was different from others in this regard. He did not selfishly lament over his own or his family's difficulties and challenges.

Chapter 2

Instead, he presented the plight of Israel before the God of Israel and shouldered the weight of an entire nation upon himself.

Leaders always look beyond themselves and are always concerned about the welfare of others. Gideon proved his leadership skills in his response to the angel and was burdened with the state of Israel at that time.

Even though he could have just complained about the difficulties he was facing, he recognized that the situation extended beyond his deliverance and demonstrated a profound concern for the well-being of the nation of Israel.

God wants every believer to look beyond themselves. He wants us to genuinely care about others and go the extra mile to show our concern.

Many leaders in the Bible exemplified this trait. Ezra was one of them.

Chapter 2

When the Israelites who had returned to Jerusalem married foreign wives, he cried for forgiveness and wore sack clothes in repentance.

Even though he did not partake in their sins, he was concerned about them and showed this through his actions. Nehemiah also did the same thing. He was so concerned about Israel that he left the palace to go and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

Daniel, in his prayer of repentance in Daniel 9, identified with the sins of his people.

“We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgements.” (Daniel 9:5).

Chapter 2

Unlike Saul, the first king of Israel, who did not care about the spiritual state of his people as long as his reputation was intact (1 Samuel 15:30); true leaders in the Bible were deeply and genuinely concerned about others.

Have a heart for others. Be passionate about the growth of everyone in your space; this consecrates and positions you for a more prominent role in God's agenda for expanding His Kingdom on earth. Stop complaining about people; don't moan about what isn't working in your nation. Instead, pray, like Daniel, to see things change for the better.

After Gideon's litany of complaints, the Lord redirected his focus to the assignment on ground. He gave him the mandate to go in the might he possessed to save Israel. He also reminded him that He was his Commander. He told Gideon not to forget that it was God that has sent him on that assignment.

Regardless of the multitudes of Midianites, God reassured Gideon that His presence was enough and equipped him with sufficient might for the assignment.

Chapter 2

JUDGES 6:14 (NKJV)

"Then the Lord turned to him and said, "Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you?"

Often, when God sends us on a mission, it seems as though we are ill-equipped for the work. When David appeared before Goliath, he looked like a tiny lad before the great giant. However, that tiny lad had what was needed to bring down the giant. His five little stones and sling were God's tools to do the job. (1 Samuel 17).

God told Gideon to go in his might and asked him to launch out with what he had. When God gives you a mission, He provides what you need for the journey.

Many often want to wait until they have enough before doing what God instructs them to do. Such people eventually become irrelevant to God's plan for their generation.

Chapter 2

When God tells you to go, you must obey Him promptly. You don't need to be rich in millions before you give offerings to the church and the poor. Start with the little in your hands. You also don't have to get it all together before you begin that assignment God has committed into your hands. What you have with God is more than enough.

When Jesus sent his disciples on the mission to tell people about God's kingdom, what they took on their journey seemed too small for the task ahead, yet, they never lacked as they went from village to village, and God met them with abundant provisions as they obeyed.

"And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing." Luke 22:35 KJV.

This was Jesus' conversation with His disciples after He sent them to preach the gospel. (Matthew 10: 1). Start with the little you have. God never leaves His people stranded - He always glorifies Himself in the lives of those He chooses to do His work.

Chapter 2

He only asks that we are willing and obedient so that He can bless us with the good of the land.

When God told Gideon to launch out because he was the man for the job, Gideon became scared. He reminded God of his inabilities and insecurities. He also reminded God of his family's poverty and lowly position in his father's house (as if God did not know everything about him).

Gideon saw himself as unequipped and insignificant for the task of delivering the Israelites from the Midianites. After he listed his disqualifications, God reminded him of the only qualification he needed to do the job: His presence.

JUDGES 6:15-16 (NKJV)

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."

16 - And the Lord said to him, "Surely I will be with you , and you shall defeat the Midianites as one man."

Chapter 2

God did not try to talk Gideon out of his weaknesses; He just redirected his focus to the only thing that mattered; God Himself. He reassured Gideon that He would be with him every step of the way.

God is all we need to do the assignments He gives us. His presence gives us the strength to rise above our sea of weaknesses and limitations. Like Gideon, we may be overwhelmed by our disqualifications and inabilities. Moses understood this and insisted he wouldn't move an inch without God's presence.

Then Moses told the Lord, "If your presence does not go with us, don't bring us up from here. Exodus 33:15 ISV

It is they that know God that will be strong and do exploits. Daniel 11:32 KJV.

For example, Moses first encountered God before launching the assignment to deliver the Israelites from their bondage in Egypt. (Exodus 3).

Chapter 2

When Jesus called His disciples, He called them to be with Him before He sent them to the mission field. **Mark 3:14.** God invites all men to a deep and strong relationship with Himself. He wants us to know Him. We should first prepare for whatever assignment He gives to us in the place of prayers.

It is not enough to be passionate about the task ahead of us; we must desire an encounter with God to receive sustaining and staying power on the assignment.

God's presence is the greatest advantage we have in life, and His presence is the fullness of all we need to do what we have been called to do. When we feel weak and insecure because of our inabilities, God always comes to prove Himself mighty.

His grace and presence are all we need, and His strength is always made perfect in our weaknesses.

Chapter 2

QUESTIONS AND REFLECTIONS

1. Read and memorise Proverbs 22:29.
2. Find out how Jesus called all His disciples. Were they all working when Jesus called them? Do this as a personal study.
3. Every believer should know Jeremiah 29:11 by heart. Can you read this scripture off-hand? If you can't, make it a duty to read and memorise this verse.
4. Every day, while looking in your mirror, call yourself the names God has called you. For instance;

I am a king and priest of God. I am not a failure. I am who God says I am. I am a champion. I do not hate anyone because all I've got inside of me is the love of God which has been shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghost.
Amen.

Chapter 2

5. Read John 2:13 - 17, Nehemiah 1:1 - 4, 2:1 - 5 and Exodus 2:11 - 15. Can you see any similarities in these verses? Write out the lessons you can see from these bible passages.

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6. Out of the seven days in a week, can you sacrifice a day to pray for your church, your country and believers worldwide for at least 5 minutes? It isn't about the time; it's about staying consistent with this.

- What day of the week are you choosing?

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- How many minutes?

Chapter 2

Now, set a reminder on your phone for the day and time you have just set apart to pray for others.

7. How many signs were shown to Gideon?
8. Read and memorise 2 Corinthians 12:9.
9. What chapter and verse of the book of Psalm talks about not forgetting the Lord's benefit?
10. Is it okay to ask God for a sign as proof of what He tells you to do?
11. God honours consistency. Dedicate a time to seek God's face and stay with that time. For instance, it could be 6 am - 6:15 every day. You cannot stay with this consistently for as long as 3 - 5 years and more without having significant encounters with God.
 - Choose the day now:
 - Choose the time:

Chapter 2

12. Make it a part of you to offer at least a cup of water to every visitor and always show kindness to strangers.

13. Read **Genesis 18:1 - 15**. Write out three lessons from this passage.

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Chapter 2

CONFESSION

Dear Lord, help me to be diligent in my duty. Please help me not to be lazy. Make me a man/woman you can trust with your assignments in Jesus' name.

Father, help me lift Your thoughts towards me above every other thought. I cast down imaginations and thoughts that exalt themselves above Your opinion about me. I subscribe fully to what You think about me now and always in Jesus' name. Amen.

Father, make me a true leader. Please help me to be genuinely concerned about others. I refuse to lead a self-centred life in Jesus' name. Amen.

I refuse to buy the lie that all must be perfect before I launch out. Help me, Jesus, not to despise my days of little beginnings. Help me faithfully steward the little I have in Jesus' name. Amen.

Chapter 2

Father, help me to lean on You always. I choose to surrender my weaknesses to Your strengths and receive grace to remain in vital union with You every day in Jesus' name. Amen.

Dear Lord, help me to show kindness to all men. I refuse to give to You what costs me nothing. I receive grace to be hospitable and sensitive to the people You bring my way in Jesus' name. Amen.

Chapter 3

A person wearing a hoodie is shown from behind, with their right arm raised and fist clenched. They are standing on a rocky outcrop. The background is a vast, hazy landscape under a bright orange and red sunset sky filled with soft, white clouds. The entire scene is framed within a white arch shape on a dark brown background.

GIDEON'S RESPONSE TO GOD'S CALL

GIDEON'S RESPONSE TO GOD'S CALL

After Gideon's conversation with the angel, Gideon wanted a confirmation that God was entirely with him and that the assignment was not a figment of his imagination.

JUDGES 6:17-22

17 - "Then he said to Him, "If now I have found favour in Your sight, then show me a sign that it is You who talk with me.

18 - Do not depart from here, I pray, until I come to You and bring out my offering and set it before You." And He said, "I will wait until you come back."

19 - 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.

20 - 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.

Chapter 3

21 - 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.

22 - 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 asked for a sign to prove that it was God's voice he had heard all along. He pleaded with the angel to wait for him while he prepared a meal. Gideon then went in to make a young goat ready.

He also baked unleavened cakes. After making the meal, he put the cakes in a basket and took the meat in a pot.

Then, he took them to the angel, who instructed him to lay them on a rock. Gideon did as he had been instructed, and the angel touched the meal with the end of his staff.

Chapter 3

As he did this, fire came out of the rock and consumed the meal. Then, the angel disappeared. Gideon got his sign and confirmation that God was sending him on the mission.

The meal that Gideon prepared for the angel must have cost him a lot because his family was poor and the Midianites had impoverished the land.

Yet, Gideon chose to use the little he had to make a meal for the angel and gave God something that cost him a lot.

When we offer things to God, we must be careful to do it with a willing heart. Just as Jesus praised the widow who gave her last mite and denounced the Pharisees who gave God little out of the abundant wealth, God always recognises those who go the extra mile to honour Him.

"Sitting across from the offering box, he was observing how the crowd tossed money in for the collection. Many of the rich were making large contributions. One poor widow came up and put in two small coins—a measly two cents. Jesus called his disciples over and said, "The truth is that this poor widow gave more to the collection than all the

Chapter 3

others put together. All the others gave what they'll never miss; she gave extravagantly what she couldn't afford-she gave her all." Mark 12:42-22 The Message Translation.

Another lesson in the verses for this chapter is that Gideon chose to be hospitable when he had every reason not to be. He could have used something else to get his confirmation, something that cost him nothing.

However, he took what he had and prepared a befitting meal for his guest. Like his ancestor, Abraham, who prepared a worthy meal for three wayfaring men, Gideon was hospitable when it wasn't convenient. (Genesis 18:1-8).

Often, God sends angels to us in the form of men. He wants us to show kindness to them because we honour Him when we do this.

Chapter 3

Sarah received her long-awaited miracle baby because she cooperated with Abraham to show hospitality to angels who came in the form of men. (Genesis 18:10). Don't hesitate to show kindness to men; your long-awaited blessings might be in such actions.

The writer of Hebrews admonishes us not to be forgetful to entertain strangers because some people have entertained strangers unawares by doing this.

Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Hebrews 13:2 KJV.

After Gideon realised that God had been speaking to him all along, he became afraid. He was scared because he thought he would die from seeing the angel of God face to face.

God immediately reassured him that he would not die. He spoke peace to Gideon's frightened heart. Gideon's response to this encounter was to build an altar unto God.

Chapter 3

He called the altar Jehovah Shalom because of the great peace God's presence ministered to his troubled heart. Gideon raised this altar as a sign of his consecration and worship to God; and in memorial of God's visitation to him.

JUDGES 6:23-24

23 - "Then the Lord said to him, "Peace be with you; do not fear, you shall not die."

24 - So Gideon built an altar there to the Lord, and called it The-Lord-Is-Peace. To this day it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites."

Altars can signify a lot of things. They can signify a place of prayer or a song of thanksgiving and also represent doing something tangible to commemorate something God has said or done.

We must raise altars to God to signify our consecration and worship to Him. When Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had specific encounters with God, they built altars as reference points to their encounters.

Chapter 3

God's word can also be a place to raise altars of faith. As we read, study, hear and meditate on God's word, we discover specific portions that speak directly to our hearts.

We also see those parts that speak about God's purpose for our lives. As we journey in life, whenever we face situations contrary to what we discovered in God's word, we can always go back to what God has said. We can always hold God by His word. Raising altars to God is essential because altars are places where divinity meets humanity.

They are places where spirits meet a man. Even though we can't raise altars of wood and stones today, we can raise altars of prayer and faith unto God.

Our hearts can also be raised as a holy altar unto God as we consciously make decisions that please Him and separate us unto Him for His glory.

After Gideon built an altar unto God, God revisited him that night. The Lord gave him specific instructions about the next thing to do.

Chapter 3

He asked him to take his father's young bullock, the second bullock that was seven years of age. After taking the bullock, Gideon should throw the altar of Baal in his father's house and cut down the tree beside the altar.

God further instructed Gideon to raise an altar unto Him in a specified location and use the bullock as the burnt offering.

JUDGES 6:25-29

25 "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;

26 - 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."

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.

Chapter 3

28 - And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, there was the altar of Baal, torn down; and the wooden image that was beside it was cut down, and the second bull was being offered on the altar which had been built.

29 - So they said to one another, "Who has done this thing?" And when they had inquired and asked, they said, "Gideon the son of Joash has done this thing."

Gideon did everything that God had commanded him. However, he didn't do it alone. He took ten of his servants because he was afraid of his father's household and the men of the city.

His fear also made him not carry out God's instructions in the daytime but at night. The following day, the men in the city discovered what had been done and inquired about the person who dared to pull down the altar of Baal. Their investigations eventually led them to Gideon.

Gideon's first altar made it easy for God to revisit him.

Chapter 3

Sometimes, building the first altar of prayer is all that is required for us to enjoy more God encounters in our lives. That same night, God came again to Gideon. Gideon had built a personal altar unto God, and God knew He could also trust him to build a corporate and territorial altar.

God will not entrust us with national assignments if we fail on a personal level. Despite Gideon's fear when instructed by God to tear down the altars in his father's house, he displayed immense courage by obediently carrying out the command.

Someone once said that courage is not the absence of fear but the ability to perform daring feats afraid. Whatever God has instructed you to do, do it. Even if you have to do it afraid, make sure you obey God to the letter.

Gideon did not wait to overcome his fear before he obeyed God. He took the step of obedience even when his knees were quivering. He also took ten men along to do the job.

Chapter 3

These men must have been like-minded because they didn't try to stop him from throwing down the altar of Baal and raising an altar to God.

Asking others to pray or go with you on an assignment is not a sign of faithlessness or weakness. More often than not, we need others of like minds to launch into the next phase of God's assignment for us.

Have you tried to walk down a forest alone at night? How was it? Were you scared? Don't tell me you weren't. Well, maybe you were not frightened, but how does walking that same road at night with someone beside you feel? You would definitely feel more relaxed and confident. The bottom line is; you need people in your life. You might not find ten people like Gideon, but please, find one!

I have a family friend who set out a day of the week to pray for me, my family and my ministry. She's been doing this for years.

Chapter 3

Whenever I am about to carry out a significant assignment and have fears, there are friends I can call to pray with me and those I can ask to see me through that assignment. Two will forever be better than one but ensure you have the right person with you.

There's another friend who prays together with my family online every month. There is so much power in unity.

Lastly, destroying Baal's altar and raising an altar to God was a way of securing victory before the battle against the Midianites. Gideon was removing everything that would not allow God's presence to abide in Israel and establishing God's reign in Israel.

We must always take away anything and everything that will not allow Jesus to reign in our lives and vicinity. We must also ensure that we raise altars unto God.

Before he even confronted the Midianites at all, he was already winning. Jesus has already paid for your victory; whatever He asks you to do, bury the fears and go ahead with it because your victory is assured!

Chapter 3

One would have thought that Baal would rain fire from heaven or strike down the person that destroyed his altar.

However, Baal was powerless before the great and mighty God of Israel. Even though Gideon destroyed the altar at night, the god couldn't do anything to defend himself. Like a toothless bulldog, Baal was powerless before Gideon.

Sometimes, we face adversaries as Christians, and these foes can be the sins that so easily beset us, as the writer of Hebrews puts it. (**Hebrews 12:1**). These sins can be addictions or bad habits, and often, they act like formidable foes.

Understanding what God has said in His word about our authority in Christ is very important if we must overcome these sinful and bad habits. Like Baal, these sins and habits may appear unconquerable until we confront them in the name of the Lord.

Chapter 3

The men worshipping Baal did not realise the limits of his power until Gideon confronted Baal. When confronting sin and evil, we realise that although they look ferocious and undefeatable, they are powerless. Be intentional about confronting evil. Never become comfortable in sin. No matter how tough it appears, it will bow when we confront it with God's power. You can overcome that addiction by confronting it with the help of the Holy Spirit. Take men with you as Gideon did; ***taking men with you can mean praying with friends.*** Confront Baal - that sin, idol, addiction- and you will realise it is powerless. Whatever holds you bound will fall flat in Jesus' name. Amen!

Another thing to note is that Gideon did not pull down Baal's altar because of youthful exuberance; he did it because God instructed him to do it. We have God's word as our manual for life and His Spirit as our constant guide.

It is wise to allow His word and Spirit to teach us how to pull down ungodly, sinful and satanic altars.

Chapter 3

QUESTIONS AND REFLECTIONS

1. Read Genesis 26:25, Genesis 45:1 - 3, Exodus 17:15 and 1 Samuel 14:35. These are short verses; did you learn anything from them? Write them down.

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2. How many servants did Gideon take with him by night to do what God asked him to do?

3. Do you have prayer partners? If not, set out a day in a week to pray together with your friends and stay consistent with it. Having a prayer partner helps you to stay active and consistent in the place of prayer. Who are you thinking of choosing as your prayer partner? List at least three names.

Chapter 3

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4. What is Gideon's other name?

5. Read and memorise Hebrews 12:1 and Psalms 145:13

6. What is the name of the people who gathered behind Gideon after he blew the trumpet?

7. What is the name of the altar Gideon built for the Lord after God told him not to be afraid?

8. Cut off from anything that fuels sin in your life. Be mindful of what you hear, see and allow into your heart.

Henceforth, I cut off from;

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Chapter 3

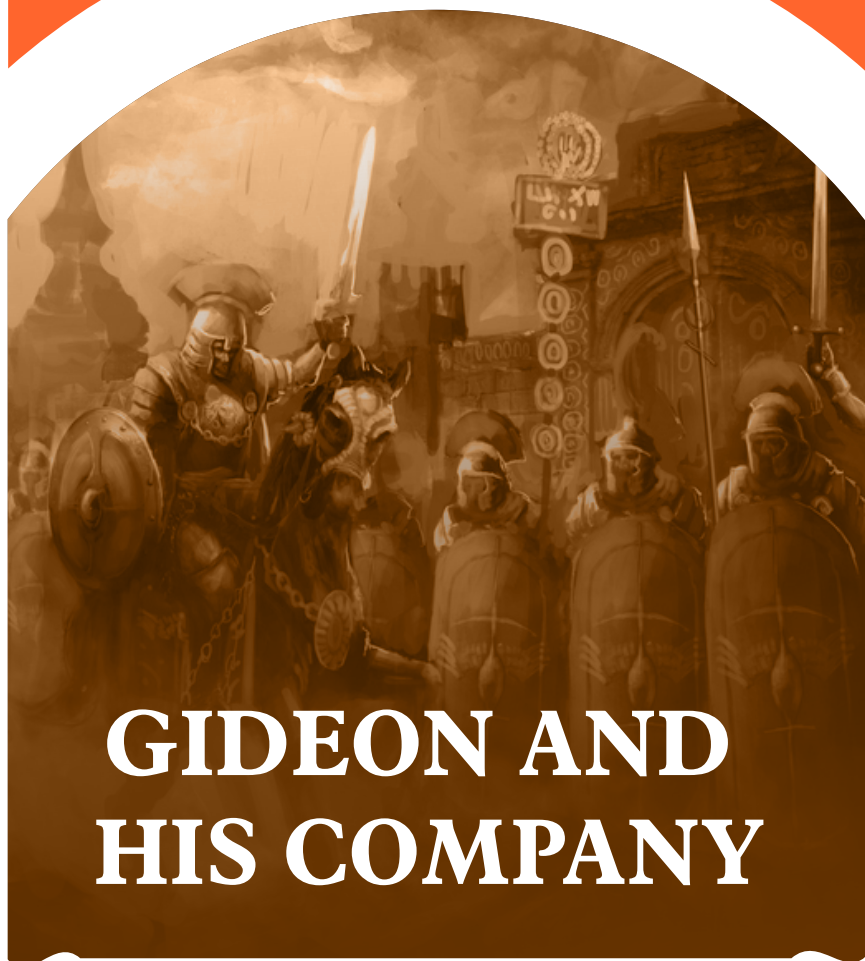
CONFESSION

Lord Jesus, I offer my heart to You as a living altar. Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart always bring pleasure to You.

I declare that Your kingdom reigns in my life and vicinity. I declare Your reign in my state and my country. I pull down everything that will not allow You to reign. Reign, Jesus, Reign.

The Spirit of God empowers me to overcome every negative habit. Sin shall not have dominion over me. I am victorious over sin, negative addictions and evil in Jesus' name. Amen.

Chapter 4



GIDEON AND HIS COMPANY

GIDEON AND HIS COMPANY

FATHERS ARE COVERINGS

JUDGES 6:28-32

28 - "And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, there was the altar of Baal, torn down; and the wooden image that was beside it was cut down, and the second bull was being offered on the altar which had been built.

29 - So they said to one another, "Who has done this thing?" And when they had inquired and asked, they said, "Gideon the son of Joash has done this thing."

30 - Then the men of the city said to Joash, "Bring out your son, that he may die, because he has torn down the altar of Baal, and because he has cut down the wooden image that was beside it."

31 - But Joash said to all who stood against him, "Would you plead for Baal? Would you save him? Let the one who would plead for him be put to death by morning! If he is a god, let him plead for himself, because his altar has been torn down!"

Chapter 4

32 - Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal, saying, "Let Baal plead against him, because he has torn down his altar."

As stated earlier, when the city's men woke up the following day and found Baal's altar in shambles, they began investigating who could have done such a thing.

Their investigation quickly led them to Gideon, the son of Joash. As soon as they discovered who broke Baal's altar down, they asked Joash to hand Gideon over to them so that they could kill him.

They wanted to avenge their god. However, Joash refused and told the people that if Baal was a god, he could and would avenge himself.

Chapter 4

He also told them that fighting for the god was unacceptable because the god might turn against anybody that wanted to plead or fight for him. Joash's words saved Gideon from being lynched by his kinsmen and the people of Israel.

Joash, Gideon's father, did not have the encounter that Gideon had. He also didn't receive the instructions to pull down Baal's altar and erect an altar for the living God.

However, Joash seemed to think that Gideon did the right thing, and he protected him against the people that wanted to kill him. Understanding the place of fathers in our lives is very important. Your father can be your biological dad, any male authority figure or your spiritual leader.

Even though Joash did not have the revelations that Gideon had, his wisdom saved Gideon from death. God used Joash's experience and wise words to keep the people from taking a rash decision against Gideon.

Chapter 4

Never despise the fathers that God has placed over you. Fathers can be your biological dad and the authority figures around you. They might not have the revelations and knowledge that you possess, but their experience and accumulated years of wisdom can be your safety in difficult seasons.

If Gideon had burst into the meeting to announce to all that cared to hear that he was only doing God's will, he might not have left that place alive because the Israelites had wandered so far away from God that their allegiance was to Baal. They would have killed him on the spot, but Joash's logical argument and wisdom preserved his son's life.

There is an adage that says that what a young boy sees while standing, an older man sees while sitting. Fathers have significant roles to play in our lives, and their covering over us cannot be underestimated.

Chapter 4

Honour your father even if he is an unbeliever. Do not ever be tempted to rubbish his counsels. Even when they are not good counsels, maintain an attitude of honour towards them while you politely decline them.

“Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father...” 1 Timothy 5:1a KJV.

Moses instructs children to honour their fathers and mothers so that their days will be long on earth in Exodus 20:12, and Paul reiterates it in Ephesians 6:2.

We shorten our days when we despise the fathers God has placed over us.

HOLY SPIRIT - THE GREATEST ADVANTAGE

JUDGES 6: 32-35

32 - “Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal, saying, “Let Baal plead against him, because he has torn down his altar.”

Chapter 4

33 - Then all the Midianites and Amalekites, the people of the East, gathered together; and they crossed over and encamped in the Valley of Jezreel.

34 - But the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon; then he blew the trumpet, and the Abiezrites gathered behind him.

35 - And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh, who also gathered behind him. He also sent messengers to Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali; and they came up to meet them.”

The next company Gideon had was the Holy Spirit.

After Joash told the people to allow Baal to fight for himself, he gave Gideon a new name, Jerubbaal. This name means Baal should plead against Gideon for throwing down his altar.

He wanted this to remind everyone present that Baal was not as powerful as they thought because he couldn't defend himself. After this meeting, the Midianites and Amalekites gathered together as usual against the Israelites.

Chapter 4

They pitched their tents in the valley of Jezreel. Unlike previous times when Gideon went hiding because of these enemies, the Spirit of God came upon him this time, and he blew a trumpet.

The people of Abiezer who heard the trumpet gathered unto him. Then, Gideon also sent messengers to other places in Israel, and those people came to meet him. It was time for war.

What Gideon could not do in previous years became possible when God's Spirit came upon him. The enemies he was always hiding from suddenly seemed conquerable because the Spirit of God empowered him. There is this story of a soldier that some people killed. These people used knives and machetes to kill this man. When his corpse was taken to the morgue, a gun was found in his pocket, and the gun he had on him was a loaded high-tech weapon. Even though this man was armed, he died cheaply because he refused to use his weapon.

Chapter 4

As Christians, the Holy Spirit is our greatest advantage. Without Him, we will always live in fear and cowardice. However, with Him, we can triumph against all odds. Gideon did what was humanly impossible because of the help of God's Spirit.

He blew a trumpet. A trumpet was an instrument of war; it was used in the Bible to gather the Israelites for battle. (Numbers 10:9). Gideon was filled with boldness and declared war against the enemies of Israel because of God's Spirit.

But the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon; then he blew the trumpet, and the Abiezrites gathered behind him. Vs 34

One of the things that the Holy Spirit empowers us with is boldness. When the Holy Spirit came upon Peter, timid Peter became so bold in words that three thousand men were convicted as he spoke. God has not given us His Spirit for decorative purposes.

Chapter 4

The Spirit of the God who made the heavens and the earth lives in us so we can live triumphantly. It is, therefore, a sad reality when believers underutilise the grace, wisdom and power of the Holy Spirit in them.

As believers, we must seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit daily and submit to be led by Him in all our ways.

In continuation of the actions of Gideon after the Spirit of God came upon him, he gathered a large troop of people because of the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

Those afraid of the Midianites and Amalekites became bold and confrontational when they heard Gideon's trumpet. Others also became courageous when the messengers of Gideon called them to battle.

35 - And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh, who also gathered behind him. He also sent messengers to Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali; and they came up to meet them."

Chapter 4

We can achieve impossible feats when we are filled with the Spirit of God. Zechariah prophesied to Zerubbabel that completing the temple that had been abandoned for over 16 years would not be by power nor by might; but by the Spirit of the Lord. **Zechariah 4:6.**

The Midianites terrorised the Israelites for seven years but were confronted when God's Spirit came upon one man. Often, God doesn't need a multitude to attain victory: He needs just one Spirit-filled and Spirit-empowered man.

Another important lesson here is that Gideon's boldness was contagious. Although nobody was around when God's Spirit came upon him, the effect of his encounter was felt far and wide. Men of Israel gathered themselves unto him from different places in Israel.

Chapter 4

We inspire others to follow God when we yield ourselves to the Lord. Our obedience leads other people to salvation, and our surrender makes others willing to follow God all the way.

God seeks just one man who will surrender to be empowered. With that man, He can alter a civilisation and overthrow strongholds that have terrorised nations for decades. Be that one man today.

After the people gathered unto Gideon, he became afraid again. He was scared because he was aware of his limitations. He wanted to be sure that he was God's chosen candidate for the job; therefore, he asked God to prove that He would save Israel through his hand.

Gideon told God that he would put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor and that he wanted God to make the fleece wet with dew and the ground around it dry. The next day when Gideon woke up, the ground was dry while the fleece was filled with water

Chapter 4

The water Gideon squeezed from the fleece filled a bowl. This first sign, however, was not enough for Gideon because he asked for a reverse sign of what God did with the fleece the first time.

He told God he wanted the ground wet while the fleece remained dry. Again, God gave Gideon the sign he requested.

JUDGES 6:36-40

36 - "So Gideon said to God, "If You will save Israel by my hand as You have said-

37 - 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."

38 - 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.

Chapter 4

39- 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."

40 - And God did so that night. It was dry on the fleece only, but there was dew on all the ground."

In these verses, we see God's patience and kindness on display. Even after revealing Himself to Gideon and empowering him with His Spirit, Gideon was still weak in faith, and he still wanted God to prove that He would deliver the Israelites through his hand.

Gideon's repeated requests for signs didn't make God furious at him. Instead, God went the extra mile to put Gideon's heart at rest. God says in His word that He will not crush the weakest reed or put out a flickering candle.

Isaiah 42:3a

Chapter 4

God's infinite patience was brought to play with Gideon's repeated demands. His patience was also revealed when He called Moses to deliver the Israelites from the hand of Pharaoh. Exodus 3 and 4. God understands our weak frame and is patient in His dealings with us.

Another lesson here is that Gideon didn't doubt the power and ability of God by asking for those signs; he doubted his ability. He wondered if he was the suitable vessel to champion the cause of delivering the Israelites from the Midianites.

He didn't doubt that the Midianites would be defeated; he was only sceptical about his role in defeating them. Gideon wasn't tempting God; neither was he asking for those signs for selfish purposes.

Unlike Satan, that wanted Jesus to turn stones into bread for selfish reasons, Gideon wanted God to give him those signs to strengthen his faith.

Chapter 4

He wanted God to validate his role in the assignment on ground. As already stated, God knows our frame, and He will patiently help us as we grow in faith when we ask for His help.

GOD'S LITTLE ARMY

JUDGES 7:1

1 - "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.

Interestingly, Gideon is addressed by the new name his father gave him in this chapter. He was called Jerubbaal. Using this name must have reminded Gideon constantly that if God could defeat Baal, then the Midianites were as good as vanquished.

Sometimes, God gives us certain revelations in His word, so we will never forget what He has done for us. When the Israelites crossed Jordan, God instructed them to pick stones of remembrance.

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These stones were to be used to tell their children about the miracles God had done in times past. (Joshua 4). Gideon's new name also served this purpose: It was a reminder that God was over and above every enemy. As we read and study God's word, we need to take note of those aspects where God reveals Himself to us in His word. Like the significance of Gideon's new name, know that if God has done it before, He will do it again. Judges 7 starts with the gathering of 32,000 men for the battle against the Midianites.

While the Midianites camped on the North side, these men camped on the other.

"So that the host of the Midianites were on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley." Judges 7:1b.

The air was thick with anticipation when God spoke to Gideon about the size of his army.

God told Gideon that the people with him were too many for Him to use. He told Gideon that using the multitude with him would make the Israelites take God's glory for themselves.

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2 - 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.'"

God never shares His glory with man, never. Whenever we become too much in our own eyes, too strong in our estimation and too good in our judgement, God steps in to cut our overgrown wings.

God cannot stomach man's pride and resists the pride with everything. It is, therefore, essential for us to always maintain a humble heart before God. We must never become too much for God to use. Even though Gideon's army of 32,000 was small compared to the Midianites' army of 135,000, God knew that Israel would vaunt himself against God if the 32,000 men went against the Midianites.

God, therefore, reduced the men so that He alone would take the glory for the victory over the Midianites.

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You didn't pass the exam just because you read; you passed because God helped you.

Your parents have been helpful but are not the sole reason you are comfortable and wealthy. Your wife is not the only reason you have a peaceful home; God is working behind the scenes. Don't be tempted to give God's glory to any man. No one, but God, deserves it.

Numbers do not move God the way they move men. Multitudes do not move God. He works with those whose hearts are right before Him regardless of their numbers. As the famous adage says: One with God is a majority.

When God is for us and with us, even when we are very little in number, nothing against us will succeed.

After God told Gideon that the people with him were too many, He told him to ask those fearful to return home. Twenty-two thousand men packed their war gear and bags and returned home, and only ten thousand men were left with Gideon.

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JUDGES 7:3

"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."

Not everyone begins a race that ends it, and not everybody who starts a journey with you will also complete it. It would not have been wise for Gideon to become sentimental because of the 22,000 men that left.

They were too scared to continue in the battle, and forcing them to stay would have discouraged others eventually. It is wise to understand this so that you will not hold grudges against people whose temporary stay in your life is over.

Another important lesson is that fear cripples a man from attaining destiny when allowed to rule. Fear paralyzes people and makes them unable to carry out a task or an assignment given to them.

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Gideon started afraid but didn't allow fear to take over his mind. These other men, however, were termed as fearful and afraid. It was a double description because these men had allowed fear to take hold of their minds and were now under its control. It was, therefore, easy for them to turn back from the battlefield.

Seven years under the rule of the brutal Midianites had crushed the spirit of these men, and they had allowed the circumstances they faced to define them. We will go through frightening situations in life, but we must never let these situations define our outlook or crush our spirit.

The Scripture rightly asks: ***A person's spirit sustains him through sickness- but who can bear a crushed spirit?***

Proverbs 18:14(NET). When a man's spirit is crushed, he doesn't have the strength to stand and fight on the day of battle.

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Regardless of the things you face, never allow the fear of the past, fear of present circumstances, or fear of future to overwhelm and rob you of what God wants to do in you and through you.

No matter how bad things have become, we are victorious in Jesus Christ. Even when fear stares you in the face, never allow it to rule your spirit.

After the 22,000 men left the battleground, Gideon must have been discouraged at first. Then, when he counted them, and there were still 10,000 men, he probably heaved a sigh of relief. But God wasn't finished yet. God came again and told Gideon that the men with him were still too many.

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JUDGES 7: 4-8

4 - "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."

5 - 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."

6 - 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.

7 - 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."

8 - So the people took provisions and their trumpets in their hands. And he sent away all the rest of Israel, every man to his tent, and retained those three hundred men. Now the camp of Midian was below him in the valley."

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He further instructed Gideon to bring the men to the water so He (God) could test them there. When these 10,000 men got to the river, God told Gideon to separate those who got on their knees and drank directly from the river from those who scooped the water into their hands and lapped it like dogs.

Those who got on their knees were nine thousand seven hundred men, while those who scooped the water into their hands and lapped like dogs were three hundred men.

Gideon then got the final shocker from God, who said,

“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.” (Verse 7).

Gideon sent the 9,700 men back home while he retained the 300 men.

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This number, however, was still too much for God to use. God still took 9,700 men and left Gideon with only 300 men. God does not want us to rely on our strength and abilities; He wants us to depend on Him and will always bring us to that place where we trust and rely on Him alone.

To reduce the number of the remaining men, God asked Gideon to take them to the river. Two categories of soldiers emerged from the river: those who knelt to drink water and those who put the water in their hands to drink.

These men did not even know that God was testing them for the next level. They thought they were having a good drink before the battle.

Sometimes, God tests us in ordinary situations to know what is in our hearts and whether we are ready for the next phase of our lives. God tested King Hezekiah in another typical situation to know what was in his heart.

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"So when the envoys arrived from the Babylonian officials to visit him and inquire about the sign that occurred in the land, God left him alone to test him, in order to know his true motives." (2 Chronicles 32:31 NET).

The two categories of soldiers at the riverside also have something to teach us. Those who knelt to drink water were so engrossed in the drinking activity that they weren't aware of their surroundings, unlike those who lapped from their hands.

When we become too engrossed in worldly activities as believers, we render ourselves unfit for God's work. Those who drank kneeling would have been tempted to drink too much and were not vigilant of their surroundings as they drank.

God wants us to be sober and vigilant as believers. Some things that will hinder us from being sober and vigilant are selfishness, gluttony, offences and distractions by screens and social media.

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Whatever will not allow us to consistently maintain a posture of sobriety and vigilance will rob us of becoming God's end-time battle axe. We must ensure that our hearts are always right before God so that we can always be weapons in His hands.

As mentioned, God reduced the number of soldiers from 32,000 to 300. Against the Midianites' soldiers of 135,000, the 300 men were like a dot amid an ocean. Yet, God knew that this dot was all that was needed for total victory.

JUDGES 7:4-8

4 - "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."

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5 - 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."

6 - 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.

7 - 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."

8 - So the people took provisions and their trumpets in their hands. And he sent away all the rest of Israel, every man to his tent, and retained those three hundred men. Now the camp of Midian was below him in the valley."

Gold is often purified through exposure to high-temperature heat or chemical solutions. The purer gold is, the more valuable and expensive it becomes. As believers, God takes us through certain processes to prune us and make us fit for His work. He takes our consecrations very seriously. He is holy, and He wants us to be holy too.

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John 15:3 states: ***Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.*** God's word is likened to water in Ephesians 5:26. Taking those men to the water was like exposing them to God's word.

God's word exposes our true nature just as fire exposes the impurities in gold. We must always read and study God's word so our hearts will constantly be purified of dirt and impurities. When those men got to the water, the selfish and careless people were exposed and sent back home, while those who were vigilant continued to the next phase. When God's word reveals our weaknesses, it is for our salvation.

Even though those 9,700 men did not participate in the initial victory, they were still helpful later on. God prunes us so that we can bear more fruits.

He exposes the darkness in us, not to ultimately disqualify us, but to give us time to make the necessary adjustments.

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Lastly, God assured Gideon that He would save the Israelites and defeat the Midianites through the 300 men. Even though the Israelite soldiers were at a complete disadvantage number-wise, they were just the perfect number for God to use.

God knows exactly what we need to gain total victory over the works of darkness. It is wise to trust His judgement at all times.

GIDEON AND HIS SERVANT

After God made his final selection of soldiers, He came to Gideon that night to give him a spy job. God told him to go into the enemy's camp and that if he was afraid to go there alone, he should take his servant, Purah, along.

JUDGES 7:7-10 KJV

7 - "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."

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8 - So the people took provisions and their trumpets in their hands. And he sent away all the rest of Israel, every man to his tent, and retained those three hundred men. Now the camp of Midian was below him in the valley.

9 - It happened on the same night that the Lord said to him, "Arise, go down against the camp, for I have delivered it into your hand.

10 - But if you fear to go down, go thou with Purah thy servant down to the host"

Again, we see God's merciful and gracious nature at work. God knew that going into the enemy's camp would be scary for Gideon, and He made allowance for him to go with his servant, Purah.

God loves us so much and always wants to help us obey His instructions. He is not a stern headmaster that gives complex tasks and waits nearby with a cane to severely punish defaulters. He is the One who works in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure. Philippians 2:13.

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Although Purah was a servant, God knew he was the right person to go with Gideon. God called this servant by name and nominated him as the best person to do the spy job with Gideon.

Never despise any man. Sometimes, those we think are low-class or inexperienced people might be the best company for us at certain seasons in life.

It is, therefore, wisdom not to look down on any man because of their low position in life. Samuel would have made the wrong judgement if God hadn't intervened, and he would have chosen those who had the outward carriage of a king but didn't have the virtues that make a true king.

The people around you matter. No man can thrive in isolation, and your friends will go a long way to determine whether you will succeed in your assignment.

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Daniel had the right company, and because of this, he scaled through difficult seasons successfully. On the other hand, Dinah met disaster because she was with the wrong company. Who are your friends? What are their values about life?

Are your friends fearful people who run in their shadows, or are they brave souls who do things afraid? God knew that Purah would not add to Gideon's fear - He knew Purah was an asset to Gideon, not a liability, and this turned out to be absolutely correct.

QUESTIONS AND REFLECTIONS

1. Do you have any spiritual father or mentor? If you don't have one, pray that God will give you your father. It is safe to have someone you are accountable to.
2. Read Proverbs 1:8 – 33. What lessons can you draw from these verses?

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3. Carefully reread Romans 8. Read the whole chapter.
4. How many men did Gideon first gather to fight the Midianites?
5. How many soldiers did the Midianites have?
6. Every morning, if you can, and you should, before setting out, always pray for the infilling of the Holy Spirit.
7. Read Isaiah 44:3 - 4, Luke 11:13, and John 7:37 - 39.

Write out the lessons you learn from these verses.

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9. How many men left because they were afraid?
10. How many men did Gideon finally go with to fight the Midianites?
11. Develop the habit of always asking God for help when you feel tired and exhausted. Don't carry on; stop and ask God for help. Actually, before starting anything whatsoever, always, at every point in time, ask God for help.
12. In Judges 7, what is the name of the servant of Gideon that God told him to take with him if he was afraid?
13. In how many companies did Gideon divide the 300 men?
14. Read Psalm 103:8 - 14, Isaiah 43:1 - 2, 41:10. Write the lessons learnt.

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14. Read Isaiah 42:8, 48:11 and memorize 2 Corinthians 12:9.

Write out the lessons learnt.

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15. Read 2 Timothy 1:7, Romans 8:15 and 1 John 4:18.

Write the lessons learnt.

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16. Read 1 Peter 5:8, 1:13 and memorize Ephesians 4:27.

Write out the lessons learnt.

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CONFESSION

I enjoy the grace to honour the fathers God has placed in my life. I do not despise their experience, wisdom or counsel. My days are long on earth as I honour them. I receive grace to connect with the fathers and mentors that God has assigned to help me fulfil His plan for my life in Jesus' name.

Dear Holy Spirit, fill me with Your presence and power today. I am empowered by You to overcome every challenge and difficulty in this season in Jesus' name.

Father, thank You for Your patience and mercies towards me. You know my frail frame, and You deal patiently and kindly with me. For this, I am grateful, Lord. Help me deal patiently with others as You deal patiently with me, in Jesus' name.

God has not given me the spirit of fear. Therefore, I am courageous and strong.

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I have a sound mind and make the right decisions at the right time. I do not faint on the day of battle because the Lord is my strength.

I choose to trust in You alone. Please help me always to be sober and vigilant. I refuse to be self-centred and careless in Jesus' name. Amen.

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FOLLOWING GOD'S PARTTERN

FOLLOWING GOD'S PARTTERN

JUDGES 7:11-15

11 - *“and you shall hear what they say; and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp.” Then he went down with Purah his servant to the outpost of the armed men who were in the camp.*

12 - *Now the Midianites and Amalekites, all the people of the East, were lying in the valley as numerous as locusts; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the seashore in multitude.*

13 - *And when Gideon had come, there was a man telling a dream to his companion. He said, “I have had a dream: To my surprise, a loaf of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian; it came to a tent and struck it so that it fell and overturned, and the tent collapsed.”*

14 - *Then his companion answered and said, “This is nothing else but the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel! Into his hand God has delivered Midian and the whole camp.”*

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15 - And so it was, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, that he worshiped. He returned to the camp of Israel, and said, "Arise, for the Lord has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand."

After God told Gideon to go with Purah, He told him that he would hear certain things in the enemy's camp and that those things he heard would strengthen his heart. Gideon obeyed God's instructions and went with Purah to the enemy's camp.

When they arrived at the enemy's camp, Gideon heard one of the soldiers talking to another soldier about his dream. In the dream, he saw a loaf of barley bread tumble into the camp of the Midianites.

This loaf of bread struck a tent, and the tent fell over and collapsed. After narrating the dream, the other soldier exclaimed, "This is nothing else but the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel! Into his hand God has delivered Midian and the whole camp." (Verse 14).

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The dream and the interpretation of the dream were great assurances to Gideon's heart. After hearing them, he fell and worshiped God. Then, he returned to the camp and prepared his men for battle.

Obedying God immediately was very important in this mission. If Gideon had decided to wait until a more convenient time before he went to the enemy's camp, he would probably have missed this dream and its interpretation.

When God says move, don't wait to think or calculate things. Obey God promptly.

These verses also show that what we listen to matters a lot. Hearing that the enemies he was afraid of were terrified of him must have caused Gideon's faith to skyrocket.

What Gideon heard strengthened his heart and his faith, and made him bow in worship to God, and energised him to set his soldiers in motion.

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What we give our ears to matters a lot. What are you listening to? Who are you listening to? Humanity was plunged into darkness when Eve started listening to the devil.

One of the most important instructions that Jesus gave his disciples was '**take heed what you hear**'. (Mark 4:24). What we listen to will determine to a large extent how we will turn out in life. When the ten spies came with an evil report of the Promised Land, it made the Israelites despair.

Take heed to the songs you listen to and the words you pay attention to on social media. Don't listen to depressing and discouraging news if you love your mental and spiritual sanity.

Surround yourself with godly and positive things, and most importantly, pay utmost attention to God's word. Read and listen to it day and night and meditate on it.

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God's word is life to our bones and health to all our flesh. Paying attention to God's word always pays. Paul told Timothy that in the last days, many would depart from the faith because they would give heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.

What we listen to can take us away from the faith or make us stronger in faith. Take heed to what you hear.

As already narrated, Gideon went to the Midianite camp as God instructed and heard a man sharing his dream with his companion. The Midianite soldier that had a dream did not know that an enemy was listening to him. He thought he was alone with his companion as he shared his dream. Both the dream and the interpretation were pivotal to their eventual defeat. Unknown to them, their private conversation gave Gideon the boost he needed to annihilate them.

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JUDGES 7: 11-15

11 - "and you shall hear what they say; and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp." Then he went down with Purah his servant to the outpost of the armed men who were in the camp.

12 - Now the Midianites and Amalekites, all the people of the East, were lying in the valley as numerous as locusts; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the seashore in multitude.

13 - And when Gideon had come, there was a man telling a dream to his companion. He said, "I have had a dream: To my surprise, a loaf of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian; it came to a tent and struck it so that it fell and overturned, and the tent collapsed."

14 - Then his companion answered and said, "This is nothing else but the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel! Into his hand God has delivered Midian and the whole camp."

15 - And so it was, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, that he worshiped. He returned to the camp of Israel, and said, "Arise, for the Lord has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand."

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Our dreams are important, and so are their interpretations. Throughout the Scriptures, God speaks to people through their dreams. Joseph, Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Joseph, the husband of Mary, Peter and Paul are examples of people that received divine instructions in their dreams.

This Midianite understood his dream was important, so he shared it with his companion.

Who we allow to interpret our dreams also matters. The companion that interpreted the Midianite's dream was accurate in his interpretation. He knew precisely who the loaf of barley bread represented and what the tent symbolised. He also declared that the dream meant God would deliver Midian and its hosts to be destroyed through Gideon's sword.

His interpretations were prophetic. Although the loaf of bread could in no way be compared to the tent, it was God's chosen instrument of warfare.

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It is also important to note that the bread the man saw in his dream was barley bread. Only the poorest citizens usually ate barley bread as opposed to wheat bread.

God was revealing that Gideon, who came from a very humble background, would be the one to defeat the Midianites. God always chooses the foolish things of the world to confound the wise and the weak things of the world to confound the mighty things. (1 Corinthians 1:27).

When we have dreams, whether dreams of the night or dreams/visions of the heart, it is vital to choose wisely the people we allow to interpret them. Wrong interpretations will not only endanger us; they might also lead to the loss of that dream.

The source of our dreams is also essential. Just as God gives instructive and warning dreams, the devil also tries to manipulate people,

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events and outcomes through dreams. One of the ways to know the source of our dreams is to pray and seek God's face about them. The word of God is also an excellent litmus test to check the authenticity of our dreams.

Also, the people who hear our dreams and the environment we share them in matter greatly. Joseph got into massive trouble because he shared his dreams with his brothers.

At this, his brothers replied, “Do you really think you're going to rule us or lord it over us?” So they hated him even more because of his dreams and his interpretations of them. Genesis 37:8 ISV.

Come, now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast has devoured him: and we will see what will become of his dreams. Genesis 37:20 KJV.

This Midianite was also unaware that the enemy was listening to his dreams. Moses' vision to take the Israelites

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to the Promised Land got truncated because doubters and unbelieving believers surrounded him. (Deuteronomy 4:21 - 22).

God became angry with Moses after He instructed him to speak to a rock to bring forth water, and Moses, triggered by his frustration and anger over the complaining Israelites, struck the rock. (Numbers 20:8-11). If the environment is not right, keep the dream to yourself.

After Gideon left the enemy's camp with his servant, Purah, he went to rally his 300 men for battle. He told them that they already had the victory before the battle. Then, he divided the men into three companies.

He put a trumpet in every man's hand, along with empty pitchers. Afterwards, he instructed them to look at him and imitate whatever he did. He told them that when he blew his trumpet, they should do likewise and proclaim, 'the sword of the Lord and Gideon'.

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JUDGES 7:16-18

16 - "Then he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put a trumpet into every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and torches inside the pitchers.

17 - And he said to them, "Look at me and do likewise; watch, and when I come to the edge of the camp you shall do as I do:

18 - When I blow the trumpet, I and all who are with me, then you also blow the trumpets on every side of the whole camp, and say, 'The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!'"

Gideon's battle strategy is weird. After announcing to his men that they were warring from victory, he armed them with trumpets and pitchers. Except for their proclamation of the sword of the Lord and Gideon, none of these soldiers had swords or standard battle weapons. What a risk! Who goes to a battle with a pitcher and a trumpet? Worse still, they were only 300 against 135 000, and they still had the confidence to go into battle without any weapons.

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Again, we see God's wisdom at play. Not only were they too small compared to the enemy's army, but they also did not possess the sophisticated weapons that the enemy had.

Even though it is not mentioned when God told Gideon to use this strategy, we know clearly that it is a divine strategy. God's ways are not our ways; neither are His thoughts our thoughts. His thoughts and ways are higher than ours, just as the heavens are higher than the earth. (Isaiah 55:8-9).

A rational and natural man would have scoffed at Gideon's army and battle strategy. However, spiritual things are always foolish to the natural mind because they are spiritually discerned. (1 Corinthians 2:14).

The next time the Lord instructs you to do something, and that thing seems naturally foolish, don't hesitate to obey.

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God's ways often do not make sense to the natural mind. Feeding five thousand men with five loaves of bread and two fish is definitely abnormal. Yet, this is God's way of doing things.

Have you read about how God asked the children of Israel to move around a mighty wall once for seven days and seven times on the seventh day to bring down the wall? How does this make sense to the natural man? They didn't have to hit the wall with anything; all they did was obey God's seemingly foolish instructions, and the wall fell flat. No matter how foolish God's instructions appear, go ahead and do it.

Another important lesson here is that Gideon divided the men into three companies. Sometimes, God reduces things into smaller companies to effectively make the best use of them. When Jesus wanted to feed the multitude, He told the disciples to make them sit in companies of the fifties. (Luke 9:14). If you are a leader, it is crucial to learn this. Sometimes, the most effective way to get people to play their part is to have them in smaller companies.

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This is why many churches have units, departments and home cells. As a believer, learning from this and staying in your company is also important. Even though the physical body is one, it has many systems; and every part of the body belongs to a system. Know your company, stay there and function well. Don't be a stray person or a lone ranger.

After Gideon instructed his men on what to do, he and the company of hundred men with him went closer to the enemy's camp. Since Gideon had gone there before, it was easy to lead his men there. When they got there, they did as Gideon commanded.

All three companies of men blew their trumpets and broke their pitchers. Then, they held their torches in their left hands and cried, 'The sword of the Lord and Gideon'. They did this at the dead of the night, just at the beginning of the middle watch.

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The sounds of the blaring trumpets woke and terrified the enemies, while the raised torches made them think that a mighty host had surrounded them. The effect of this was massive as the Midianites fled. As they ran, God made them turn against one another, and they began to kill one another. The victory that God promised Gideon had become a reality.

JUDGES 7:19-23

19 - “So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the outpost of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, just as they had posted the watch; and they blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers that were in their hands.

20 - Then the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers—they held the torches in their left hands and the trumpets in their right hands for blowing—and they cried, “The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!”

21 - And every man stood in his place all around the camp; and the whole army ran and cried out and fled.

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22 - When the three hundred blew the trumpets, the Lord set every man's sword against his companion throughout the whole camp; and the army fled to Beth Acacia, toward Zererah, as far as the border of Abel Meholah, by Tabbath.

23 - And the men of Israel gathered together from Naphtali, Asher, and all Manasseh, and pursued the Midianites.”

Before Gideon could experienced the realities of the victory God promised him, there was work to do. Gideon had to obey all of God's instructions the way God wanted before he experienced the victory he already had.

Often, we already have victory in the spirit, but before it can be manifested in the physical, there are instructions we must follow. Whenever we despise God's instructions, we delay our miracles: and every time we refuse to do God's things in God's ways, we hinder our blessings.

Even though God had proclaimed the victory and the enemies had declared their defeat, Gideon had to position his men to actualise the victory strategically.

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Another important lesson is the time Gideon went against the enemy; He went there at the beginning of the middle watch. In ancient Israel, time was divided into watches, and the middle watch was around 10 pm to 2 am.

At a strategic moment when the enemy was deep asleep, Gideon struck. Unlike the first time when he pulled down the altar of Baal at night, Gideon did not make this move in the night because he was afraid but because he knew that was the best time to enforce his victory over the enemy.

Understanding times and seasons is crucial. However, knowing what to do during each time and season is much more critical. Gideon knew the best time to strike, and the result of launching out at that time was phenomenal.

Finally, it was evident that Gideon and his men did not need to fight initially in that battle because the Lord caused the enemies to turn against themselves. God's wisdom played out here because it was now evident why Gideon and his men did not need the swords at first.

Chapter 5

The enemies' sword was used against themselves. God is the only wise God, and it is wise to trust Him always. (1 Timothy 1:17). Even though Gideon didn't lift a sword against the enemy, he had to fulfil his part of submitting to God and obeying all His instructions. From Gideon, we see that when we submit to God, we have the boldness and authority to resist the enemy, and he will flee. (James 4:7).

QUESTIONS AND REFLECTIONS

1. Read 1 Timothy 4:1 - End. Write out at least five lessons from what you have just read.

Write out the lessons learnt.

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Chapter 5

2. Find the strength to delete every song that gratifies the flesh from your devices. Fill it up immediately with songs that would help your spirit grow to maturity.
3. It is usually very easy to forget dreams. Get a book by your bedside to record your dreams. Pray to God for the gift of interpretation.
4. Read Job 4:12 - 13

Write out the lessons learnt.

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5. Choose to commit yourself to a cell unit. Also, join a department in church. There is power in being a smaller group.

Chapter 5

6. What instruments did the Israelites use to destroy the Midianites?
7. Read Isaiah 55:8-9, 1 Corinthians 12 and Psalms 68:6

Write out the lessons learnt.

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Chapter 5

CONFESSION

Lord Jesus, help me to be more committed to exposing myself to Your word. I choose to listen to godly and faith-strengthening content at all times.

My dreams are alive because God is the source of my dreams. I refuse to open my atmosphere to satanic and demonic manipulations. Satan will not hijack the dreams God gives to me in Jesus' name.

Dear Lord, help me never to become wise in my own eyes. I operate in divine wisdom, and I do not despise the ways of the Lord. I find my company, and I stay there. I function effectively and appropriately, and I give my best for the nourishment and growth of the body. Amen.

Chapter 6



THE DECLINE

JUDGES 7: 24-25

24 - "Then Gideon sent messengers throughout all the mountains of Ephraim, saying, "Come down against the Midianites, and seize from them the watering places as far as Beth Barah and the Jordan." Then all the men of Ephraim gathered together and seized the watering places as far as Beth Barah and the Jordan.

25 - And they captured two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb. They killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb they killed at the winepress of Zeeb. They pursued Midian and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on the other side of the Jordan."

As the enemies fled, Gideon sent messengers throughout Ephraim's mountains. He told the people to come against the Midianites and seize from them the watering places.

Chapter 6

They seized the watering places and captured two princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb. Then, they killed these princes.

Although Gideon started the battle with three hundred men, he knew he needed more men to eradicate the Midianites. Jesus began with twelve disciples, but when the Holy Spirit came, He came upon one hundred and twenty people.

God always starts small with the purpose of multiplication, and He often begins with corn of wheat and then advances until that single seed becomes a forest.

Though thy beginning was small, thy latter end should greatly increase. Job 8:7.

This is God's intention for every faithful believer; to increase us and to advance His kingdom through us. Jesus also described the kingdom in this manner.

Chapter 6

He said that God's kingdom is like a grain of mustard seed which, although is the least of all seeds, becomes the greatest of herbs when it grows. (**Matthew 13:31-32**). No man faithfully follows God and remains small. Gideon needed the other men of Israel to achieve complete victory. You need other believers to survive, and I pray that God will send the men required to help you accomplish all He has in store for you in Jesus' name.

Another lesson here is that Gideon sent messengers throughout the mountains of Ephraim to call men to join in the battle. We are like these messengers; we have been sent to tell men about the victory that Jesus has gotten for humankind over sin and Satan.

We must faithfully proclaim what we have been sent to proclaim. Those messengers did as they were told, and their obedience added more men to the battle on ground. The men of Ephraim, not Gideon, were the ones that killed the princes of Midian.

Chapter 6

Their part in the battle was crucial. As a messenger of Christ, do not fail to declare the good news of Jesus to others. Let your words stir up men's hearts to join in the battle against the forces of darkness.

Preach the gospel to others in season and out of season.

Recruit men into God's kingdom.

As the battle raged on, the men of Ephraim who killed the princes of Midian became contentious and furious at Gideon. They spoke angrily to him because they felt left out. They asked him why he didn't invite them to the battle from the beginning.

Unlike their sharp words, Gideon responded kindly to them. He reminded them of the enormous part they played in the battle. He also redirected their focus to God, who had given them victory over the princes of Midian. After saying this to them, their anger subsided. See what he said;

Chapter 6

JUDGES 8:1-3

1 - "Now the men of Ephraim said to him, "Why have you done this to us by not calling us when you went to fight with the Midianites?" And they reprimanded him sharply.

2 - So he said to them, "What have I done now in comparison with you? Is not the gleanings of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer?"

3 - God has delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb. And what was I able to do in comparison with you?" Then their anger toward him subsided when he said that."

Gideon is an example of a wise leader. He understood how important it was to quench the fire of jealousy and discontent among the people and how dangerous it was for them to be divided on the battleground.

Instead of brushing off the men's concerns, he redirected their focus to what was truly important; what God had done through all of them. Peter and the apostles also faced a similar case of discontent when the widows of the Grecians began to murmur that they were being neglected.

Chapter 6

The apostles also acted wisely by setting deacons over the people to handle the matter (**Acts 6**).

Wisdom is always necessary when working with people. We must learn to follow peace with all men. (Hebrews 12:14). It is also essential to destroy every seed of division, discontent, jealousy and gossip before it grows.

Gideon used a soft answer to turn away the wrath of the men of Ephraim. He refused to allow division among the soldiers.

Another important lesson here relates to the attitude of the men of Ephraim. Instead of recognising their critical role in the battle and giving God the glory for helping them play their part, they became jealous and discontent.

They wanted to start an internal battle when the external war raged. It is vital to guard your heart against seeds of discontent and jealousy. Never compare yourself with others when God uses you to get something done.

Chapter 6

It is also essential to look beyond ourselves and fix our gaze on what God is doing. The men of Ephraim also wanted personal recognition, and they wanted it to be said of them that they were in the battle from the beginning. When our desire for fame and glory blinds us to the big picture of what God is doing, we become selfish and carnal in our actions. The men of Ephraim became angry and offended at their leader because of their desire to be recognised.

After speaking to the men of Ephraim, Gideon and his men came to Jordan and passed over. He and the three hundred men with him were exhausted, yet they kept pursuing the enemy.

After staying awake all night to pursue the enemy, Gideon and his men were exhausted. They were tired to their bones. Yet, they kept chasing after the enemy despite their exhaustion.

Chapter 6

They knew the battle was not over as long as the Midianites were still alive. The Scriptures tell us that the glory of the youth is their strength. (**Proverbs 20:29**). It also tells us that even the young men will faint and be weary. However, we have the assurance that waiting on the Lord will renew their strength. (**Isaiah 40:30-31**). Sometimes, we get tired and weary as we walk with the Lord. Occasionally, we become discouraged and exhausted.

It is crucial at such moments to hold on to the Lord more tightly than ever. It is essential to keep following Jesus even when we are weak.

Jesus said we would have tribulations in this world and face things that will make us weary. However, He also assured us of victory that His strength is made perfect in our weakness.

Chapter 6

These things I have spoken unto you, that in me you might have peace: In the world you shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. (John 16:33 KJV)

“And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” 2 Corinthians 12:9a KJV.

Weary moments are not moments to stop praying and reading our Bibles. They are not seasons to take a break from God. Someone once said that when you don't feel like praying, pray harder because the enemy wants to make you prayerless so that he can exploit you.

Are you exhausted? Tired? Weary? Don't give up. This is your greatest moment because God's strength is more than sufficient to carry you. He didn't bring you this far to leave you.

Keep pursuing even when you feel weary. God's grace is more than enough to carry you through. On the other hand, the moment you realise that God is no longer involved in your pursuits, please, give up! If God is not involved, you are taking a risk.

Chapter 6

As Gideon and his exhausted men pursued the enemy, they came to Succoth. Gideon pleaded with the men of Succoth to give him bread for his weary men. He told them that he was pursuing the kings of Midian and that his people needed bread to continue in the battle. But the men of Succoth refused.

They taunted Gideon and refused to give him bread. Gideon was furious because of their response and threatened to deal severely with them after the battle. He also went to Penuel and pleaded with them as he pleaded with the men of Succoth for bread for his men. The men of Penuel responded the same way as the men of Succoth. Gideon then promised to break down their tower when he returned from battle.

Gideon, at this point, was exhausted. Yet, his plea for bread was for his men because he wanted them to be strong enough to finish what they had started. Gideon's selflessness here is worthy of emulation.

Chapter 6

As a leader, he put his people first. Another thing to note here is the response of the men of Succoth and Penuel. Succoth and Penuel are located on the other side of River Jordan and belong to the tribe of Gad. These men, therefore, were Israelites. Their response to Gideon's plea for bread was not only callous but utterly selfish.

As Israelites, these men should have been concerned about the welfare of their brethren, but they were not. They were unwilling to spare some bread for their weary soldiers. God frowns at all forms of selfishness and wickedness.

He hates it when we turn away from those in need. He reprimanded the Israelites when they piously did religious activities while withholding their bread from the hungry. (Isaiah 58:7). Pure religion, according to James 1:27, is when we visit others in their afflictions and keep ourselves unspotted from the world.

Chapter 6

God wants us to identify with others in their sorrows and their joys and to love and care for those that are needy. The men of Succoth and Penuel were wrong in their response to Gideon.

Another lesson here is that Gideon spoke rashly to the men of Succoth and Penuel because he was furious at their callousness. God instructs us to leave vengeance to Him.

He is our defence, and when others treat us unjustly, He is more than able to fight for us. Gideon's response here might also have been due to his exhaustion.

It is wise not to react when you are exhausted or angry because you can make rash decisions at such moments. As believers, we must always pray for our leaders. Gideon was tired, and so were his 300 men.

Chapter 6

There was probably no one standing in the gap for him at this moment of great need. Our leaders are humans, and they can make rash decisions. Therefore, praying for them consistently and supporting them in every way we can is essential.

After leaving the men of Succoth and Penuel with threats of revenge, Gideon continued in hot pursuit of the Midianites. Out of the 135,000 Midian soldiers that gathered against the Israelites, only 15,000 men were left.

These men gathered with their kings, Zebah and Zalmunna. Gideon sprung another surprise attack on the remaining Midianite soldiers as they camped at Karkor. He attacked them when their camp felt secure. As the kings fled, he pursued and captured them, and defeated the rest of the army.

Chapter 6

JUDGES 8:10-12

10 - "Now Zebah and Zalmunna were at Karkor, and their armies with them, about fifteen thousand, all who were left of all the army of the people of the East; for one hundred and twenty thousand men who drew the sword had fallen.

11 - Then Gideon went up by the road of those who dwell in tents on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah; and he attacked the army while the camp felt secure.

12 - When Zebah and Zalmunna fled, he pursued them; and he took the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and routed the whole army."

Gideon did not allow the discouraging attitude of the men of Succoth and Penuel to distract him from his mission. He went on pursuing the enemy even after his brethren disappointed him.

We must never allow disappointments and discouragements to keep us from doing what God instructed us. Since men did not call us, men must not stop us from doing what God has called us to do.

Chapter 6

Also, Gideon attacked the camp of the Midianites while they felt secure. It was indeed a foolish thing to become at ease in a time of war. The Midian kings knew that Gideon wanted them dead, yet they allowed themselves to become careless at some point.

We have an enemy who has sworn to keep us out of our godly and goodly heritage as believers, and we can't afford to let down our guard.

The Bible proclaims woe on everyone at ease in Zion. (**Amos 6:1**). Satan is actively searching for Christians to devour; those at ease are his easiest prey. The carelessness of the Midianites eventually cost them their lives.

Another important lesson in these verses is that Gideon did not relent until he captured the kings of Midian because he knew they could always regroup and retaliate if their kings were still alive.

Chapter 6

Unlike Saul, who spared the king of the Amalekites, Agag, Gideon captured the kings of the Midianites. Again, the importance of leaders cannot be overemphasised. Smite the shepherd, and the sheep will scatter. (Mark 14:27).

Gideon went to the root of the matter and attacked those who held Midian together as a nation. When dealing with any problem, it is always wise to address it from its root because this is the only way to manage it effectively and permanently.

After Gideon successfully captured the Midianite kings, he embarked on a mission of retribution against the men of Succoth and Penuel. During this pursuit, he apprehended a young man from Penuel and obtained the names of the leaders and elders of Succoth through him.

Then, he captured the leaders and elders and dealt mercilessly with them. Then, he went to Penuel, tore down their tower and killed the men of the city.

Chapter 6

Afterwards, Gideon interrogated the Kings of Midian about the people they killed at Tabor, and the kings confessed that the men they killed looked like Gideon.

JUDGES 8:13-21

13 - "Then Gideon the son of Joash returned from battle, from the Ascent of Heres.

14 - And he caught a young man of the men of Succoth and interrogated him; and he wrote down for him the leaders of Succoth and its elders, seventy-seven men.

15 - Then he came to the men of Succoth and said, "Here are Zebah and Zalmunna, about whom you ridiculed me, saying, 'Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in your hand, that we should give bread to your weary men?'"

16 - And he took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness and briers, and with them he taugth the men of Succoth.

17 - Then he tore down the tower of Penuel and killed the men of the city.

18 - And he said to Zebah and Zalmunna, "What kind of men were they whom you killed at Tabor?" So they answered, "As you are, so were they; each one resembled the son of a king."

Chapter 6

19 - Then he said, "They were my brothers, the sons of my mother. As the Lord lives, if you had let them live, I would not kill you."

20 - And he said to Jether his firstborn, "Rise, kill them!" But the youth would not draw his sword; for he was afraid, because he was still a youth.

21 - So Zebah and Zalmunna said, "Rise yourself, and kill us; for as a man is, so is his strength." So Gideon arose and killed Zebah and Zalmunna, and took the crescent ornaments that were on their camels' necks."

After their confession that they were responsible for the death of Gideon's siblings, Gideon ordered his first son, Jether, to kill them.

Jether was afraid to do this because he was young. Gideon eventually had to kill the kings and stripped their camels of the ornaments on them afterwards.

Gideon judged two sets of people in these verses: his brethren and his enemies. Even though the judgement meted on the enemy was just, he took revenge on his brethren; and this was wrong.

Chapter 6

When others hurt and maltreat us, God wants us to forgive them. He wants us to be merciful and gracious towards them. Paul instructed the Christians in Galatians to do good to all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. (**Galatians 6:10**).

Another important lesson here is that until we grow spiritually, we won't have the ability and capacity to conquer some enemies. Jether, Gideon's son, couldn't kill the Midian kings because he was young. The reference to his youthfulness here doesn't necessarily mean his age.

David was young when he killed the lion, the bear and Goliath. It means he was immature and unskilled in the art of war. Scriptures record this: But the boy did not take out his sword, fearing because he was still a boy. (**Judges 8:20b**).

Chapter 6

Paul said to the Galatians, "Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, differs nothing from a servant, though he is lord of all." (Galatians 4:1). As long as we remain spiritually immature, we will be afraid to take on certain spiritual responsibilities. It is expedient that we prioritise our spiritual growth so that when the Father gives us challenging tasks, we can handle them with precision and dexterity. As we grow, we learn to judge things more accurately. Our discernment also becomes sharper as we mature in spiritual things.

The word of God helps us grow spiritually. (1 Peter 2:1). Our obedience to divine and human instructions also takes us from one spiritual level to another. The more we grow in God, the more confident we become in our spiritual identity.

After Gideon successfully vanquished the Midianites as God promised, the men of Israel came to him to make him their king. They were awed at his success and wanted him and the generations after him to rule over them.

Chapter 6

However, Gideon turned down their offer. He said, "I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; the LORD shall rule over you." (Verse 23). It is beautiful to appreciate people who go the extra mile for us, and when we are grateful, we attract more blessings and favour.

JUDGES 8:22-23

22 - "Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, "Rule over us, both you and your son, and your grandson also; for you have delivered us from the hand of Midian."

23 - But Gideon said to them, "I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; the Lord shall rule over you."

The men of Israel were grateful to Gideon for allowing himself to be used as the vessel for their deliverance from the Midianites. It was an excellent gesture on their part. However, offering Him the place God alone should take in their lives wasn't a good appreciation gift.

Sometimes, in a bid to show our gratitude, we give others what is not theirs to take. A man once helped a young lady. She desperately needed financial assistance for her accommodation, and the man went the extra mile to help her get the money.

Chapter 6

Even though he didn't know her, he gave her the money without any amorous expectations. When the lady told her friends about the man's generous cash gift, they advised her to go to his house.

They told her that no man gave anything without expecting something else in return. They counselled her to give her body to the man as a gift. The lady did what her friends said and went to the man's house. She met him at home and thanked him profusely for meeting her needs.

Then, she began to make seductive moves at him. Unknown to her, the man's wife was at home. Before the lady could further embarrass herself, the man called his wife and excused himself. The man and his wife were sincere believers, and the woman used that avenue to preach the gospel of salvation to the lady.

Like that lady, many people offer what shouldn't be given in appreciation for what has been gotten. Gideon rightly redirected the people's attention to God, who made the victory possible in the first place.

Chapter 6

He told them that the Lord would rule over them. Many people dance to the tune of their benefactor because they want to show their gratitude. They forget God only used that person and can always raise others to help them.

They stop attending church and serving Jesus because someone God used to help them doesn't like their spiritual hunger. This is not only unwise, but also dangerous. Never be tempted to give what is not yours to give. After redirecting the people's focus to God, Gideon took advantage of their desire to be appreciative. He asked the people to give him the earrings from their loot. The people gladly gave him what he requested, and Gideon made a fortune of one thousand seven hundred shekels of gold from them. Afterwards, Gideon used the gold he had gathered to make an ephod. He set this image up in his city, and many Israelites came there to worship it. Gideon also married many wives, and he had seventy sons from them. The nation of Israel had rested for forty years from their enemies.

Chapter 6

Gideon was not sincere when he redirected the people's attention to God. Instead of using that moment to reveal God to the people, he took advantage of them and exploited them. Even though he told the people that the Lord would rule over them, his heart was far from what he proclaimed.

JUDGES 8:24-30

24 - "Then Gideon said to them, "I would like to make a request of you, that each of you would give me the earrings from his plunder." For they had golden earrings, because they were Ishmaelites.

25 - So they answered, "We will gladly give them." And they spread out a garment, and each man threw into it the earrings from his plunder.

26 - Now the weight of the gold earrings that he requested was one thousand seven hundred shekels of gold, besides the crescent ornaments, pendants, and purple robes which were on the kings of Midian, and besides the chains that were around their camels' necks.

Chapter 6

27 - Then Gideon made it into an ephod and set it up in his city, Ophrah. And all Israel played the harlot with it there. It became a snare to Gideon and to his house.

28 - Thus Midian was subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted their heads no more. And the country was quiet for forty years in the days of Gideon.

29 - Then Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and dwelt in his own house.

30 - Gideon had seventy sons who were his own offspring, for he had many wives."

God does not want us to offer lip service to Him. He wants heartfelt worship and service. As leaders, it is also crucial that we do not use the people God has given us to enrich our pockets. We must be careful not to turn the lively stones God has sent us into bread for personal gains. Gideon didn't only amass a fortune for himself; he used that fortune to lead the people into sin. He made an image that the people began to worship. What started as an expensive image became an idol that distracted God's people.

Chapter 6

It is wrong to use our wealth to create things that lead people away from God. We live in a world where many believers are worldly and carnal. We must guard our hearts against the worship of money and fame, and we must always keep our hearts pure.

When there was little, Gideon served God faithfully and selflessly. However, in the time of plenty, he became spiritually and morally bankrupt. He amassed riches to himself and married a lot of wives.

We must be careful not to forget God in times of prosperity and plenty. Someone once said that the actual test of a man's character is not in times of need but in times of plenty.

Lastly, even though the land had rested from the Midianites for forty years, those years were not spent worshipping God. They were years of more spiritual decadence.

Chapter 6

The people of Israel were back to zero point spiritually, and they forsook the Lord their God and became idol worshippers again. We mustn't allow God's gifts of prosperity, influence and fame to turn us away from serving and worshipping Him.

Gideon did not only have numerous wives, but he also had a concubine that bore him a son, Abimelech. After living for many years, Gideon died at a good old age. As soon as he died, the Israelites returned to the worship of Baal.

JUDGES 8: 31-35

31 - "And his concubine who was in Shechem also bore him a son, whose name he called Abimelech.

32 - Now Gideon the son of Joash died at a good old age, and was buried in the tomb of Joash his father, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

33 - So it was, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel again played the harlot with the Baals, and made Baal-Berith their god.

Chapter 6

34 - Thus the children of Israel did not remember the Lord their God, who had delivered them from the hands of all their enemies on every side;

35 - nor did they show kindness to the house of Jerubbaal (Gideon) in accordance with the good he had done for Israel.”

They even chose one of the Baal gods, Baal-Berith, as their god. They promptly forgot the great deliverance that God had given them from the hands of the Midianites and forgot Gideon as well.

They didn't show any kindness to Gideon's descendants despite his role in their deliverance from their enemies.

The Scriptures rightly say that better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof. (Ecclesiastes 7:8). Gideon, who started well, ended badly—He didn't finish well. In all we do, we need to ask God for grace to finish strong and well. It is not enough to have a beautiful beginning; we must also pray for a glorious end.

Chapter 6

In these verses, we also see how insincere Gideon was when he told the Israelites that he would not rule over them, nor would his sons. The meaning of Abimelech is 'My father is king'. By giving his son this name, Gideon assumed a kingly position over the people.

His false humility before the people earlier is despicable in light of his latter actions. We might deceive men with our actions, but we can't fool God. God knows our secret desires and ambitions; it is wise to expose them before Him and ask Him for help.

Like the proverbial dog returning to its vomit, the Israelites returned to their worship of Baal. As soon as Gideon died, they reverted to their old ways and began to worship Baal.

They completely forgot God. The legacy of spiritual decay Gideon left for the people of Israel in his later years completely overturned all the good he had done when he was younger.

Chapter 6

This ungodly legacy backfired on his descendants because the Israelites didn't show any kindness to them after his demise.

We mustn't allow our good to be evil spoken of because of the way we live. We must also intentionally hand down great spiritual legacies to future generations because we will always reap what we sow.

QUESTION AND REFLECTIONS

1. Read 2 Chronicles 20:1 – End to see a similar story about how God won a battle with almost nothing.

Write out the lessons learnt.

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Chapter 6

2. Read Proverbs 15:1 and Proverbs 25:11.

Write out the lessons learnt.

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3. Memorise Hebrews 12:14

4. Read John 6:33 and 2 Corinthians 12:9.

Write out the lessons learnt.

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Chapter 6

5. Memorise 2 Corinthians 12:9.
6. What are the names of the two princes of Midianites that Gideon captured?
7. Develop the habit of praying for all ministers of God worldwide. To stay consistent, set a specific time and day to pray for them weekly. Leaders get tired; they need our prayers.
8. Read 1 Kings 19:4 - 14 and Isaiah 58. Write out the lessons learnt.

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Chapter 6

- 9. By all means, surround yourself with the right people. While doing this, detach yourself from the wrong ones.
- 10. Don't lose guard. Don't relent. The battle is not over until the end. Keep praying, and keep up the faith. One fundamental way to do this is to pray without ceasing.
- 11. Memorise Amos 6:1 and read Isaiah 32:9 - 11.
- 12. Read Hebrews 5:12 - 13 and memorise 1 Peter 2:2
Write out the lessons learnt.

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Chapter 6

13. Read John 3:27, James 1:17 and 1 Corinthians 4:7.

Write out the lessons learnt.

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Chapter 6

CONFESSION

Dear Lord, help me never to shut my bowels of compassion to those in need. I am merciful as my Father in Heaven is merciful. I take the responsibility to pray for my leaders and support them always in Jesus' name.

Father, help me to deal with issues from their source properly. I refuse to allow the actions of others to hinder me from completing my God-given assignment. I also refuse to become careless and lose my guard in this journey in Jesus' name.

I receive the grace to forgive quickly those who offend me. Help me forgive them always too. I want to grow in grace and the knowledge of You, and I prioritise my spiritual growth in Jesus' name.

Chapter 6

Dear Lord, help me to have a grateful heart always. As I show my appreciation to others, I operate in wisdom, and I do not say thank you with what is not mine to give in Jesus' name.

Father, help me love you in truth and sincerity all the days of my life. In times of nothing and in times of plenty, help me never to waver in my commitment and love for you.
Amen.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Olayemi Emmanuel is not only an educator by profession, but also by purpose. He holds a bachelor's degree in mathematics from the esteemed Ekiti State University in Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria, and a master's degree in education from Anglia Ruskin University in Chelmsford, United Kingdom.

With extensive experience as a mathematics teacher in Nigeria, Emmanuel has cultivated his expertise in education, constantly striving to impact individuals on a personal level. Driven by his firm belief that education can transform lives, he invests in the growth and development of numerous youths. Emmanuel's written works span a wide range of genres, from religious literature to self-help, as he seeks to empower and inspire through his books.

About the Author

He is a Christian who is deeply passionate about assisting fellow believers in understanding the Scriptures and its practical application in their daily lives.

His deep and natural passion to transfer knowledge made him write the first edition of the Good Morning Jesus Daily Devotional book, which he published and donated across Nigeria. He has since written eight more editions of the devotional that continues to bless lives. He is also the author of the new book *Bible Study Hacks*, his latest work.

He is the president of Kingdom Drive Christian Network, an interdenominational community of believers with a single mandate to raise multigenerational Christian soldiers. KDCN runs a campus ministry, The Troops Campus Network in four universities: The University of Ibadan, Ekiti State University and Federal University of Oye Ekiti, Ikole and Oye Campuses.

About the Author

The ministry also plans to run weekly meetings in 2 secondary schools across Nigeria.

Olayemi Emmanuel is married to Olabisi, and they are blessed with two boys: Blessed and Nathaniel.

ABOUT THE BOOK

‘God doesn’t call the qualified: He qualifies the called.’ This saying is true, and Gideon’s story is perfect proof. In the first volume of the Heroes of Faith series, you will be introduced to the humble farmer turned reluctant warrior, Gideon, as he grapples with doubt, faces insurmountable odds, and ultimately discovers his true purpose. You will also journey with the Israelites as they face yet another learning curve in their walk with God in the Promised Land. Gideon’s story is every man’s redemption story, and his life has countless lessons we all need to learn from. As you read each chapter, engage the questions and reflections with an open heart, and let each page draw you into a vital and more intimate relationship with our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. As you turn the final page, you will emerge not only enriched by Gideon’s extraordinary tale but also humbled by how much you need God, especially after a huge victory. You will also be awakened to the boundless potential residing within any heart that fully surrenders to Jesus.