

God Equips Those He Calls

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JUDGES 6-7

This Week's Core

Competency:

Identity in Christ - I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God..

But to all who did receive Him, He gave them the right to be children of God, to those who believe in His name, (John 1:12)

Using This Study

❶ EXAMINE His Word

What does God SAY? Open your time with prayer. The words God uses to communicate matters, so go back and pay close attention to the details that are emphasized or repeated in the passage.

❷ EXPLORE His Word

What does God MEAN? Asking questions of the text helps surface how the details relate to the message God wants to communicate.

❸ EXPAND His Word

How does this FIT? Studying cross references can help expand your understanding of a passage and discover the unity in God's word.

❹ EMBRACE His Word

Why does it MATTER to me? Embrace God by responding to what you discover in His word in faith and obedience.

Introduction

Recently, I saw the preview for the movie "Captain America." Picture a movie set in World War II. A small, frail Steve Rogers is trying to enlist in the army. One quickly gathers two distinct impressions. First, Steve is an earnest patriot who desperately wants to serve his country. Second, multiple recruiters reject him because of his small stature. Coincidentally, an army officer notices Steve's intensity and desire. As a result, Steve is selected for an experimental program. Skip ahead a few scenes. Steve is surrounded by scientists and is strapped into a giant tube where he receives some kind of investigational treatment. When he emerges from the tube, his body has been remade into nearly perfect human form. Steve has become Captain America. Captain America has a fantastic shield and he has been endowed with athleticism, strength, cunning, even charm.

What Steven Roger's lacked, science and training supplied. The man with the heart and mind of a hero was given all the physical necessities to look and perform like a super-soldier. Thus, a hero was made.

How does God choose a hero? What are His pre-requisites? Who will God select to deliver Israel out of Midian's hand?

This Week

Gideon was a farmer. He was, by his own reckoning, unremarkable. He did not have any political ambitions, nor did he aspire to be a great military leader. He seemed to be content with keeping a low profile.

The Gideon story is a story of transformation. God selects a very unlikely hero. We see an extremely cautious man, perhaps even a coward. Yet this man, in God's mighty hands, becomes one of the most celebrated leaders in Israel's history. This story illustrates the well known Christian adage: *God does not call the equipped, he equips the called.*

God is looking for a Gideon for today: an ordinary man or an ordinary woman who will respond to God in faith and step out to fulfill God's calling.

① EXAMINE His Word

What does God SAY? Prayerfully note significant details and terms emphasized in the passage

Judges 6

1 The Israelites did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. So the LORD handed them over to Midian seven years,

2 and they oppressed Israel. Because of Midian, the Israelites made hiding places for themselves in the mountains, caves, and strongholds.

3 Whenever the Israelites planted crops, the Midianites, Amalekites, and the Qedemites came and attacked them.

4 They encamped against them and destroyed the produce of the land, even as far as Gaza. They left nothing for Israel to eat, as well as no sheep, ox or donkey.

5 For the Midianites came with their cattle and their tents like a great swarm of locusts. They and their camels were without number, and they entered the land to waste it.

6 So Israel became poverty-stricken because of Midian, and the Israelites cried out to the LORD.

11 The Angel of the LORD came, and He sat under the oak that was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash, the Abiezrite. His son Gideon was threshing wheat in the wine vat in order to hide it from the Midianites.

12 Then the Angel of the LORD appeared to him and said: "The LORD is with you, mighty warrior."

13 Gideon said to Him, "Please Sir, if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened? And where are all His wonders that our fathers told us about? They said, 'Hasn't the LORD brought us out of Egypt?' But now the LORD has abandoned us and handed us over to Midian."

14 The LORD turned to him and said, "Go in the strength you have and deliver Israel from the power of Midian. Am I not sending you?"

15 He said to Him, "Please, Lord, how can I deliver Israel? Look, my family is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the youngest in my father's house."

16 "But I will be with you," the LORD said to him. "You will strike Midian down as if it were one man."

17 Then he said to Him, "If I have found favor in Your sight, give me a sign that You are speaking with

me.

20 The Angel of God said to him, "Take the meat with the unleavened bread, put it on this stone, and pour the broth on it." And he did so.

21 The Angel of the LORD extended the tip of the staff that was in His hand and touched the meat and the unleavened bread. Fire came up from the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread. Then the Angel of the LORD vanished from his sight.

22 When Gideon realized that He was the Angel of the LORD, he said, "Oh no, Lord GOD! I have seen the Angel of the LORD face to face!"

23 But the LORD said to him, "Peace to you. Don't be afraid, for you will not die."

33 All the Midianites, Amalekites, and Qedemites gathered together, crossed over the Jordan, and camped in the Valley of Jezreel.

34 The Spirit of the LORD took control of Gideon, and he blew the ram's horn and the Abiezrites rallied behind him.

35 He sent messengers throughout all of Manasseh, who rallied behind him. He also sent messengers throughout Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, who also came to meet him.

36 Then Gideon said to God, "If You will deliver Israel by my hand, as You said,

37 I will put a fleece of wool here on the threshing floor. If dew is only on the fleece, and all the ground is dry, I will know that You will deliver Israel by my strength, as You said."

38 And that is what happened. When he got up early in the morning, he squeezed the fleece and wrung dew out of it, filling a bowl with water.

39 Gideon then said to God, "Don't be angry with me; let me speak one more time. Please allow me to make one more test with the fleece. Let it remain dry, and the dew be all over the ground."

40 That night God did as Gideon requested: only the fleece was dry, and dew was all over the ground.

Judges 7

1 Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) and everyone who was with him, got up early and camped beside the spring of Harod. The camp of Midian was north of them, below the hill of Moreh, in the valley.

2 The LORD said to Gideon, “You have too many people for Me to hand the Midianites over to you, or else Israel might brag: ‘I did it myself.’”

3 Now announce in the presence of the people: ‘Whoever is fearful and trembling may turn back and leave Mount Gilead.’” So 22,000 of the people turned back, but 10,000 remained.

4 Then the LORD said to Gideon, “There are still too many people. Take them down to the water, and I will test them for you there. If I say to you, ‘This one can go with you,’ he can go. But if I say about anyone, ‘This one cannot go with you,’ he cannot go.”

5 So he brought the people down to the water, and the LORD said to Gideon, “Separate everyone who laps water with his tongue like a dog. Do the same with everyone who kneels to drink.”

6 The number of those who lapped with their hands to their mouths was 300 men, and all the rest of the people knelt to drink water.

7 The LORD said to Gideon, “I will deliver you with the 300 men who lapped and hand the Midianites over to you. But everyone else is to go home.”

8 So Gideon sent all the Israelites to their tents but kept the 300, who took the people’s provisions and their trumpets. The camp of Midian was below him in the valley.

9 That night the LORD said to him, “Get up and go into the camp, for I have given it into your hand.

10 But if you are afraid to go to the camp, go with Purah your servant.

11 Listen to what they say, and then you will be strengthened to go to the camp.” So he went with Purah his servant to the outpost of the troops who were in the camp.

12 Now the Midianites, Amalekites, and all the Qedemites had settled down in the valley like a swarm of locusts, and their camels were as innumerable as the sand on the seashore.

13 When Gideon arrived, there was a man telling his friend about a dream. He said, “Listen, I had a dream: a loaf of barley bread came tumbling into the

Midianite camp, struck a tent, and it fell. The loaf turned the tent upside down so that it collapsed.”

14 His friend answered: “This is nothing less than the sword of Gideon son of Joash, the Israelite. God has handed the entire Midianite camp over to him.”

15 When Gideon heard the account of the dream and its interpretation, he bowed in worship. He returned to Israel’s camp and said, “Get up, for the LORD has handed the Midianite camp over to you.”

16 Then he divided the 300 men into three companies and gave each of the men a trumpet in one hand and an empty pitcher with a torch inside it in the other.

17 “Watch me,” he said, “and do the same. When I come to the outpost of the camp, do as I do.

18 When I and everyone with me blow our trumpets, you are also to blow your trumpets all around the camp. Then you will say, ‘For Yahweh and for Gideon!’”

19 Gideon and the 100 men who were with him went to the outpost of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch after the sentries had been stationed. They blew their trumpets and broke the pitchers that were in their hands.

20 The three companies blew their trumpets and shattered their pitchers. They held their torches in their left hands, their trumpets in their right hands, and shouted, “A sword for Yahweh and for Gideon!”

21 Each Israelite took his position around the camp, and the entire Midianite army fled, and cried out as they ran.

22 When Gideon’s men blew their 300 trumpets, the LORD set the swords of each man in the army against each other. They fled to Beth-shittah in the direction of Zererah as far as the border of Abel-meholah near Tabbath.

25 They captured Oreb and Zeeb, the two princes of Midian; they killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb and Zeeb at the winepress of Zeeb, while they were pursuing the Midianites. They brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon across the Jordan.

Notes:

② **EXPLORE His Word**

What does God MEAN?

1. Judges 6 opens with Israel in trouble. How would you describe the Midianites and their conflict with Israel?
2. What excuses did Gideon use in response to the Lord's call?
3. From Judges 6:24-32, what purposes might the Lord have had for commanding Gideon to tear down the altar of Baal and cut down the Asherah pole?
4. a) From Judges 6:34 -7:8, how does Gideon end up with an army of 300 men and why?

b) What might this suggest about the ways in which God works?
5. In multiple places throughout this passage, God responds to Gideon's fear or his need for a sign. In light of this, how do you account for what is said about Gideon in Hebrews 11:34?

③ **EXPAND His Word**

How does this FIT?

6. a) What is the significance of Judges 6:34a?

b) How do believers benefit from the presence of the Holy Spirit?
Romans 8:26-27

1 Corinthians 2:10

2 Corinthians 1:22

Galatians 5:16

Galatians 5:22

2 Timothy 2:7

④ **EMBRACE His Word**

Why does this MATTER to me?

7. a) In Judges 6:13 Gideon questions God about the problems he and his nation are facing. How is he blaming God? What is he failing to acknowledge?

b) When you face difficult or painful problems, what can you do to remain humble?

c) How do you struggle against the natural tendency to blame others or even God amidst difficulties?
8. Look back at question 2 and read Ephesians 2:10. What excuses might you be using to avoid God-given opportunities to minister to others? (Stop and ask God to give you a willing heart).
9. What do you find amazing about the way the Lord defeated the Midianites? How might the Lord be calling you to step out in obedience?

Summarize your thoughts on the passage:

Write about what God wants you to KNOW...

Write about how God wants you to FEEL...

Write about what God wants you to DO...

Sermon Notes:

30 CORE Competencies

10 Core Beliefs

Trinity *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation by Grace *Ephesians 2:8-9* I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 Core Practices

Worship *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness *Matthew 6:33* I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community *Acts 2:44-47*

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money *2 Corinthians 8:7*

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith *Ephesians 6:19-20*

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 Core Virtues

Joy *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, me, and others.

Faithfulness *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I demonstrate loyalty in my relationships with others in response to God's loyalty to me.

Self-Control *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience *Proverbs 14:29*

I endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.