

Gideon – Part 1

Before we jump into the story, I have a few general questions for everyone.

Have you ever...

- Started to exercise and get in shape and then just stopped?
- Started to get up early and develop a good habit, but then just stopped?
- Said you are never going to date “THAT TYPE OF PERSON” but then you did?
- Said you’re not going to binge watch Netflix anymore, but bam, 5 hours later and you have Cheetos dust all over your fingers and you can’t feel your butt!
- Said you are going to be nicer person, but then you just threatened to push someone down the stairs at school?
- Said you are going to grow closer to God and read your Bible, but you just haven’t?

Sometimes, we have these cycles in our lives, where we start out being well-intentioned. We stick to our goals, for a bit, but then what happens is we find ourselves right back to where we started! We are doing the same thing we always did, because you know what, old habits die hard! Real hard.

What we find when we jump into the book of Gideon is that the nation of Israel (God’s chosen nation) was doing really well following after God, but after a couple of years, the nation got back into bad habits and now were actually doing the complete opposite of good!

Judges 6:1-11

Yet again the People of Israel went back to doing evil in God’s sight. God put them under the domination of Midian for seven years. Midian overpowered Israel. Because of Midian, the People of Israel made for themselves hideouts in the mountains—caves and forts. The People of Israel, reduced to grinding poverty by Midian, cried out to God for help.

Israel fell into their old cycle and forgot what God had done.

We must remember what God did in our past so we can have confidence in our future!

Remember when God did amazing things in your life? Remember when He gave you hope, peace, and strength when times were hard? See, Israel forgot all of this. So, what happened is their enemy saw this and again, began to take them over. This was an ongoing thing for Israel. It was so bad that the people of Israel were hiding out in caves!

Understand this: ISRAEL WAS TO BE THE STRONGEST NATION ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH AND HERE THEY ARE LIVING IN DENS AND CAVES BECAUSE THEY ARE AFRAID.

When we don’t remember what God has done, it will cause us to live in places we were never called to to be.

What I mean by that is that when you don’t keep God the focus of your past, present, and future; you are going to end up places you never should have been, doing things you should never have done. **Have you ever ended up somewhere with people you didn’t even like, doing things you don’t even like to do? I know I have.**

So, we find in verses 7-11 God sends them a prophet to remind them of where they came from, and who they are. But he also says: “*But you didn’t listen to me.*”

OUCH!!! How many times have we heard that?? You are where you are because you didn't listen! So, this is where we get introduced to Gideon! A dude that was just minding his own business... doing his own thing...

11-12 One day the angel of God came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, whose son Gideon was threshing wheat in the winepress, out of sight of the Midianites.

Gideon is minding his own business; I imagine he probably has his AirPods in. Listening to his own music, doing his own thing, threshing some wheat in a winepress to keep it from the enemy, because they would come steal it all if they saw it. Now see, normally, you would want to thresh wheat out in the open so that the wind could blow away the chaff. But Gideon is apparently scared out of his mind. He goes into hiding in an underground winepress to live in fear.

I love that God found Gideon in the winepress. He found Gideon in the place of fear where he was hiding. Isn't it interesting that sometimes we will choose to live in a place of fear, than living in open faith?

When we don't have faith in God, we will choose to live in a place of fear not faith.

Let's talk about this!! Some of the biggest fears that you have in your life have developed into places that you live. Now, I am not trying to be heartless.

Social anxiety

That moment when you begin to feel like things are out of control, your palms begin to sweat, you began to feel like things are closing in on you. Talking to strangers, speaking in public, dating, making friends, eating in front of other people, going to school or work, starting conversations all of these things are a challenge.

Anxiety is real. You know it and I know it!

I can lead us into panic attacks. During a panic attack, the victim usually wants to retreat from wherever they are in an effort to calm down and make the panic go away. If someone has had a panic attack, they're often in fear of having another one, and this causes them to look for a way out of wherever they are. In a crowded place, or one that offers no quick escape (like an airplane or a subway car), he or she can feel extremely stressed. This can lead to someone not leaving the house because they are so afraid that they will end up somewhere where they can't get away.

Anxiety is real, it is big, and it can be really, *really* scary. Anxiety is something that is used by our enemy to get into our heads and try to paralyze us so that we can't live or do anything for the glory of God. Satan would be just as satisfied making an ineffective, too-scared-to-act Christian as he would be satisfied in distracting a non-Christian from God.

Another place we can live is...

Failure

Failing in school, work, relationships, driving—basically, failing at life. We're afraid of disappointing those we love and messing up in some extravagant, irreparable way. The fear of failure is paralyzing because it inhibits us from taking risks and moving forward—which is, of course, what growing up is all about. Becoming an adult is embracing the process of trial and error, repentance and grace. I dread mistakes. Failure would give me nervous

sweats. It was always there, hovering darkly and persistently on the horizon. It is terrifying.

There are so many other fears, that we could talk about. But just like so many of us, Gideon was living in fear down in this little room, hiding away.

The angel of God appeared to him and said, “God is with you, O mighty warrior!”¹³ Gideon replied, “With *me*, my master? If God is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all the miracle-wonders our parents and grandparents told us about, telling us, ‘Didn’t God deliver us from Egypt?’ The fact is, God has nothing to do with us—he has turned us over to Midian.”

I love Gideon's response because it's so real, raw and so what we would do! “Who me???”

1. Gideon questions whether or not God is talking to him. Wait a minute... you sure it's me you are talking about? Not another guy. Did you say something to the wrong guy?
2. Gideon questions where God has been? Literally this takes some guts for sure! He then said, “IF GOD WAS WITH US THEN...” Literally telling God that you haven't been with us. You haven't been doing your part. He is literally telling God; YOU DID THIS TO ME!!!

WOW!!! Do we not do this when we live in fear??

When we live in fear, we question the identity of who we are and question the identity of who God is.

God isn't scared of your fears. This convo is just about to get really intense... real fast! God responds.

¹⁴ But God faced him directly: “Go in this strength that is yours. Save Israel from Midian. Haven't I just sent you?”

This just got real! God just gets all up in Gideon's grill. Like all up. Think about when your dad or mom or even coach wanted to make a point to you. They get all close to you, they get their voice on. You know the **intimidating voice**.

¹⁵ Gideon said to him, “*Me*, my master? How and with what could I ever save Israel? Look at me. My clan's the weakest in Manasseh and I'm the runt of the litter.”¹⁶ God said to him, “I'll be with you. Believe me, you'll defeat Midian as one man.”

Now here comes the excuses! We all do this all the time. We make an excuse of why we are in the condition we are in. We blame our past, we blame our family, we blame others. We do everything we can to not accept the responsibility that it's on us.

I cannot because I am weak, but God reminds you that He is with you.

So, then Gideon says okay... God I get this, but I need you to prove to me something. I need a sign. What is funny is we will see Gideon do this more than once. He will want reassurances from God.

So, the first sign we see happens is that Gideon brings God a gift. He makes God a meal! He was like well maybe some grub would be a good thing! So, he makes a special meal to God and this is what God does...

“Take the meat and unraised bread, place them on that rock, and pour the broth on them.” Gideon did it. ²¹⁻²² The angel of God stretched out the tip of the stick he was holding and touched the meat and the bread. Fire broke out of the rock and burned up the meat and bread while the angel of God slipped away out of sight. And Gideon knew it was the angel of God! Gideon said, “Oh no! Master, God! I have seen the angel of God face-to-face!”²³ But God reassured him, “Easy now. Don’t panic. You won’t die.”

Gideon built an altar to God and worshipped him.

BUT THAT SAME NIGHT... God was going to ask Gideon to do something. This was Gideon’s first mission as a WARRIOR FOR GOD!

Sometimes what God asks you to do is not easy, but it’s for a purpose.

Gideons dad, Joash, was not a follower of God. As a matter of fact, Joash worshipped the idol Baal.

Baal was a fertility god who was believed to enable the earth to produce crops and people to produce children.

Baal worship was rooted in sexuality and involved ritualistic prostitution in the temples. At times, appeasing Baal required human sacrifice, usually the firstborn of the one making the sacrifice (Jeremiah 19:5). The priests of Baal appealed to their god in rites of wild abandon which included loud, ecstatic cries and self-inflicted injury like cutting themselves. Sounds like a great God to worship (HUGE EYE ROLL)

Tear down your father’s Baal altar and chop down the Asherah fertility pole beside it. Then build an altar to God, your God, on the top of this hill. Take the prime bull and present it an offering, using firewood from the Asherah pole that you cut down.” ²⁷ Gideon selected ten men from his servants, and did exactly what God had told him. But because of his family and the people in the neighborhood, he was afraid to do it openly, so he did it that night.

The first commission to Gideon is to tear down his dad’s altar to Baal and cuts down his Asherah pole. Brings a cool concept of breaking generational curses and that which was declared over a generation.

Gideon had to fight against the cycle that his father put him in! He had to be determined not to live and worship the same way his dad did.

Listen students, you don’t have to live the same way your parents did or do. You don’t have to stay in their lifestyles! I hope that they want better for you, I want better for you. Parents genuinely want better for their kids than they had.

However, you may live in a home where you don’t like the way that your parents live. You don’t like what they “worship” or the lifestyle that they live. Well you don’t have to live that way! You don’t have to act that way. You don’t have to be that way!

By the power of God and through Jesus and what he did for you, you can live a life that is completely different than theirs.

The cure for a generational curse to be broken has always been repentance.