

HEROES OF FAITH SERIES



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Heroes of Faith: Gideon -

1. This week we studied the life of Gideon. What points from his life connect with you? What do you find interesting or compelling about his story?

2. Gideon's story begins in Judges chapter 6, where he is surprised to meet an angel. **Judges 6:12 When the Angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he said, "The Lord is with you, mighty warrior."** Gideon doubted both of the claims of the angel. He did not believe that God was with him or his people, and he certainly did not think he was a mighty warrior. At this point in the story, Gideon does not have faith in God or a purpose for his life. The first sermon point stated: **It is essential that we believe that God cares for us and that our lives find purpose in Him.** Do you agree that it is necessary for those who follow Christ to believe that God loves them?

Tell the story of a time in your life when you first began to believe that God loved you as an individual. Have you had any recent specific reminders of God's love for you?

Do you agree that it is essential for those who follow Christ to find their purpose in God? (Read Jeremiah 29:11, Ephesians 2:10, 2 Timothy 2:9). In your opinion, what would be the effect of following Christ but not finding purpose in your relationship with Him?

3. Because Gideon lacks faith in God and purpose for his life, he asks the angel to prove that his words come from God. Gideon's struggle to believe resonates with many who follow Christ today. We often have an impression or feel led in a specific direction, but we wonder if this is God's voice or just our desire. Tell the story of a time you felt God leading you. What was the result?

The biblical test is one of the first things we need to focus on when we sense that God is leading us. That biblical test asks what the Bible says about the direction I sense God is leading me. If the Bible forbids or discourages what I think God is telling me, I should immediately recognize this is not God's voice.

Beyond the biblical test, what are some good ways to distinguish God's voice from your own desires? Are God's voice and our desires always in conflict?

4. Once Gideon establishes faith in God and finds his purpose, the story takes a dramatic turn. An army of 135,000 men invades Israel, intending to steal the crops and rob God's people. Gideon, following God's command, sends out a call to arms. The Bible records that 32,000 men respond to this call. Shockingly, God tells Gideon that his army is too big. Eventually, God whittles down Gideon's army to only 300 men.

Judges 7:2 The Lord said to Gideon, "You have too many warriors with you. If I let all of you fight the Midianites, the Israelites will boast to me that they saved themselves by their strength." What are your thoughts on God shrinking Gideon's army?

This story reminds me of what God revealed to the apostle Paul when he was engaged in a spiritual conflict in **2 Corinthians 12:9, But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."** Therefore, I will boast gladly about my weaknesses so that Christ's power may rest on me. Does this verse relate to any issue you are facing in this season of your life? What might God be saying to you through this part of Gideon's story?

5. We think of Gideon as a hero of the faith because he trusted God and victoriously led 300 men to accomplish great things. Gideon, however, made a massive mistake after his victory. He used the confiscated gold to construct a breastplate called an ephod for himself. This golden breastplate was a reminder of the great victory. **Judges 8:27 Gideon made a sacred ephod from the gold and put it in his hometown. But soon, all the Israelites prostituted themselves by worshiping it, and it became a trap for Gideon and his family.** It seems that before long, people began worshiping the breastplate and giving credit to Gideon, not God, for the victory. This led me to say in the sermon: **We need to be aware that our hearts are prone to worship successful people and our successes. Self-sufficiency is idolatry.**

Do you agree that our hearts are prone to worship successful people and our own successes?

What do you think about this last phrase: self-sufficiency is idolatry?