

LESSON 5: GIDEON THE FEARFUL

Biblical Passages: Judges 6:11–16; 7:1–8

Former First Lady of the United States, Eleanor Roosevelt, is commonly credited with the popular quote, “Do one thing every day that scares you.” As you consider these words, what value can you see in regularly doing something that scares you? What if you *never* did anything that scares you? Well, you might never ride a rollercoaster, right? More than that, many people would never travel by plane, never learn to swim, and perhaps never get married. The list goes on, but the point is clear. Sometimes, for the sake of personal growth and even the simple enjoyment of life, it is necessary to take the plunge and do the things that make our palms sweat and cause our hearts to race.

Read Judges 6:11–16 and 7:1–8. Gideon considered himself weak and ill-equipped for the mission God had in mind. Gideon apparently believed that he was the *last person* God should have picked to lead His people. Understandably, this level of self-doubt stirred up a lot of fear in Gideon’s heart. First, Gideon had seen the Midianites inflict a lot of pain on his people. Second, for Gideon and his fellow Israelites, *generations* had passed since God’s miraculously rescued His people from the hands of Pharaoh. For these reasons, verse 13 explained that Gideon paused, hesitated, and recoiled when the angel of the Lord called him a “valiant warrior.” But God sidestepped Gideon’s resistance and immediately ordered him to deliver Israel from the hand of Midian. In response, Gideon pointed to his own sense of inferiority, essentially telling God, “I’m the least of the least!” God still wasn’t moved or swayed, but returned to the task at hand. “I will be with you,” God assured Gideon in verse 16, “and you will defeat Midian.”

In Judges 7:1–8, God shattered all of Gideon’s fear-based assumptions by reducing the Israelite army until only 300 men remained. God was dead set on using a small army led by a man who was recently plagued by fear. This strategy brought God greater glory when the Israelites were eventually victorious, while simultaneously replacing any remaining fear in the hearts of His people with confidence in the Lord!

CONNECTION QUESTIONS

1. What fears are you currently harboring in your own heart? In what ways are these fears preventing you from tackling the tasks God has placed before you?
2. Why does God’s presence matter when facing difficult and scary circumstances?
3. Is anyone in your family currently facing an enemy or obstacle that’s causing fear and confusion? How might God deliver you from the hand of your “Midian”?
4. What are some comforts or resources that you are putting your faith in other than the Lord? Prayerfully ask God to remove those idols or distractions so you can see His power in your life.