

# Gideon: The Strength of Faith

## Part One: Understanding Oppression and Deliverance

### Judges 6:1-18

- **Gain a Spiritual Perspective on Your Problem**

1. **Evil behavior leads to painful consequences.** Israel practiced evil and God gave them into the hands of the Midianites for seven years.

Verse 1

- **Take** a moment and **examine** your life for evil behavior that may have led you to the problem you are now facing. Not every trouble we face arises from evil, but we need to examine ourselves to be sure we do not have unconfessed sin and ongoing sin in our lives. If you find unconfessed sin, then confess it before God and experience His forgiveness and cleansing from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).
- The expression “do evil in the eyes of the LORD” (הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה) ( וַיַּעַשׂוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל ) implies several important things. First, God sets the standard for sin (הָרַע). Second, His eyes watch you every day, just as He watched Israel millennia ago. Third, as He watches, God alone sets the standard of good and evil behavior. Consider the omniscient eyes of God watching you, while His omnipotent hand holds you.
- God uses a general term for “hand” here and means that He gave Israel into the power of the Midianites. (וַיִּתְּנֵם יְהוָה בְּיַד־מִדְיָן)

2. **Evil People Oppress Believers.** The power of Midian prevailed against Israel. The Midianites would invade the land, take all the oxen, sheep, and donkeys. They would come like locusts, with innumerable camels. The people of Israel would hide in the mountains, caves and strongholds. The Midianites, Amalekites and sons of the east would strip the land of the produce and leave it devastated.

Verses 3-5

- **Where** are you hiding? Are you facing the enemies in God’s strength or are you running and hiding? **Are you fleeing from oppressors?**

Verse 6

3. **When Oppressed, Cry Out to God.** The people of Israel cried out to God because they believed He could help them. **Oppression stimulates faith.** God allows oppression to build your faith in His power to deliver. **Recognize** that God has brought oppression into your life for a purpose. If you have been evil, then **God seeks your confession and restoration.** He intends to build your faith.

Verses 7-9

4. **Listen To God as He Provides the Correct Perspective on Oppression.** God spoke three **Words of Encouragement** to Israel during this oppression.

- The God of Israel speaks to His people. **God listens and responds.**
- **God reminds Israel of His power to deliver them from Egypt and their slavery there.** As believers, **we forget how God has already delivered us from the slavery of sin by salvation.** Faith brought us to God and faith will bring us through every oppression.
- God declares: “You shall not commit idolatry by fearing the Gods of Amorites. You have not obeyed me.” **Discovering sin, by God’s convicting word in your life, actually speaks of encouragement and blessing to follow confession.** God uses circumstances to make us deal with our sin. Often we are unwilling to break free of sinful patterns until God brings pressure to bear upon our sin. God encourages us to live in faith, believing in Him and His Word, and so overcome persistent sin patterns in our lives. **Listen to God as He exposes your sin.**

Verse 10

- **God Uses People of Faith To Overcome Oppression.**

Verse 11

1. **God speaks words of strength to oppressed people.** God spoke to Gideon, the son of Joash the Abiezrite, as Gideon threshed wheat in a wine press, hiding it from the Midianites who took everything.

- God spoke tersely: “**The LORD is with you, valiant warrior.**” From the words to follow, Gideon had no idea how God could give him such a title of strength and power.

Verse 12

Note: Jesus identifies Himself as the LORD (יהוה, Yahweh, “I AM”) of the Old Testament in John 8:58.

2. **God listens** as we express our feelings, discouragement, and doubts to Him.

Verse 13

- Gideon told the LORD of the **oppression**. “If the LORD is with us, then why has all this happened to us?”
- Gideon told the LORD of his **discouragement**. “And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, “Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?”
- Gideon told the LORD about **feeling abandoned** and his **doubts**. “But now the LORD has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midianites.” God had certainly given Israel into the hands of Midian, but God had not abandoned them forever. Gideon doubted God would help Israel.
- Note: In contrast to verse one where God describes Him giving Israel into the hand of the Midianites, Gideon feels the pain internally and sharply. He uses the Hebrew term for an outstretched “palm of the hand” (בְּכַף) as if to receive a gift. Gideon describes God as dropping the nation of Israel into the upturned palm of the hand of Midian, like you would drop a candy into a child’s outstretched, eager palm. It speaks of a deliberate act by God. (וַיִּתְּנֵנוּ בְּכַף-מִדְיָן).

3. **The LORD looks at you and speaks: “Go in this your strength and deliver from oppression.”**

Verse 14

- **The strength of Gideon was the LORD with him.** The LORD directly commissioned Gideon to be the oppression buster. God will send a deliverer, and it may be you.
- **God commanded Gideon to deliver Israel from oppression.** The LORD often calls specific people to specific missions. The qualities underlying the call help us understand people of great faith. **God loves to deliver His people from oppression.**

4. **God selects deliverers and uses “nobodies.”** Gideon questioned why God would select him. He was a nobody when compared to his family and his nation.

Verse 15

- **Gideon did not understand why God chose him.** “O LORD, how shall I deliver Israel?” Feeling unworthy of the calling characterized many Old Testament believers. See, for example, Moses, Joseph, and David.
- **Gideon thought that parentage and age mattered to God.** “Behold, my family is the least in Manasseh, and I am the youngest in my

father's household." Actually, God loves to choose deliverers that others do not deem powerful. He selects the youngest (compare 1 Samuel 16:11), from obscure families, to achieve great gains and glory for God.

5. **God can defeat all oppressors with just one person.** God told Gideon that the LORD would be with Gideon.

Verse 16

- **God responded to Gideon's doubts by affirming His presence in Gideon's life.** "Surely I will be with you." The "I will be" is exactly the same Hebrew word translated as LORD in every other occurrence in this passage. The word "you" suggests the plural, meaning the nation of Israel. Putting it together, God is telling Gideon that the LORD will be with all Israel, through Gideon.
- **God responded to Gideon's doubts by affirming that He would use Gideon to destroy oppression, as one faithful, seemingly insignificant man.** "You shall defeat Midian as one man." (אֶחָד אִישׁ). The Hebrew text gives two points for emphasis here. First, the use of the term for "man" (אִישׁ) emphasizes the individual above the representative nature of the term. God selected this particular man, Gideon, and he individually was the chosen vessel of honor. Second, the term "one" (אֶחָד) speaks of the individual as the first of like ones to follow, just as the first day of the month will be followed by many more days. Gideon will be the first to lead, but many will follow.

6. **After you hear God's words of deliverance, and before you act on them, take time to sacrifice and worship God.**

Verses 17-18

- Gideon said: "Show me a sign." Faith for some people comes slowly and needs confirmation. God does not always provide a sign (אֵימֹתָ), but often uses signs to strengthen the faith of the believers. Compare Matthew 12:39-40. Even people of faith requested that God confirm their commission.
- Gideon brought an offering to the Angel of God, who promised to await his return. God alone accepts sacrifices from His people. This offering indicates that Gideon thought he was speaking with God and the fact that the Angel of God accepts the sacrifice indicates it was a theophany, an appearing of God in human flesh. The heart willing to consecrate itself to God's service, as evidenced by sacrificial worship, brings glory to God. Consider Romans 12:1-2.