

WOW! graphic + email

Today's WOW!

→ *How we see ourselves ...*

Judges 6:1-2, 4b-6

The Israelites did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. So the Lord handed them over to Midian seven years, and they oppressed Israel. Because of Midian, the Israelites made hiding places for themselves in the mountains, caves, and strongholds ... They left nothing for Israel to eat, as well as no sheep, ox, or donkey. 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 lay waste to it. So Israel became **poverty-stricken** because of Midian, and the Israelites **cried out** to the Lord.

Judges 6:11-12

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 winepress in order to **hide** it from the Midianites. Then the angel of the Lord appeared to him and said, "The Lord is with you, **valiant (mighty) warrior.**"

The dominant pattern in Scripture:

God answers prayers and accomplishes His purpose THROUGH people.

We can easily live at the level of our **circumstances, not our **calling**.**

Philippians 3:12-14

Not that I have already reached the goal or am already perfect, but I make every effort to take hold of it because **I also have been taken hold of by Christ Jesus.** Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and reaching forward to what is ahead, I pursue as my goal the prize promised by God's heavenly **call** in Christ Jesus.

Calling starts with how we **see ourselves VS how **God sees us**.**

We see ourselves based on what society says is "success", what has happened to us, and/or what regrets we have accumulated.

God “sees” us based on the fact that is He is **WITH** us and **FOR** us.

Tension: what we “see” and “feel” VS what God says.

Valiant/Mighty WARRIOR

Judges 6:13

Gideon said to him, “Please, my lord, if the Lord is **with** us, why has all this happened? And where are all his wonders that our ancestors 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.”

1) Circumstantial **disillusionment**

Judges 6:14

The Lord turned to him and said, “**Go** in the strength you have and deliver Israel from the grasp of Midian. **I am sending you!**”

Judges 6:15

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 family.”

2) Inner **critic and coward**

Fear & insecurity become louder than faith (=what God says).

Fear & insecurity always sound reasonable to us.

Judges 6:16

“But I will be **with** you,” the Lord said to him. “You will strike Midian down as if it were one man.”

Judges 6:17-18

Then he said to him, “If I have found favor with you, give me **a sign** that you are speaking with me. ¹⁸ Please do not leave this place until I return to you. Let me bring my gift and set it before you.” And he said, “I will stay until you return.”

3) Faltering **faith**

God is patient.

God will reassure us but never remove the requirement for faith.

Judges 6:25, 27

On that very night the Lord said to him, "Take your father's young bull and a second bull seven years old. Then **tear down the altar of Baal** that belongs to your father and cut down the Asherah pole beside it ... So Gideon took ten of his male servants and did as the Lord had told him. But because he was **too afraid** of his father's family and the men of the city to do it in the daytime, he did it at night.

God works with imperfect faith.

4) External **opposition**

5) Personal **comfort and/or complacency**

32,000 → 10,000 → 300

How does a "mighty warrior" fight?

- a) With growing **dependence**
- b) Through humble **obedience**
- c) With **present faith**

Affirm biblical manhood and womanhood as one of the first gifts and affirmations of identity in our creation.

--Unique and complimentary

Biblical manhood involves responsibility.

Accepting responsibility requires commitment.

- a) **Commitment to living under the authority of God.**

- b) Commitment to exercising self-control and discipline**
- c) Commitment to love like Jesus**
- d) Commitment to go first ...**

How LOUD is our faith right now?

What battle are we fighting right now?
--Lord's Prayer

Who can you encourage to live as a warrior this week?

Do we see Jesus correctly?
--He fought some battles so we don't have to!