

The background of the slide is a solid blue color with a pattern of thin, white, wavy lines that create a sense of movement and depth, resembling a stylized wave or a field of light rays.

Moving From Your Comfort Zone

Part III

Week One

Faith ~ We Need Faith To Please God

Fear ~ Fear Must Be Overcome By Faith

Focus ~ Losing Focus Will Cause You To Doubt

*Familiarity ~ God Will Use Similar Situations
To Strengthen Your Faith*

*Faithfulness ~ God Uses Your Failure To Reveal
His Faithfulness*

Week Two...

Reasons We Remain In Our Comfort Zones

Reason #1 ~ Our Company/Our Crowd of Companions

Make An Impact Without Being Identified

Willing To Sacrifice Beyond Self

Reason #2 ~ A Continuation With No Change

Remember God's Word

Remember God's Ways Are Not Our Ways

Seek Solutions While Trusting God's Sovereignty

Reason #3 ~ A Loss Of Desire/Drive/Determination

Dysfunction has a way of robbing you of your Drive, Determination, and Desire

Reason #4 ~ A Disabling Dependence On Others

We must be careful not to confuse THE RESOURCES with THE SOURCE

Introduction

Last week we examined *the man at the pool*, who had been *in his predicament for 38 years...*

Notice the Approach of Jesus....

Sees the man ~ “see that he had been in this position for a while...”

Asks the man ~ “Do you want to be made well?”

Instructs the man ~ “Take Up Your Bed and Walk”

Jesus never *addressed his excuses... Why?*

Jesus in essence is giving him an *Option/Opportunity* to live *AN ABUNDANT LIFE...*

Jesus is using him as *AN EXAMPLE* to bring emphasis to another group of people who do not think *Jesus should heal on the Sabbath...*

Jesus was moving him *from his comfort zone to a better opportunity, NOT ASSIGNMENT...*

When God approaches with *an opportunity, YOU HAVE A CHOICE...*

But when God has *an assignment* for your life...

THE CALLING BECOMES GREATER THAN YOUR COMFORT...

Biblical Passage

Judges 6:1-2,6-8, 11-17 (NLT)

1 *The Israelites did evil in the LORD's sight. So the LORD handed them over to the Midianites for seven years.*

2 *The Midianites were so cruel that the Israelites made hiding places for themselves in the mountains, caves, and strongholds.*

6 *So Israel was reduced to starvation by the Midianites.. THEN THE ISRAELITES CRIED OUT TO THE LORD FOR HELP...*7 *When they cried out to the LORD because of Midian, 8 the LORD sent a prophet to the Israelites.*

He said, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I brought you up out of slavery in Egypt.

11 *The angel of the LORD came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites.*

12 *When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, "The LORD is with you, mighty warrior."*

13 *"But sir," Gideon replied, "if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our fathers told us about when they said, 'Did not the LORD bring us up out of Egypt?' But now the LORD has abandoned us and put us into the hand of Midian."* 14 *The LORD turned to him and said, "Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you?"* 15 *"But Lord," Gideon asked, "how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family."*

16 *The LORD answered, "I WILL BE WITH YOU, and you will strike down all the Midianites together."*

17 *Gideon replied, "If now I have found favor in your eyes, give me a sign that it is really you talking to me.*

Principle #1 ~ Understand Your Assignment

Judges 6:6-12 (NIV)

6 Midian so impoverished the Israelites that they cried out to the LORD for help.

7 When the Israelites cried to the LORD because of Midian, 8 **HE SENT THEM A PROPHET, WHO SAID,** "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I brought you up out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. 9 I snatched you from the power of Egypt and from the hand of all your oppressors. I drove them from before you and gave you their land. 10 I said to you, 'I am the LORD your God; do not worship the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you live.' But you have not listened to me."

11 The angel of the LORD came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites.

12 When **THE ANGEL OF THE LORD APPEARED TO GIDEON,** he said, "**THE LORD IS WITH YOU, MIGHTY WARRIOR.**"

MANY PEOPLE ARE NOT CERTAIN OF THEIR ASSIGNMENT

- God sent someone to be **A VOICE** {speak it, teach it, give instructions}
- God sent someone to **BRING VICTORY** {Armed for battle/warfare, Lead the People}
{Your Assignment will be in the area of your gift}

Because We don't **Understand Assignments,** we battle against each other....

Principle #1 ~ Understand Your Assignment

Biblical Example

Exodus 4:10-17 (NIV)

10 Moses said to the LORD, "O Lord, *I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue.*"

11 The LORD said to him, "Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the LORD? 12 Now go; *I will help you speak and will teach you what to say.*" 13 But Moses said, "*O Lord, please send someone else to do it.*" 14 Then the LORD's anger burned against Moses and he said, "*What about your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know he can speak well. He is already on his way to meet you, and his heart will be glad when he sees you. 15 You shall speak to him and put words in his mouth; I will help both of you speak and will teach you what to do. 16 HE WILL SPEAK TO THE PEOPLE FOR YOU*, and it will be as if he were your mouth and as if you were God to him. 17 But take this staff in your hand so *YOU CAN* perform miraculous signs with it."

Moses was the Warrior ~ Aaron was the Speaker

Numbers 12:1-2 (NIV)

1 Miriam and Aaron began to talk against Moses because of his Cushite wife, for he had married a Cushite. 2 "*Has the LORD spoken only through Moses?*" they asked. "*Hasn't he also spoken through us?*" And the LORD heard this.

Principle #1 ~ Understand Your Assignment

Biblical Example

Many people fail to recognize their assignment because its not Applauded or Advertised

In Exodus 2 ~ Pharoah's Daughter takes Moses from basket and later raises him in the palace...

Exodus 17 ~ Aaron and Hur held up Moses' arms so that Israel could win the battle...

Genesis 40 ~ The Cupbearer who forgot Joseph, but later told Pharaoh about Joseph's gift...

2 Kings 5 ~ Little Slave Girl who tells Naaman about a prophet who can heal him of leprosy...

1 Samuel 30 ~ The Egyptian Slave who was left for dead, but helps David recover his stuff...

John 6 ~ Little boy who has the lunch who provides for over 5,000...

Matthew 27 ~ Simon who helped Jesus carry his cross...

*Your assignment may not be **LARGE IN SIZE OR SUBSTANCE**
But God has given it **SIGNIFICANCE/VALUE***

Principle #2 ~ The Sacrifice Will Be Greater Than Self

Judges 6:1-2 (NIV)

1 Again **THE ISRAELITES** did evil in the eyes of the LORD, and for seven years he gave **THEM** into the hands of the Midianites. 2 Because the power of Midian was so oppressive, **THE ISRAELITES** prepared shelters for themselves in mountain clefts, caves and strongholds. 6 Midian so impoverished **THE ISRAELITES** that **THEY CRIED** out to the LORD for help. 12 When the angel of the LORD appeared **TO GIDEON**, he said, "The LORD is **WITH YOU**, mighty warrior."

God's **CHOSEN PEOPLE** has walked away from HIM...
God has allowed the Midianites to destroy their crops and devastate their economy
God has arranged for 7 years of devastation among **his people**

He Anoints **SOMEONE WITH A TASK** That Will **Deliver The People**

Many people are **COMFORTABLE** with **PERSONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS**
Many people are **COMFORTABLE** with **PERSONAL ABUNDANCE**
{**Who Is Benefiting From Me Being The Beneficiary of All These Blessings**}
"Fruit" is to be produced for others

Have You **CONSIDERED THE CONSEQUENCES** Of Your Comfort?

Because Of The **Magnitude of the Assignment** ~ **Remaining Comfortable Is Not An Option**

Principle #2 ~ The Sacrifice Will Be Greater Than Self

Joseph ~ Assignment was to Become the 2nd In Command To Sustain *God's People* Through Famine

Moses ~ Assignment was to Lead *God's People* Out Of Egyptian Bondage

Jeremiah ~ Assignment was to be a Prophet To *The Nations*

Nehemiah ~ Assignment was to Restore The Wall To Provide Protection For *God's People*

Esther ~ Assignment was to Save God's People From The Hand Of Those Wanted To Kill *The Jews*

Paul ~ Assignment was to take the Gospel To *The Gentiles*

Jesus ~ Assignment was to Save *God's People* From Their Sins by paying the Ultimate Price

They All Had **ASSIGNMENTS** That Required **A Sacrifice That Was Greater Than Self**

This Type of Calling/Conviction will not allow you to **REMAIN COMFORTABLE**

Principle #3 ~ Reluctance Is To Be Expected

Judges 6:12-17 (NIV)

12 When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, "The LORD is with you, mighty warrior."

13 "But sir," Gideon replied, "if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our fathers told us about when they said, 'Did not the LORD bring us up out of Egypt?' But now the LORD has abandoned us and put us into the hand of Midian." 14 The LORD turned to him and said, "Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you?" 15 "But Lord," Gideon asked, "how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family." 16 The LORD answered, "I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites together." 17 Gideon replied, "If now I have found favor in your eyes, give me a sign that it is really you talking to me."

Many people are *beating themselves up* because *they have questions or concerns about the assignment*
Assignment may cause some *DOUBTS*, but not *DISOBEDIENCE*

Why Did He Doubt?

- *What They Were Experiencing* Was Not *Matching/Meeting Expectations*
 - *What He Was Seeing... Didn't Match What God Was Saying*

All Gideon *SAW* was devastation, destruction, and discouraging dilemmas...
God *SAW* an opportunity for Deliverance and Development

When God shifts you into your *SEASON OF PURPOSE*, usually it *DOES NOT MAKE SENSE* ~
FAITH IS REQUIRED

Principle #3 ~ Reluctance Is To Be Expected

Biblical Examples of Reluctance

Moses in Exodus 3:11 ~ But Moses said to God, “Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?”

Moses in Exodus 4:1 ~ Then Moses said, “What if they will not believe me or listen to what I say? For they may say, ‘The Lord has not appeared to you.’”

Jeremiah in Jeremiah 1:6 ~ Then I said, “Lord God! Behold, I do not know how to speak, because I am a youth.”

Esther in Esther 4:11 ~ "All the king's officials and the people of the royal provinces know that for any man or woman who approaches the king in the inner court without being summoned the king has but one law: that he be put to death. The only exception to this is for the king to extend the gold scepter to him and spare his life. But thirty days have passed since I was called to go to the king."

Understand This...

1. *Doubt* Does Not Deny Your Faith
2. *Doubt* Does Not Nullify The Assignment
3. God never expects Us To Have *All The Answers* or *Complete Trust*

God Knows We Have Questions, Doubts, and Concerns and *He Still Uses Us....*

Principle #4 ~ God Gives Assurance To Overcome Anxiety of the Assignment

Judges 6:12-16 (NIV)

12 When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, "The LORD is with you, mighty warrior."

13 "But sir," Gideon replied, "if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our fathers told us about when they said, 'Did not the LORD bring us up out of Egypt?' But now the LORD has abandoned us and put us into the hand of Midian."

14 The LORD turned to him and said, "Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you?"

15 "But Lord," Gideon asked, "how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family." 16 The LORD answered, "I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites together."

God Gives Divine Promises For The Assignment

- ❖ You Have My Presence ~ I Am With You*
- ❖ I Will Make You Great ~ You Are A Mighty Warrior {Although you don't see it yet}*
- ❖ You Have Victory {You Will Strike Them Down}*

God's Gives Us Assurance To Overcome Through His Word

Is That Enough For You To Move From Your Comfort Zone?

Principle #5 ~ God Is Patient In The Process Of Transition

Judges 6:36-40 (NIV)

36 Gideon said to God, "If you will save Israel by my hand as you have promised--
37 look, I will place a wool fleece on the threshing floor. If there is dew only on the fleece and all the ground is dry, then I will know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you said." 38 And that is what happened. Gideon rose early the next day; he squeezed the fleece and wrung out the dew--a bowlful of water.

39 Then Gideon said to God, "Do not be angry with me. *Let me make just one more request. Allow me one more test with the fleece.* This time make the fleece dry and the ground covered with dew."
40 That night God did so. Only the fleece was dry; all the ground was covered with dew.

Once God reveals his Purpose {assignment} ~ He displays his Patience
God Knows Gideon is struggling with doubts because of his level of faith
God Does Not REBUKE HIM...

God takes him *THROUGH A PROCESS* to *STRENGTHEN HIS FAITH...*
Many people are not operating BY FAITH because they refuse to go through the Process

The Disciples went through a 3 year process ~ Jesus kept asking, "Do You Still Not Believe"

If not... Let's go through another storm... "Do You Still Not Believe"

Principle #5 ~ God Is Patient In The Process Of Transition

Test #1 ~ Build Faith Among Family instead of Foes

Judges 6:25-27 (NIV)

- 25 That same night the LORD said to him, "Take the second bull from your father's herd, the one seven years old. Tear down your father's altar to Baal and cut down the Asherah pole beside it.*
- 26 Then build a proper kind of altar to the LORD your God on the top of this height. Using the wood of the Asherah pole that you cut down, offer the second bull as a burnt offering."*
- 27 So Gideon took ten of his servants and did as the LORD told him. But because he was afraid of his family and the men of the town, he did it at night rather than in the daytime.*

*He Did As God Commanded **Although He Was Afraid***

He Is Gaining Confidence, But Still Cautious

*God Takes Us Through **Levels of Testing** To **Build Our Trust***

Jeremiah 12:5 (NIV)

- 5 "If you have **raced with men on foot** and they have worn you out, **how can you compete with horses?**
If you stumble in safe country, how will you manage in the thickets by the Jordan?"*

If you are faithful with THIS ASSIGNMENT.... Then I Can Trust You With Next Level Leading!!!

Principle #5 ~ God Is Patient In The Process Of Transition

Test #2 ~ Trust God With Decrease {Take Him At His Word}

Judges 7:2-8 (NIV)

2 The LORD said to Gideon, "You have too many men for me to deliver Midian into their hands. In order that Israel may not boast against me that her own strength has saved her,

3 announce now to the people, 'Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back and leave Mount Gilead.'" So twenty-two thousand men left, while ten thousand remained.

4 But the LORD said to Gideon, "**There are still too many men.** Take them down to the water, and **I WILL SIFT THEM FOR YOU THERE.** If I say, 'This one shall go with you,' he shall go; but if I say, 'This one shall not go with you,' he shall not go." 5 So Gideon took the men down to the water. There the LORD told him, "Separate those who lap the water with their tongues like a dog from those who kneel down to drink." 6 Three hundred men lapped with their hands to their mouths. All the rest got down on their knees to drink. 7 **The LORD said to Gideon, "With the three hundred men that lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hands.** Let all the other men go, each to his own place."

8 **So Gideon sent the rest of the Israelites to their tents but kept the three hundred,** who took over the provisions and trumpets of the others. Now the camp of Midian lay below him in the valley.

Gideon's Faith Is Beginning To Grow ~ *Experiences With God Shapes Your Expectations Of God*

Time Teaches Us To Take God At His Word!!!

Principle #6 ~ God Continues To Give Assurance Until Assignment Is Complete

Judges 7:9-15 (NIV)

9 During that night the LORD said to Gideon, "Get up, go down against the camp, because I am going to give it into your hands. 10 If you are afraid to attack, go down to the camp with your servant Purah 11 and listen to what they are saying. Afterward, YOU WILL BE ENCOURAGED to attack the camp."

So he and Purah his servant went down to the outposts of the camp. 13 Gideon arrived just as a man was telling a friend his dream. "I had a dream," he was saying. "A round loaf of barley bread came tumbling into the Midianite camp. It struck the tent with such force that the tent overturned and collapsed." 14 His friend responded, "This can be nothing other than the sword of Gideon son of Joash, the Israelite.

God has given the Midianites and the whole camp into his hands."

15 When Gideon heard the dream and its interpretation, HE WORSHIPED GOD. He returned to the camp of Israel and called out, "Get up! The LORD has given the Midianite camp into your hands."

For the fourth time GOD PROMISES victory. God has prepared the enemy for defeat.

He Just Needed His Servant To TRUST IT!!!

God was willing to give him one more assurance of his assignment.

Philippians 1:6 (NIV)

6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion...

*Principle #6 ~ God Continues To Give Assurance
Until Assignment Is Complete*

The Assignment Is Still The Same ~ “You Will Deliver My People”

The Conditions Are Still The Same ~ “The Midianites Are Still Destroying The Land”

God’s Promises Are Still The Same ~ “I Will Be With You”

What Changed???

Gideon’s Trust In God

Gideon Had Weak Faith ~ Gideon Had Wavering Faith ~ Gideon Had Winning Faith

In Conclusion....

Principle #1 ~ Understand Your Assignment

Principle #2 ~ The Sacrifice Will Be Greater Than Self

Principle #3 ~ Reluctance Is To Be Expected

Principle #4 ~ God Gives Assurance To Overcome Anxiety of the Assignment

Principle #5 ~ God Is Patient In The Process Of Transition

Principle #6 ~ God Continues To Give Assurance Until Assignment Is Complete