

MANO 

[GIDEON : LEAD WITH COURAGE]

SESSION 1

[CRY OUT]

CRY OUT.

Judges

^{5:31} There was peace in the land for forty years. ^{6:1} **then** the Israelites did evil in the LORD's sight. So the LORD handed them over to the Midianites for seven years.

TRUTH : We CHASE things that control us and IGNORE the God who loves us.

^{6:2} The Midianites were so cruel that the Israelites made hiding places for themselves in the mountains, caves, and strongholds. ⁴ They left the Israelites with nothing to eat, taking all the sheep, goats, cattle, and donkeys.

⁵ They stayed until the land was stripped bare.

⁶ So Israel was reduced to starvation by the Midianites.

Then the Israelites CRIED OUT to the LORD for help.

Open your MOUTH.

Q : Have you ever CRIED OUT to God?

TRUTH : When you're at your LOWEST - God is the CLOSEST.

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. ⁹ **I rescued you** from the Egyptians and from all who oppressed you. **I drove out** your enemies and **I gave you** their land. ¹⁰ I told you, '**I am the LORD your God.**

You must not worship the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you now live.' **But you have not listened to [obeyed] me."**

Open your EARS.

¹¹ Gideon son of Joash was threshing wheat at the bottom of a winepress to hide the grain from the Midianites.

¹² The angel of the LORD appeared to him and said,
“Mighty Hero, the LORD is with you!”

**Q :: When God calls you by name -
what name does he call you?**

TRUTH : You are who GOD SAYS you are.

¹³ “Sir,” Gideon replied, “if the LORD is with us, **why** has all this happened to us? And **where** are all the miracles our ancestors told us about? Didn’t they say, ‘The LORD brought us up out of Egypt’? But now the LORD has abandoned us and handed us over to the Midianites.” ¹⁴ Then the LORD turned to him and said, **“Go with the strength you have, and rescue Israel from the Midianites. I am sending you!”** ¹⁵ “But Lord,” Gideon replied, “how can I rescue Israel? My clan is the weakest in the whole tribe of Manasseh, and I am the least in my entire family!” ¹⁶ The LORD said to him, **“I will be with you.** And you will destroy the Midianites as if you were fighting against one man.”

TRUTH : I can’t - but WE CAN.

¹⁷ Gideon replied, “If you are truly going to help me, show me a sign to prove that it is really the LORD speaking to me. // ²¹ Then the angel of the LORD touched the meat and bread with the tip of the staff in his hand, and fire flamed up from the rock and consumed all he had brought. And the angel of the LORD disappeared. ²² When Gideon realized that it was the angel of the LORD, he cried out, **“Oh, Sovereign LORD, I’m doomed! I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face!”** ²⁴ And Gideon built an altar to the LORD there and named it **Yahweh-Shalom** (which means “the LORD is Peace”).

Open your EYES.

Questions and Actions.

Q: What things have the potential to control you?
[habits - hobbies - people - jobs - emotions - etc.]

Q: When was your “cry-out” moment? If you haven’t had one yet - what will it take for you to “cry out”?

Q: When God calls you by name - what name does he call you?

Prayer : “FATHER - thank you that you see me, know me, and love me. I’m coming to you today with my eyes and ears wide open. Speak to me like you spoke to Gideon, and may I respond in worship and obedience.”

Action : **Schedule 30 minutes alone with God to . . .**

- **Read** the full story of Gideon in Judges 6-8.
- **Reflect** on what God is saying to you in the story.
- **Respond** by writing a “cry out” prayer to God - ask him to reveal the idols in you, your family, or your community that need to be overcome with His help. Tell God you’re ready and willing to receive his power.

Notes.

SESSION 2

[DESTROY THE LIE]

Destroy it QUICKLY.

²⁷ So Gideon took ten of his servants and **did as the LORD had commanded**. But he did it at night because he was afraid of the other members of his father's household and the people of the town.

TRUTH : Obedience isn't the absence of FEAR - it's the FAITH to overcome it.

Destroy it COMPLETELY.

²⁸ Early the next morning, as the people of the town began to stir, someone discovered that the altar of Baal had been broken down and that the Asherah pole beside it had been cut down. **In their place a new altar had been built**, and on it were the remains of the bull that had been sacrificed. ²⁹ The people said to each other, "Who did this?" And after asking around and making a careful search, they learned that it was Gideon, the son of Joash.

TRUTH : What you TOLERATE will eventually DOMINATE.

Destroy it OPENLY.

³⁰ "Bring out your son," the men of the town demanded of Joash. "He must die for destroying the altar of Baal and for cutting down the Asherah pole." ³¹ But Joash shouted to the mob that confronted him, "Why are you defending Baal? Will you argue his case? Whoever pleads his case will be put to death by morning! If Baal truly is a god, let him defend himself and destroy the one who broke down his altar!"

³² From then on Gideon was called Jerub-baal, which means "Let Baal defend himself," because he broke down Baal's altar.

TRUTH : You've got to RELEASE what you've always known to RECEIVE what you've never had.

Questions and Actions.

Q: **WHAT** is the one thing that enslaves you the most?

Q: **WHO** can you ask for help?

Q: **WHEN** will you start destroying your idols?

Q: **HOW** can you believe a TRUTH you don't know?

Prayer : "LORD - you have called me to overcome, and I am asking for your help. May your Spirit empower me to walk in truth today. I'm choosing to destroy my idols quickly and completely with your help and the help of those around me. Thank you for the victory that is already coming my way."

Action : Make your own Truth Chart using these ?'s

1. what is the **IDOL** that needs to be destroyed?
2. what is the **LIE** that I've chosen to believe?
3. what is the **TRUTH** that will set me free?

Notes.

SESSION 3

[BELIEVE THE TRUTH]

BELIEVE THE TRUTH.

God is WITH you.

Judges

^{6:16} The LORD said to him, “**I will be with you.**

And you will destroy the Midianites as if you were fighting against one man.”

TRUTH : God’s PRESENCE brings God’s POWER.

God is IN you.

^{6:34} **Then the Spirit of the LORD took possession of Gideon.**

He blew a ram’s horn as a call to arms, and the men of the clan of Abiezer came to him. ³⁵ He also sent messengers throughout Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, summoning their warriors, and all of them responded.

**TRUTH : God is working IN you
so he can work THROUGH you.**

^{6:36} Then Gideon said to God, “If you are truly going to use me to rescue Israel as you promised, ³⁷ **prove it to me in this way.**

I will put a wool fleece on the threshing floor tonight. If the fleece is wet with dew in the morning but the ground is dry, then I will know that you are going to help me rescue Israel as you promised.” ³⁸ And that is just what happened.

When Gideon got up early the next morning, he squeezed the fleece and wrung out a whole bowlful of water. ³⁹ Then Gideon said to God, “Please don’t be angry with me, but let me make one more request. Let me use the fleece for one more test. This time let the fleece remain dry while the ground around it is wet with dew.” ⁴⁰ So that night **God did as Gideon asked.** The fleece was dry in the morning, but the ground was covered with dew.

God is FOR you.

^{7:1} So Jerub-baal (that is, Gideon) and his army **got up early and went** as far as the spring of Harod. The armies of Midian were camped north of them in the valley near the hill of Moreh.

TRUTH : Your ACTIONS show what you BELIEVE.

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 own strength.”** ³ Therefore, tell the people, ‘Whoever is timid or afraid may leave this mountain and go home.’”

So 22,000 of them went home, leaving only 10,000 who were willing to fight. ⁴ But the LORD told Gideon, **“There are still too many!** Bring them down to the spring, and I will test them to determine who will go with you and who will not.” ⁵ When Gideon took his warriors down to the water, the LORD told him, “Divide the men into two groups. In one group put all those who cup water in their hands and lap it up with their tongues like dogs. In the other group put all those who kneel down and drink with their mouths in the stream.” ⁶ Only **300** of the men drank from their hands. All the others got down on their knees and drank with their mouths in the stream.

⁷ The LORD told Gideon, **“With these 300 men I will rescue you and give you victory over the Midianites. Send all the others home.”** ⁸ So Gideon collected the provisions and rams’ horns of the other warriors and sent them home. But he kept the **300** men with him.

God is AHEAD OF you.

TRUTH : GO with what you KNOW instead of WAITING on what you don’t.

Questions and Actions.

Q: What keeps you from experiencing God's power?

Q: Which of these is the hardest for you to believe?
God is WITH me, IN me, FOR me, and AHEAD of me.

Q: How do you hear God's Voice?
[see below for some help]

Prayer : "GOD, you are the creator and sustainer of the universe and you have chosen to reveal your power and presence to ME. Nothing will trump your plan today - and I'm ready to receive it, believe it, and do it."

Action : 5 ways to **HEAR** God's Voice.

- Listen to **Gods Word.** *(command or principle)*
- Listen to **Gods Spirit.** *(yes - no - wait)*
- Listen to **Gods People.** *(seek wise counsel)*
- Listen to **Gods Timing.** *(divine circumstances)*
- Listen to **Your Heart.** *(God-given desires)*

Notes.

SESSION 4

[FIGHT LIKE HELL]

FIGHT LIKE HELL.

Judges

^{7:8} The Midianite camp was in the valley just below Gideon.

⁹ That night the LORD said, **“Get up! Go down into the Midianite camp, for I have given you victory over them!”**

Fight with a CALLING.

¹⁰ But if you are afraid to attack, go down to the camp with your servant Purah. ¹¹ Listen to what the Midianites are saying, and **you will be greatly encouraged.** Then you will be eager to attack.” So Gideon took Purah and went down to the edge of the enemy camp. ¹² The armies of Midian, Amalek, and the people of the east had settled in the valley like a swarm of locusts. Their camels were like grains of sand on the seashore - too many to count!

TRUTH : sometimes CALLING is the only thing that keeps us GOING.

¹³ Gideon crept up just as a man was telling his companion about a dream. The man said, “I had this dream, and in my dream a loaf of barley bread came tumbling down into the Midianite camp. It hit a tent, turned it over, and knocked it flat!” ¹⁴ His companion answered, “Your dream can mean only one thing - **God has given Gideon** son of Joash, the Israelite, **victory over Midian** and all its allies!”

¹⁵ When Gideon heard the dream and its interpretation, he **bowed in worship** before the LORD. Then he returned to the Israelite camp and shouted, **“Get up! For the LORD has given you victory over the Midianite hordes!”**

PRAYER : “God - give me the CLARITY to know what to do and the COURAGE to do it.” - Andy Stanley

Fight with a FRIEND.

¹⁶ He divided the 300 men into three groups and gave each man a ram's horn and a clay jar with a torch in it.

¹⁷ Then he said to them, "**Keep your eyes on me.**

When I come to the edge of the camp, do just as I do."

¹⁸ "As soon as I and those with me blow the rams' horns, blow your horns, too, all around the entire camp, and shout, '**For the LORD and for Gideon!**'"

TRUTH : It's NOT GOOD for Man to be ALONE.

¹⁹ It was just after midnight, after the changing of the guard, when Gideon and the 100 men with him reached the edge of the Midianite camp. Suddenly, they blew the rams' horns and broke their clay jars. ²⁰ Then all three groups blew their horns and broke their jars. They held the blazing torches in their left hands and the horns in their right hands, and **they all shouted, "A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!"**

Q : Who's in your Fight Club?

²¹ **Each man stood in his place** around the camp and watched as all the Midianites rushed around in a panic, shouting as they ran to escape. ²² When the 300 Israelites blew their rams' horns, **the LORD caused** the warriors in the camp to fight against each other with their swords. Those who were not killed fled to places far away. ²³ Then Gideon sent for the warriors of Naphtali, Asher, and Manasseh, who joined in chasing the army of Midian.

Fight to THE END.

^{8:4} Gideon then crossed the Jordan River with his 300 men, and though exhausted, they **continued to chase the enemy.**

²⁸ That is the story of how the people of Israel defeated Midian, which never recovered. Throughout the rest of Gideon's lifetime - about forty years - there was **peace in the land.**

Questions and Actions.

Q: **WHERE** is God calling you to go and
WHY is it hard to go there?

Q: **WHO** are you “fighting with” and
HOW can you strengthen each other?

Q: **WHEN** are you most tempted to quit and
WHAT can you do to stay in the fight?

Prayer : “MIGHTY GOD is alive and active in me today.
I will stand in my place and fight with calling, clarity,
and courage. My family and friends will walk in victory,
because you have defeated our enemy.”

Action : Commit to a weekly place of **worship and
community** and get in your place.

Notes.

SESSION 5

[FINISH STRONG]

FINISH STRONG.

“Finishing is better than Starting.” - Solomon

Judges

8:22 Then the Israelites said to Gideon, “Be our ruler! You and your son and your grandson will be our rulers, for you have rescued us from Midian.” 23 But Gideon replied, “**I will not rule over you, nor will my son. The LORD will rule over you!**”

Finish with INTEGRITY.

TRUTH : Integrity happens ONE CHOICE at a time.

24 However, I do have **one request** - that each of you give me an earring from the plunder you collected from your fallen enemies.” (The enemies, being Ishmaelites, all wore gold earrings.) 25 “Gladly!” they replied. They spread out a cloak, and each one threw in a gold earring he had gathered from the plunder. 26 The weight of the gold earrings was forty-three pounds, not including the royal ornaments and pendants, the purple clothing worn by the kings of Midian, or the chains around the necks of their camels. 27 **Gideon made a sacred ephod from the gold** and put it in Ophrah, his hometown. But soon all the Israelites prostituted themselves by worshiping it, and **it became a trap** for Gideon and his family.

TRUTH : Your integrity will determine your LEGACY.

Q : where are you most tempted to compromise?

Finish with INFLUENCE.

²⁹ Then Gideon son of Joash returned home.

³⁰ He had seventy sons born to him, for he had many wives.

³¹ He also had a concubine in Shechem, who gave birth to a son, whom he named Abimelech. ³² Gideon died when he was very old, and he was buried in the grave of his father, Joash, at Ophrah in the land of the clan of Abiezer.

³³ As soon as Gideon died, the Israelites prostituted themselves by worshiping the images of Baal, making Baal their god. ³⁴ **They forgot the LORD their God**, who had rescued them from all their enemies surrounding them.

TRUTH : Influence happens ONE PERSON at a time.

Q : WHO and HOW are you influencing?

- - -

3 steps to Finishing Strong.

- **STOP** doing anything that is destructive or distractive.
- **START** doing anything that brings life and peace.
- **KEEP** doing anything that moves your closer to God.

Questions and Actions.

Q: What do you need to **STOP** doing?

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-
-

Q: What do you need to **START** doing?

-
-
-

Q: What do you need to **KEEP** doing?

-
-
-

Prayer : “YOU GOD are my refuge and strength.
I’m committing today and the rest of my days to walk
in your truth, your power, and your calling on my life.
I’m excited to see what you’re going to do in me and
through me for your glory and my good. Amen.”

Action: What’s the ONE THING you need to do NOW.

Notes.

I AM A MAN.

**God has called me, gifted me,
empowered me, and positioned
me to lead myself, my family,
& my community.**

TODAY I CHOOSE TO . . .

- Cry Out**
- Destroy the Lie**
- Believe the Truth**
- Fight like Hell**
- Finish Strong**