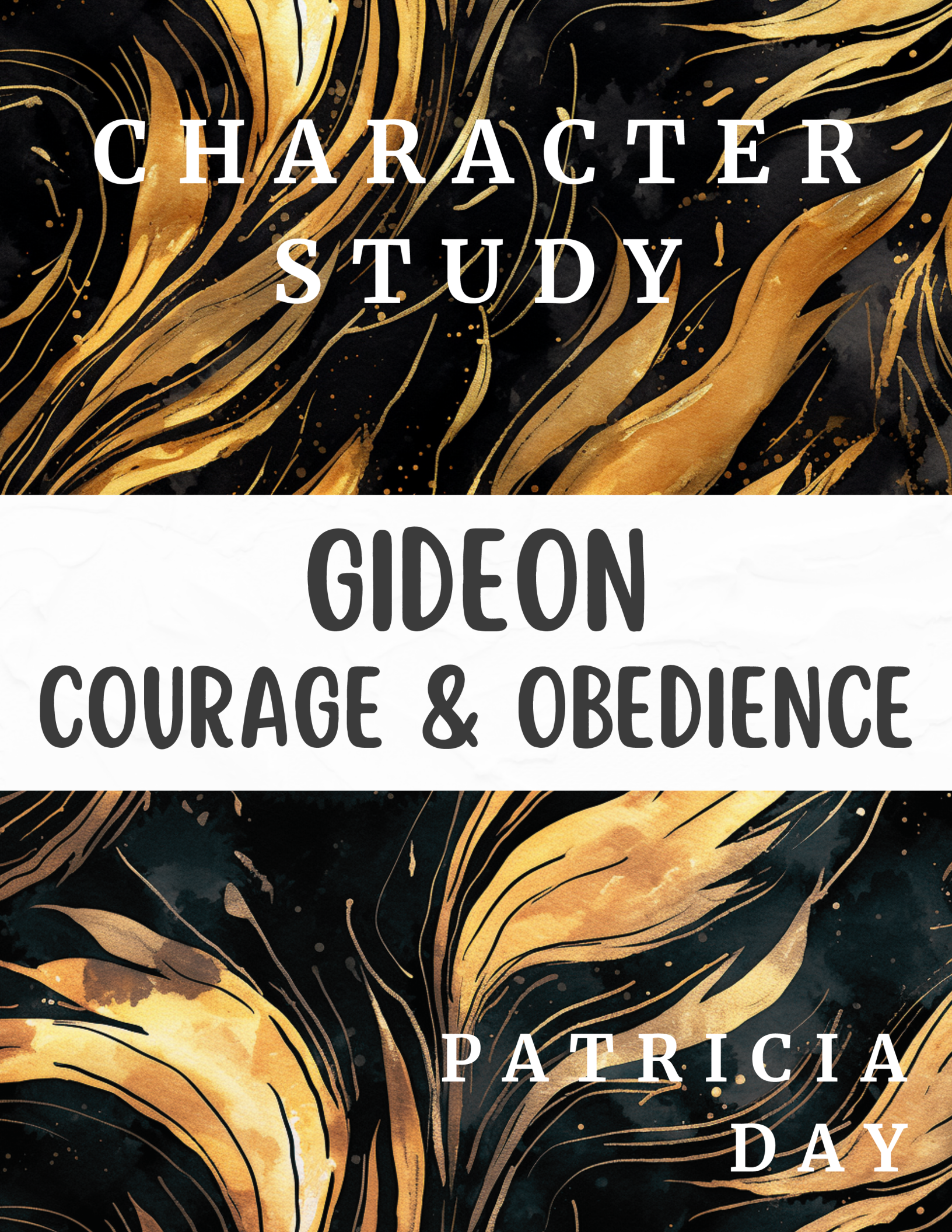




CHARACTER STUDY

GIDEON COURAGE & OBEDIENCE

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DAY



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BIBLE LESSON

GIDEON'S COURAGE & OBEDIENCE

The story of Gideon is one of the most inspiring narratives in the Bible, found in the book of Judges. Gideon, an unlikely hero, is called by God to lead the Israelites against their oppressors, the Midianites.

His journey from fear and doubt to faith and victory serves as a powerful example of how God equips and empowers ordinary individuals to accomplish extraordinary tasks.

While the events of Gideon's life took place thousands of years ago, the lessons we can draw from his story are profoundly relevant to our lives today.

In this Bible lesson, we will explore the life of Gideon, examining key themes, principles, and applications that can help us trust God's plan for victory in our own lives.



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The book of Judges provides a sobering insight into the recurring pattern that plagued Israel during this period. The cycle of apostasy can be summarized in four stages: sin, oppression, repentance, and deliverance.

- Sin: Israel would drift away from God, forsaking His commands and engaging in idolatry and wickedness. This rebellion against God's covenant marked the beginning of the cycle.
- Oppression: As a consequence of their disobedience, God would allow neighboring nations, in this case, the Midianites, to oppress Israel. The oppression was often characterized by economic hardship, loss of security, and suffering.

Current Situation – Midianite Oppression

Among the many oppressors in the book of Judges, the Midianites held a prominent role during Gideon's time. Their oppression was particularly severe, lasting for seven long years. During this period, the Midianites, along with other eastern peoples, would descend upon Israel like locusts, ravaging their crops, livestock, and livelihoods. The Midianites' presence cast a shadow of fear and despair over the Israelites, as they were constantly on the run and deprived of basic necessities.

Amid this bleak backdrop, Gideon, a member of the tribe of Manasseh, emerged as an unexpected figure. He was found threshing wheat in a winepress, an unconventional and fearful act. Typically, wheat was threshed on elevated open-air threshing floors to catch the wind and separate the grain from the chaff. Threshing in a winepress, however, was an act of caution, an attempt to hide from the Midianites who might seize the grain.



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Gideon's humble beginnings and his choice to thresh in secrecy were indicative of the pervasive fear and uncertainty that had gripped Israel. Furthermore, Gideon's initial lack of confidence in his own abilities and resources made him appear ill-suited for leadership. His circumstances reflected the overall spiritual and emotional state of the Israelites during this dark period.

Gideon's journey from obscurity to leadership is a testament to God's transformative power and His capacity to work through those who trust and obey Him, despite their humble beginnings and insecurities.

The Angel of the Lord Appeared to Gideon

The encounter between Gideon and the Angel of the Lord marked a pivotal moment in Gideon's life and the unfolding of God's plan. When the Angel addressed Gideon as a "mighty warrior," it was a divine affirmation of Gideon's untapped potential. This title was in stark contrast to Gideon's self-perception as an ordinary, fearful individual. The Angel's appearance and words conveyed God's perspective, highlighting that He saw something extraordinary in Gideon—a potential leader and deliverer of Israel.

Despite the Angel of the Lord's powerful message, Gideon's response was marked by doubt and uncertainty. He questioned the message, expressing his disbelief in God's presence and power in the face of the ongoing oppression by the Midianites. Gideon's doubt is a relatable human response to a seemingly insurmountable challenge. It reveals his struggle to reconcile the declaration with the grim reality of his circumstances. Gideon's doubts serve as a reminder that even those whom God calls may initially wrestle with questions and uncertainty.



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To seek reassurance and confirmation of God's call, Gideon requested a sign from God using a fleece. He asked that the fleece be wet with dew while the ground around it remained dry on one occasion and then dry while the ground around it was wet on another. This fleece test demonstrated Gideon's need for tangible proof and his desire to ensure that he was indeed following God's will.

God responded to Gideon's requests for signs with patience and understanding. He granted both signs as Gideon had requested, despite the fact that one might have sufficed. This patience displayed God's willingness to accommodate Gideon's doubts and fears, emphasizing His commitment to confirming His call to Gideon.

In our own lives, when we encounter moments of doubt or uncertainty about God's calling or His presence in challenging circumstances, we can draw inspiration from Gideon's journey. God's patient affirmation and willingness to provide assurance through signs remind us that He is always with us, empowering us to fulfill the roles and purposes He has prepared for us, even when we may initially doubt our own abilities.

Gideon's journey toward obedience and preparation began with a bold and symbolic act—tearing down the altar of Baal in his father's house. This act signified a turning away from idolatry, a pivotal step in reestablishing Israel's commitment to the one true God. Baal worship had become prevalent among the Israelites, and it represented a departure from their faith in Yahweh. Gideon's courage to confront this idolatry in his own family (even though he was afraid and did it at night) marked the beginning of a spiritual revival.



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Gideon's action is a powerful reminder that obedience to God often requires us to confront and dismantle the idols in our own lives—anything that competes with our allegiance to Him. It challenges us to examine our hearts and make choices that align with God's will, even when it involves confronting deeply ingrained sin or cultural norms.

The Gathering of an Army

Following the destruction of the altar of Baal, Gideon, guided by God's direction, gathered an army of 32,000 men to confront the Midianites. This army appeared to be a powerful force, and it seemed logical to rely on sheer numbers for victory. However, God had different plans.

God initiated a unique process of elimination, instructing Gideon to reduce the size of his army. First, God allowed those who were fearful or afraid to leave, reducing the army by thousands. Then, God took them through a series of tests by the water, selecting only those who drank in a specific way. This process ultimately reduced Gideon's army to a mere 300 men.

God's purpose in this dramatic reduction was to demonstrate that victory would come not through human strength or numbers but through His intervention and power. The smaller, more vulnerable army would magnify the glory of God when they triumphed over the Midianites, showcasing His miraculous provision and strength.



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Gideon's obedience extended beyond the composition of his army; it also encompassed following God's unconventional battle plan. God instructed Gideon to equip his men with torches, trumpets, and empty pitchers. They were to surround the Midianite camp at night and, at a signal, break the pitchers, revealing the torches and blowing the trumpets. This unconventional approach emphasized that the victory would come from God's strategy rather than human military tactics.

Gideon's trust in God's battle plan was a testament to his growing faith and obedience. He did not rely on the conventional wisdom of warfare but placed his confidence in God's guidance. The outcome of the battle, as we will explore further, highlighted the effectiveness of Gideon's trust in God's unconventional methods.

The Battle of Midian

With a small, unconventional army of 300 men, Gideon embarked on the Battle of Midian. Their strategy was unlike anything the Midianites had encountered before. Gideon divided his men into three companies, each carrying torches hidden in pitchers and trumpets. They surrounded the Midianite camp during the middle watch of the night. At Gideon's signal, they broke the pitchers, revealing the torches, and blew the trumpets, creating a sudden and startling noise. This unexpected attack caused confusion and chaos among the Midianites. They awoke to the sound of trumpets, saw the surrounding lights, and believed they were under attack by a massive force.



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The Midianites, overwhelmed by fear and disorientation, began to flee and turned on one another in the darkness. Gideon's unconventional tactics, combined with God's supernatural intervention, created a powerful moment in which the Midianites were defeated by their own panic.

Central to Gideon's victory was God's direct intervention. It was not the brilliance of the military strategy or the strength of Gideon's army that routed the Midianites, but rather God's sovereign power. The Lord caused the Midianites to turn on each other in fear and confusion. This divine intervention displayed God's supremacy over human circumstances and emphasized that the victory belonged to Him.

The Battle of Midian serves as a profound reminder that, in our own lives, victory often hinges on God's intervention rather than our own abilities. When we face seemingly insurmountable challenges or formidable foes, we must remember that God can intervene in extraordinary ways to bring about our deliverance.

Through the astonishing victory over the Midianites, Gideon's faith and trust in God were profoundly strengthened. Gideon, who initially doubted his own abilities and questioned God's presence, now witnessed firsthand the remarkable power of the Almighty. His faith journey mirrored a transformation from insecurity and hesitation to unwavering trust and confidence in God's promises.

Gideon's story illustrates that faith is not static but can grow and mature as we experience God's faithfulness in our lives. It encourages us to trust God even when our circumstances seem bleak, knowing that He can turn the tide of any battle and strengthen our faith in the process.



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The victory at the Battle of Midian marked the end of the oppressive seven-year rule of the Midianites over Israel. The Midianite oppression was broken, and the Israelites enjoyed a season of peace that lasted for forty years. During this time, Israel experienced relief from the hardships and suffering they had endured.

This period of reprieve highlighted the significance of Gideon's leadership and the impact of his obedience and faith. It demonstrated that when God raises up leaders who are willing to trust Him and follow His guidance, entire communities can experience freedom and peace.

APPLICATION FOR TODAY

Trusting God's Calling

Just as Gideon was called to a specific purpose, each of us has a unique calling from God. It might involve our careers, relationships, or service to others. Trusting God's plan for our lives is not always easy, especially when it appears improbable or challenging. However, Gideon's story reminds us that God sees potential in us that we might not recognize in ourselves. To apply this today, we should seek God's guidance, pray for clarity, and step out in faith even when the path ahead seems uncertain. Trusting God's calling often leads to unexpected and remarkable outcomes.

Overcoming Doubt

Gideon's initial doubts about God's presence, power, and plan are relatable to many of us. In our journey of faith, doubt can be a natural part of the process. Yet, God is patient and willing to confirm His calling to us, just as He did with Gideon.



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When doubt arises, we should turn to prayer, seek God's Word for reassurance, and remember past instances of His faithfulness. God uses our doubts as opportunities for growth and deepening our faith. We can learn from Gideon to trust God's character even in the face of uncertainty.

Obedience and Preparation

Gideon's obedience in tearing down idols and preparing for battle underscores the principle that we must be obedient in small matters before God entrusts us with more significant responsibilities. This applies to our spiritual growth and service. We should be faithful in the small tasks God places before us, whether it's practicing kindness, studying His Word, or serving in our communities. As we prove faithful in these smaller areas, God can entrust us with greater influence and impact in His kingdom.

God's Power in Weakness

Gideon's victory with a small, ill-equipped army emphasizes the truth that God's power is made perfect in our weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9). Today, we should learn to rely on God's strength, recognizing that our own limitations can be a canvas for God's miraculous work. When we face challenges that seem insurmountable, we can turn to God, seeking His guidance and strength. His power shines through our weaknesses, demonstrating His glory to the world.



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GIDEON'S COURAGE & OBEDIENCE

Unconventional Faith

Gideon's unique battle strategy challenges us to trust in God's wisdom rather than relying solely on conventional wisdom or human methods. Often, God's ways are not our ways, and His solutions may seem unconventional. To apply this principle today, we should be open to God's guidance even when it appears counterintuitive. This means seeking His direction in prayer, consulting His Word, and being willing to step out in faith, even if it means going against the norm. Gideon's unconventional faith teaches us that God's wisdom transcends human understanding, and His plans are always for our good and His glory.



GIDEON'S COURAGE & OBEDIENCE

DEEPER REFLECTION

How can I identify and confront the "idols" in my life—things that may distract me from God's purpose or lead me astray from His path?

What doubts or uncertainties do I struggle with when it comes to recognizing God's calling or guidance in my life, and how can I overcome them?



GIDEON'S COURAGE & OBEDIENCE

DEEPER REFLECTION

In what ways have I experienced God's patience and confirmation of His presence in my life, even when I may have initially doubted His plan?

Am I willing to be obedient in small matters and prepare for God's work, even when it may seem insignificant or challenging?



GIDEON'S COURAGE & OBEDIENCE

DEEPER REFLECTION

How can I better rely on God's strength and recognize His power in my moments of weakness or adversity?

In what areas of my life am I open to embracing unconventional faith, trusting in God's wisdom even when it goes against conventional wisdom or my own understanding?

Bible Study NOTES

TOPIC:

KEY VERSES:

INSIGHTS & KEY TAKEAWAYS:



RELATED VERSES



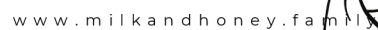


WORDS TO LOOK UP



PRAYER & NOTES:

A detailed black and white line drawing of a lily flower. The central flower is in full bloom, showing six petals with prominent veins radiating from the center. To the left and right of the main flower are several buds at various stages of development, some partially open. The stems are thin and elegant, with small, pointed leaves. The overall style is clean and minimalist, suitable for a coloring page.

This image shows a full page of blank, lined paper. It features approximately 20 evenly spaced horizontal grey lines across its entire width, providing a guide for handwriting or typing. The paper itself is a clean, off-white color.





WANT MORE?



Hi, my name is Patricia. Married mother of two with a mild indoor plant addiction. CEO at Milk and Honey, where our aim is to equip parents to faithfully and boldly train their children to walk with the Lord all the days of their life.





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