



## **RUNNING WITH THE GIANTS**

Gideon

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Discussion Notes

The Crossing Church

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### **OPENING**

This week we are continuing a series called “Running with the Giants.” The idea for this series comes from the Book of Hebrews where the author gives a long list of people who were giants in the faith. The race of life is a constant challenge, but we don’t have to run it alone. Now we are looking at the lives of biblical giants who ran with endurance and faith, and used their stories to build our own. This summer, we will be running with giants and discovering inspiration for our own journeys. We have these giants of the Bible who have gone before us, sharing their life lessons and helping to keep us from making the same mistakes.

### **SCRIPTURE<sup>1</sup>**

**Judges 6:1-4, 6** Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord and for seven years he gave them into the hands of the Midianites. Because the power of Midian was so oppressive, the Israelites prepared shelters for themselves in mountain clefts, caves and strongholds. Whenever the Israelites planted their crops, the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples invaded the country. They camped on the land and ruined the crops all the way to Gaza and did not spare a living thing for Israel, neither sheep nor cattle nor donkeys...Midian so impoverished the Israelites that they cried out to the Lord for help.

**Judges 6:11-16** The angel of the Lord came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belong to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites. When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he said, “The Lord is with you, mighty warrior.” “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.” 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?” “But Lord,” Gideon asked, “how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.” The Lord answered, “I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites together.”

**Philippians 1:21** Paul said, “I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body. Whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.”

**Romans 8:31-32** If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all.

### **OBSERVATION**

Gideon was an ordinary man, but God had extraordinary plans for him. Aren’t we all ordinary people? We have high hopes for ourselves – our careers, our parenting skills, our ability to earn money – but we have the flaws of regular men and women. Gideon was one of the judges serving God with people like Deborah and Samson during 300 years in Israel before the people demanded a king. He had no special skills until God empowered him to rise up as a champion of his people and overcome a terrible enemy.

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<sup>1</sup> All scripture is NIV unless otherwise indicated



## APPLICATION

Israel's history was one of disobedience, disaster and deliverance. The people would disobey and God would bring punishment; the punishment would bring disaster such as two exiles of the nation; and then the people would cry out to God and He would deliver and bless them until the cycle began again. For many of us, this has been the way of our own individual lives. We are close to Him, then we are tempted away to dire consequences, then we repent and are delivered.

**Question:** Tell us about an experience in your life when your disobedience caused disaster and you called upon God for deliverance.

**Question:** When did you forget that the spirit of God rests on you? When did you discover that you are ordinary like Gideon, but the power of God helped you act extraordinarily?

Our own nation is in this cycle now – we are facing disaster from denial of God throughout our culture. What the Bible calls evil has become commonplace in our society. But God is merciful and will raise up champions like Gideon for us, too, if we will “humble ourselves and pray and seek His face and turn from our wicked ways.”<sup>2</sup>

**Question:** Tell us about all of the answered prayers you have experienced during your walk with God. How do these memories help you to approach the future with confidence?

When we realize that God knows our names and loves us personally, and that there is actually an opportunity for us to be extraordinary because we are rightly connected to God, we know that we aren't ordinary anymore. God can use us because He is with us. Remember, courage is not the absence of fear, it is confidence in the presence of God. And the closer we walk with God, the more courage will be required.

**Question:** What does this mean to your life? Does it cause fear or encourage confidence in you?

**Question:** What would an extraordinary person like you do when you know that you have that kind of a relationship with God? What are your dreams of “extraordinariness”?

We are so valuable to God that He equates us with the price of His Son. So we need to wake up every day and ask ourselves how we can be extraordinary that day. We don't need to be like the average people around us who don't know God – He is for us - He is in us - He is with us.

**Question:** What kind of a person do you want to be? What do others say about you when you are not around? Are you happy with their comments? Do they think you are a champion for God?

**Question:** What would your life be like if you decided that whatever role you have in life, you will approach it with the hope of being extraordinary? Specifically consider parenting, loving your spouse, earning a living and serving God.

So how many rounds do we get with God? Answer - as many as we need because His mercy never runs out. He loves us too much to not let us face the consequences of our rebellion, but His mercy is so great that when we return and ask His forgiveness, He will be there.

## PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we are just ordinary people like so many biblical giants. We need to have the courage to look at every day as an opportunity to do extraordinary things through your power and wisdom in us. Help us to change our perspective of ourselves and see us as You do – ordinary clay that can be molded into extraordinary vessels for Your purposes. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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<sup>2</sup> 2 Chronicles 7:14