

Four Lessons from Four Men – mentioned in one verse

Hebrews 11:32 - Barak, Gideon, Samson and Jephthah

God can use flawed people to do great things

Judg 6:14-15 *Then the Lord turned to him and said, "Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you?" 15 So he said to Him, "O my Lord, how can I save Israel? Indeed my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house." NKJV*

Gideon thought he was unqualified to lead God's people since his family was the **weakest** in Manasseh, and he was the **youngest** in his family.

Judg 11:1-3 *Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valor, but he was the son of a harlot; and Gilead begot Jephthah. 2 Gilead's wife bore sons; and when his wife's sons grew up, they drove Jephthah out, and said to him, "You shall have no inheritance in our father's house, for you are the son of another woman." 3 Then Jephthah fled from his brothers and dwelt in the land of Tob; and worthless men banded together with Jephthah and went out raiding with him. NKJV*

Jephthah was the son of two **sinners**.
He was driven out of town by his own half-brothers.

Judg 14:1-3 *Now Samson went down to Timnah, and saw a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines. 2 So he went up and told his father and mother, saying, "I have seen a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines; now therefore, get her for me as a wife." 3 Then his father and mother said to him, "Is there no woman among the daughters of your brethren, or among all my people, that you must go and get a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?" And Samson said to his father, "Get her for me, for she pleases me well." NKJV*

Samson fell in love with **forbidden** women. (see Deut 7:1-5)

God is patient while our faith grows

Judg 4:8 *And Barak said to her, "If you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go!" NKJV*

After Debra told Barak that God would deliver the Canaanites into his hand, he set a **condition** on going into battle. Make no mistake about it... this was bad!

God determined that Barak wouldn't receive glory for the victory, but he still used him to defeat the Canaanites and **deliver** His people from severe oppression.

Don't forget, his name is enshrined in the hall of fame of faith!

Judg 6:17-18 *Then he said to Him, "If now I have found favor in Your sight, then show me a sign that it is You who talk with me. 18 Do not depart from here, I pray, until I come to You and bring out my offering and set it before You." NKJV*

Judg 6:36-40 So Gideon said to God, "If You will save Israel by my hand as You have said — 37 look, I shall put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor; if there is dew on the fleece only, and it is dry on all the ground, then I shall know that You will save Israel by my hand, as You have said." 38 And it was so. When he rose early the next morning and squeezed the fleece together, he wrung the dew out of the fleece, a bowlful of water. 39 Then Gideon said to God, "Do not be angry with me, but let me speak just once more: Let me test, I pray, just once more with the fleece; let it now be dry only on the fleece, but on all the ground let there be dew." 40 And God did so that night. It was dry on the fleece only, but there was dew on all the ground. NKJV

Judg 7:9-16 It happened on the same night that the Lord said to him, "Arise, go down against the camp, for I have delivered it into your hand. 10 But if you are afraid to go down, go down to the camp with Purah your servant, 11 and you shall hear what they say; and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp." Then he went down with Purah his servant to the outpost of the armed men who were in the camp. 12 Now the Midianites and Amalekites, all the people of the East, were lying in the valley as numerous as locusts; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the seashore in multitude. 13 And when Gideon had come, there was a man telling a dream to his companion. He said, "I have had a dream: To my surprise, a loaf of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian; it came to a tent and struck it so that it fell and overturned, and the tent collapsed." 14 Then his companion answered and said, "This is nothing else but the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel! Into his hand God has delivered Midian and the whole camp." 15 And so it was, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, that he worshiped. He returned to the camp of Israel, and said, "Arise, for the Lord has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand." NKJV

Gideon **asked** for three proofs that he was really the one God was going to use to deliver His people. God was patient enough to **offer** Gideon a fourth sign, and he needed it.

God Requires Life Giving Faith

Judg 4:14-16 Then Deborah said to Barak, "Up! For this is the day in which the Lord has delivered Sisera into your hand. Has not the Lord gone out before you?" So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand men following him. 15 And the Lord routed Sisera and all his chariots and all his army with the edge of the sword before Barak; and Sisera alighted from his chariot and fled away on foot. 16 But Barak pursued the chariots and the army as far as Harosheth Hagoyim, and all the army of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword; not a man was left. NKJV

Even though Barak would only go to battle if Deborah went with him, he still had enough faith to go to battle and **utterly** destroy Sisera's army.

Judg 7:15-18 And so it was, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, that he worshiped. He returned to the camp of Israel, and said, "Arise, for the Lord has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand." 16 Then he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put a trumpet into every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and torches inside the pitchers. 17 And he said to them, "Look at me and do likewise; watch, and when I come to the edge of the camp you shall do as I do: 18 When I blow the trumpet, I and all who are with me, then you also blow the trumpets on every side of the whole camp, and say, 'The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!'" NKJV

Gideon had enough faith to refer to a **future** victory in **past** tense. He said the Lord has delivered Midian into your hand.

Judg 8:10-12 Now Zebah and Zalmunna were at Karkor, and their armies with them, about fifteen thousand, all who were left of all the army of the people of the East; for one hundred and twenty thousand men who drew the sword had fallen. 11 Then Gideon went up by the road of those who dwell in tents on the east of Nobah and

Jogbehah; and he attacked the army while the camp felt secure. 12 When Zebah and Zalmunna fled, he pursued them; and he took the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and routed the whole army. NKJV

Gideon went to battle with **300** men against an army of 135,000 men. The odds were 450 to 1. Although it took four signs to get Gideon to where God wanted him to be, he got there and was used by God to do something great.

All four men knew victory belonged to God

Judg 5:1-5 *Then Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam sang on that day, saying: 2 "When leaders lead in Israel, When the people willingly offer themselves, Bless the Lord! 3 "Hear, O kings! Give ear, O princes! I, even I, will sing to the Lord; I will sing praise to the Lord God of Israel. 4 Lord, when You went out from Seir, When You marched from the field of Edom, The earth trembled and the heavens poured, The clouds also poured water; 5 The mountains gushed before the Lord, This Sinai, before the Lord God of Israel... 13 "Then the survivors came down, the people against the nobles; The Lord came down for me against the mighty. NKJV*

Deborah and Barak sang a song that gives **God** the credit for the victory over the Canaanites.

Judg 8:22-23 *Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, "Rule over us, both you and your son, and your grandson also; for you have delivered us from the hand of Midian." 23 But Gideon said to them, "I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; the Lord shall rule over you." NKJV*

Gideon refused to become king over Israel because he knew that God was the only true king and God was the true **deliverer** of Israel.

Judg 11:23 *'And now the Lord God of Israel has dispossessed the Amorites from before His people Israel; should you then possess it? NKJV*

In verse 9 Jephthah knew that it was God who would give victory over the Ammonites. In verse 23, he gave God the credit for giving Israel the land to begin with.

Judg 11:30-32 *And Jephthah made a vow to the Lord, and said, "If You will indeed deliver the people of Ammon into my hands, 31 then it will be that whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the people of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up as a burnt offering." 32 So Jephthah advanced toward the people of Ammon to fight against them, and the Lord delivered them into his hands. NKJV*

Jephthah knew that God was the **only** one who could save Israel, and he was willing to be a tool in God's hands. Jephthah had enough faith to **fulfill** his vow to the Lord, even at great personal cost!

Judg 16:28-30 *Then Samson called to the Lord, saying, "O Lord God, remember me, I pray! Strengthen me, I pray, just this once, O God, that I may with one blow take vengeance on the Philistines for my two eyes!" 29 And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars which supported the temple, and he braced himself against them, one on his right and the other on his left. 30 Then Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines!" And he pushed with all his might, and the temple fell on the lords and all the people who were in it. So the dead that he killed at his death were more than he had killed in his life. NKJV*

The strong man may have had the greatest weaknesses, but even Samson understood that his true strength came from the **Lord**.

So what?

We **all** have flaws. God's not looking for perfect people. He chides self-righteous people.

God can **use** us while helping us overcome our flaws.

There are **no** non-essential workers in the Lord's kingdom!

God is **patient** with us even though our faith isn't perfect yet.

We must be willing to commit our lives to God **regardless** of the cost.

We must give God the glory for **everything** he does in our lives.