**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. 3 Whenever the Israelites planted their crops, marauders from Midian, Amalek, and the people of the east would attack Israel, 4 camping in the land and destroying crops as far away as Gaza. They left the Israelites with nothing to eat, taking all the sheep, goats, cattle, and donkeys. 5 These enemy hordes, coming with their livestock and tents, were as thick as locusts; they arrived on droves of camels too numerous to count. And 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. Judges 6:1-6**

**Sin Destroys Faith**

**Hard Times can be your Starting Point of Faith**

1. **God gets your attention**
2. **You are not “the man”!**
3. **You need Me!**

**7When they cried out to the Lord because of Midian, 8the Lord sent a prophet… Judges 6:7-8a**

**God’s Word grows your faith**

**Then the angel of the Lord came and sat beneath the great tree at Ophrah, which belonged to Joash of the clan of Abiezer. 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!”**

**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.”**

**14Then 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!” Judges 6:11-15**

1. **It will remove your false beliefs about yourself**

* **I’m nobody**
* **I’m weak**
* **I have no value**

1. **It will give you true idea of who you are in Christ**

* **Hero**
* **Rescuer**
* **Sufficient**

1. **It will remove your false ideas of God**

* **God doesn’t care about me**
* **God won’t use His power to help me**
* **God has abandoned me**

**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.**

* **Sovereign God**

**And Gideon built an altar to the Lord there and named it Yahweh-Shalom (which means “the Lord is peace”).**

* **God of Peace**

**Remove Your Faith Counterfeits**

**The Lord said to him, “I will be with you. And you will destroy the Midianites as if you were fighting against one man.”**

**17Gideon replied, “If you are truly going to help me, show me a sign to prove that it is really the Lord speaking to me. 18Don’t go away until I come back and bring my offering to you.” Judges 6:16-17**

**Then Gideon said to God, “If you are truly going to use me to rescue Israel as you promised, 37prove 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.” 38And 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.**

**39Then 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.” 40So that night God did as Gideon asked. The fleece was dry in the morning, but the ground was covered with dew. Judges 6:36-40**

1. **Remove your God manipulators**

**That night the Lord said to Gideon, “Take the second bull from your father’s herd, the one that is seven years old. Pull down your father’s altar to Baal, and cut down the Asherah pole standing beside it. 26Then build an altar to the Lord your God here on this hilltop sanctuary, laying the stones carefully. Sacrifice the bull as a burnt offering on the altar, using as fuel the wood of the Asherah pole you cut down.” Judges 6:25-26**

1. **Remove your God replacements**

**. 2The 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. 3Therefore, tell the people, ‘Whoever is timid or afraid may leave this mountain[**[**a**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Judges%207&version=NLT#fen-NLT-6674a)**] and go home.’” So, 22,000 of them went home, leaving only 10,000 who were willing to fight.**

**4But 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.” 5When 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.” 6Only 300 of the men drank from their hands. All the others got down on their knees and drank with their mouths in the stream.**

**7The Lord told Gideon, “With these 300 men I will rescue you and give you victory over the Midianites. Send all the others home.” 8So Gideon collected the provisions and rams’ horns of the other warriors and sent them home. But he kept the 300 men with him. Judges 7:2-8**

**Don’t trust your resources! Trust God!**

**28That 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. Judges 8:28**

**For every child of God defeats this evil world, and we achieve this victory through our faith. 1 John 5:4**