

## **Those Who Trusted God**

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I can promise you there are no easy ten step processes to suddenly function in this reality with God. It is a process that will come at a price. Before looking at the price, consider this amazing similarity in the lives of these four heroes of scriptures still being celebrated in Jewish culture. These men: Noah, Moses, Joshua and Gideon all walked in covenant position with God. What was their secret?

Noah lived in a time when God assessed humanity and regretted that He made man. He concluded that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts was only evil continually. Solution? I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping things and birds of the air. (see Genesis 6: 5-7)

Noah however found favor in His eyes. He said of Noah: "Noah was a just man, perfect in his generation. Noah walked with God." It would be safe to assume Noah knew the voice of God since he walked with God. Hearing, knowing and trusting that voice would prove critical in his journey with God.

The scenario: it had never rained on the earth. The growing multitude of people are modeling a lifestyle that is in direct contrast to Noah's. God comes to him and said I will destroy all flesh on the earth but you are to make yourself a giant boat to escape with representatives of every living species on the earth.

I would have asked God many questions before even setting out. What is rain? How are you going to flood the whole world? There is not enough water in the seas to flood the whole earth. I am not expert in boat building. What if it leaks? Every living thing? How do I find them? Do you know some of these animals do not do well in close proximity to others? Could I not go up to the top of the mountains and you preserve me there?

God left nothing to chance. Noah was given very specific instructions that left nothing for him to figure out. God was not looking for man's input but rather his simple obedience. Noah did his part as instructed and experienced the working of God and His sovereignty over all creation; even the animals. His simple obedience was the tool God used to fulfill his purposes.

The next hero is Moses. He has escaped execution in Egypt and fled to the deserts where he spent the next 40 years rebuilding his life. With the privileged life of the palace behind him, he settled in his new identity as a shepherd with a growing family in the barren wilderness of Midian. This is where God chooses to present himself to Moses to begin his journey.

God asked Moses to go on a mission to Egypt where he was to free the entire population of slaves and bring them out to meet Him in the wilderness. I can just imagine Moses thinking, God, do you really know what you are asking me to do? You want me to leave the solace I have come to embrace for the past 40 years and go to confront the most powerful nation on the earth? You want me to demand them to release their workforce which they have lorded over for more than 400 years? You know this would result in their national economic collapse and change their lives forever, right? You know they have real weapons there? Are you aware that their priesthood is very powerful in the dark wisdom? Please, if it pleases you, send someone else.

When he finally agreed to go on the mission, God carefully laid out the plans so he Moses could understand. Nothing was left up to chance on his mission. There was no room for side-bar input from Moses. Moses had no real hand in this work but only to allow God to use him as a vessel. His work was simple. Tomorrow I am going to bring this plague. You go to Pharaoh and tell him this will happen. He had to hear and know the voice of God and simply obey, while at the same time ignoring all the competing voices.

Joshua came on the scene serving as Moses' servant. He however had a secret. For those two years before the 40-year sentence in the wilderness, Joshua was being introduced to the presence of God; staying in the cloud or even ascending the mountain when the multitude was not permitted. He was prepared to stand in the position of leadership. What was the requirement? He knew the voice of God and knew obedience would guarantee success.

When it was time to cross the Jordan river, which was at its highest flow at that time, Joshua did not have to figure out what to do. He knew to wait for instructions. The priests touched the water and it dried up. At Jericho, he understood God would come and bring instructions; so he waited. All the other nations were defeated with the same strategy. He followed the commands and prevailed.

Joshua began to have trouble only when the Israelites began to attribute victory to their own power, strategy or wisdom. Notice that God allowed them to go up to Ai knowing they would be defeated. He allowed them to covenant with the Gibeonites knowing He would have to honor the covenant in contradiction to His planned destruction of Gibeon. He was dependent on the obedience of his covenant partner.

Gideon started his journey with an angelic encounter. With the encouragement of the angel, Gideon gained strength and courage to break down their family altar to Baal and raise a proper altar to Jehovah. Having passed that test and surviving the death threat of his fellow Israelites, he was now moved to his real assignment – to destroy the Midian army.

The nation of Midian was given authority to rule over Israel for seven years. But unlike other conquerors, Midian was not just interested in the wealth of the nation; they wanted to crush Israel. Year after year when Israel had labored to sow their crops, the Midianites along with the Amalekites and the people of the East would come up against them.

They would encamp against them and destroy the produce of the earth as far as Gaza and leave no sustenance for Israel; neither sheep nor ox nor donkey. For they would come up with their livestock and their tents, coming in as numerous as locusts; both they and their camels were without number; and they would enter the land to destroy it. Judges 6:3-5.

God's plan to deal with this mighty mountain was to send a man. Gideon walked through the process with step by step instructions that resulted in these mighty armies broken, killing each other or fleeing from the battle seeking refuge.

What was the secret of these and so many of the other heroes in scripture? They all eventually understood that God was at His work. This work was much bigger than their capacity to understand. When they gained the platform of trust, they simply followed their instructions and left the rest for God to do. What was their price? They had to die to self and totally depend on the God who was careful to reveal Himself to them. This is a position of covenant.

What about you? Are you ready to walk closely with Him? Consider the following questions:

- **Has God revealed Himself to you so that you know beyond all doubt that He is really real?**
- **Are you able to recognize His voice when He speaks to you?** My sheep hears my voice and I know them and they follow me. John 10:27.
- **Can God trust you to go on impossible missions?** So, I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it but I found no one. Ezekiel 22:30
- **How closely have you obeyed His voice when He gives you a command?** Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believed in Me, the works that I do he will do also and greater works than these he will do because I go to My father. John 14:12

Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifice as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifices, and to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry...**1 Samuel 19:22-23**

This amazing covenant position is not you striving for the presence of God but rather you dying to self so that He can work through you. What is standing in the way?