
LOVING JESUS, LOVING PEOPLE, PLOWING A COUNTER-CULTURE

[Spring Season: April 12 – June 14 | Fall Season: September 27 – December 6]

LEADER DETAILS

- **MAIN TEXT:** Judges 6:1-7:1 (Supporting Texts: Romans 8:35-39, 12:2)
- **MAIN IDEA:** God transforms fearful people into courageous people by renewing their identity, confronting sin, and calling them into obedient faith.
- **GROWTH FOCUS:** Empower someone new this week to lead in some way (prayer time, ice-beaker, etc.)
- **ICE-BREAKER:** What's something you were irrationally afraid of as a kid?

ANNOUNCEMENTS (Full details at: emergence.church/digital-bulletin)

- **Totowa Updates** – The new eKids is open, we are in the temporary auditorium, and we have new service times! **Keep updated on changes here:** <https://emergence.church/totowa-updates>
- **Baptism Weekend – June 4th and 7th – Ringwood and Totowa**
 - **The Why** - Baptism is the way Jesus calls His followers to proclaim their faith in Him. It symbolizes how through faith we die with Christ to our sin, and are raised with Christ to new life in Him. If you are a follower of Jesus and haven't declared that through baptism, now is the time to sign up!
- **College-ish - Mondays in Totowa @ 7:00pm - June 1 – July 6**
 - **The Why** - College-ish is a six-week session for young adults from ages 18-25 to grow, connect, and learn more about Jesus. For those who are staying local as we head towards Fall, the hope is for this to also serve as a bridge into a community group for long-term connection and discipleship.

GETTING STARTED:

- **Pray:** This helps everyone prepare their heads and hearts as you turn to the discussion.
- **Watch Community Extras Video** (length 3:43 – questions from video are included below)

LAST WEEK'S GROWTH STEP FOLLOW-UP:

[Leaders: These follow-ups are meant to offer some accountability while being low-pressure. Keep it casual, "If you were able to try this last week, how did it go?" Sharing is optional; it's always okay to pass.]

- **Outward Action:** Take time this week to honor someone who has been a spiritual mother to you, whether by telling them what they've meant to you (if possible), sharing their impact with others, or by simply expressing gratitude to God for that gift.
- **Inward Prayer:** Ask God to show you where fear, comfort, or passivity may be keeping you from fully trusting and obeying Him.

SERMON DISCUSSION

Prioritize meaningful conversation over getting through every question.

Our Frame of Reality

Read Judges 6:1-6, 11-13, Romans 12:2

Israel falls into the cycle we've seen throughout Judges: rebellion, oppression, crying out, and deliverance. This time, we see God's people are hiding in caves from the Midianites. When we first meet Gideon (the next judge), he is hiding in a winepress out of fear. Pastor Ryan pointed out that everyone views life through a "frame" or lens that shapes how they interpret circumstances. The world constantly trains us to see life through fear, anxiety, and insecurity, but Romans 12 calls us to be transformed by the renewing of their minds through God's truth instead.

- What are some common "frames" people use to interpret themselves and the world around them?
- What are some verses that give you courage and confidence in who the Lord is? *[leaders note: Make sure to come ready with a 1-2 of your own. This is a great opportunity to show people how abiding in God's word really does have the power to transform our hearts and minds.]*

Letting God Define You

Read Judges 6:11-16 (some repeat from last section)

While Gideon is hiding in fear, God calls him a "mighty man of valor." Pastor Ryan emphasized that true courage begins when we allow God's truth to define us more than our fears, insecurities, or the opinions of others.

- How does believing false things about yourself affect the way you live, obey God, or relate to others?
- What lies about yourself are you often tempted to believe, and what scriptures help, or could help, you fight those lies? *[Leaders note: similar to the last section, but different angles!]*

Jesus is With You

Read Romans 8:35-39

Gideon responds to God's call with insecurity, but God tells him "I will be with you." Pastor Ryan emphasized that throughout scripture, courage is rarely built on the promise of an easy life, but on the promise of God's presence. The greatest source of courage is not self-confidence, but confidence that Jesus is with us no matter what we face.

- Why do you think God's presence is such a repeated theme throughout scripture when people are called into difficult situations?
- Can you think of a time when knowing Jesus was with you gave you courage, peace, or perseverance in a difficult situation?

Cleaning Out the House

Read Judges 6:25-27

Before Gideon fights Midian publicly, God first tells him to tear down the idols in his own household. Pastor Ryan pointed out that we can't walk boldly with God publicly while privately holding onto compromise and hidden sin. Sometimes the anxiety, fear, or heaviness we experience is connected to places in our lives where we are resisting repentance.

- Gideon obeyed God, but still did it at night because he was afraid. What does this teach us about courage and obedience?
- Is there an area of compromise or hidden struggle that God may be prompting you to address? You don't need to share details publicly, but what could it look like to bring that into the light with God and someone you trust? *[Leaders note: Use wisdom here. Depending on the trust and maturity of your group, this could open the door for meaningful honesty and confession. At the same time, don't pressure people to share publicly beyond what is appropriate.]*

Courage is Built Through Obedience

Read Judges 6:36-7:1

Gideon continues to wrestle with fear and uncertainty, even asking God for reassurance through the fleece. Yet eventually, Gideon has to step forward in obedience. Pastor Ryan reminded us that courage is not the absence of fear, but learning to obey God even when fear is present. Over time, courage is built through steps of obedience.

- Have you ever experienced courage growing only after you stepped out in obedience? What happened?

 - What is one step of obedience or courage you sense God calling you to take this week?
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GROWTH STEP THIS WEEK

- **Outward Action:** Take one courageous step of obedience this week in an area where fear has been holding you back.
 - **Inward Prayer:** Meditate on scripture, asking God to renew your mind with His truth and help you see yourself and your circumstances through His eyes.
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PRAYER PROMPTS:

- Thank God that He is patient and gracious toward fearful people
 - Pray for God to renew our minds and help us see life through His truth
 - Pray for courage to obey God even when fear is present
 - Pray for God to expose and heal areas of hidden sin or compromise
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NEXT WEEK'S TEXT: Judges 7:1-8:32 (Gideon Part 2)