



**13 May 2020**  
**Midweek Encouragement**

A couple of weeks ago, I was reading the books of Joshua and Judges for my Disciple Class homework.

There's a very great contrast between Joshua and some of the judges. Joshua is our ideal image of what a true man of God looks like: faithful, courageous and upright. Contrast this image to some of the judges.

Like Gideon.

When first approached the Lord's angel, he says, *"If the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us?"* (Referring to the pillaging of the Israelites by the Midianites).

And he also says, *"My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house."*

Compared to Joshua, Gideon doesn't seem faithful or courageous.

Yet, Gideon was chosen by God.

Another contrasting example to Joshua is perhaps the most famous judge in the book of judges, Samson. Samson went against so many God's rules to the Israelites.

He ate honey from a lion's carcass and gave some to his parents, a big no-no for Israelites for whom dead bodies are unclean. He left his philistine wife behind after slaying 30 men of Ashkelon, because she had enticed him to give the answer to the riddle he had posed to them. He had sex with a prostitute. He caved in to Delilah's pressure and gave away the secret to his great strength.

Compared to Joshua, Samson doesn't seem upright at all. He was prone to all kinds of excesses.

Yet Samson was chosen by God.

The judges were chosen by God to deliver the Israelites from oppression by their enemies.

It was quite a vicious cycle. The people would sin. God would then allow their enemies to oppress them. The people cried to God for deliverance. He would send a person, a judge, to lead the Israelites and defeat their enemies and deliver them. After a while, the people would go back to their sinful ways, and the cycle would begin again.

The DISCIPLE Bible Study manual describes the judges well:

*“Many of the judges were not what we think of as judges. Perhaps a better description would be charismatic leaders. All were tribal leaders – men and women who were raised up by the Lord in time of crisis and confusion to call Israel back to obedience, to unify the people, and to lead them in battle against an assortment of enemies.”*

Judges 2:16 summarised is as such: *Then the Lord raised up judges, who saved them out of the hand of those who plundered them.*

The key learning point for us from the book of Judges is this:

God can choose anyone to serve his purposes. It could be a Joshua, it could be a Gideon, it could be a Samson. Anyone can be chosen. Even you. So don't discount yourself. Neither discount anyone else.

DISCIPLE Bible Study manual further says:

*“The judges were not noted for their great spiritual qualities but for their willingness to hear and respond to the call of God. They were not so much heroes as they were instruments of the Lord.”*

So, no matter what our weaknesses are, or what the weaknesses of others are, God can use us. God can use them. Only we MUST be willing to hear and respond to God's call, and then he can empower us and use us.

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