

BOLDLY APPROACH

LET US THEN BOLDLY APPROACH THE THRONE OF GRACE WITH CONFIDENCE, SO THAT WE
MAY RECEIVE MERCY AND GRACE IS OUR TIME OF NEED.

HEBREWS 4.16

Welcome reader!!!

Thank you for joining us this week, we're so glad you're on board! If it's your first time following a devotional like this, thank you for coming along! We hope you enjoy studying with us. We've tried to make things as simple as possible, both for your sake and our own. All you have to do is read the text (or the chapter that it came from, it's up to you!), then read the devotional on the following page. After that, have a think about the questions!

Our focus this week is on getting to know God's character. There are a lot of stories in the Bible that seem extreme or unusual, and by not understanding them, we fail to see God's character. We want to take some of the mystery away and show you who God really is and why He did some of the things He did.

Hebrews 4:16 says, *"Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."*

If you don't have it already, we want to give you that confidence. We are in a time of need, and we definitely need grace and mercy.

We hope you learn something radical this week that you didn't know before, and we also hope that it brings you closer to God. If you want to learn anything further, don't be afraid to get in contact with us. If we can't answer your questions, we'll get help from someone that can. More than anything, we want to go on this journey with you.

So, strap in: if these stories surprise you like they did us, you're in for a wild ride.

Happy studying,

The Collective Leadership Team

THE COLLECTIVE



DAY 1: A Faithful God - Judges 7:9-11

DAY 2: A Loving God - Hosea 3:1

DAY 3: A Just God - Joshua 7:10-12

DAY 4: A Patient God - Nehemiah 9:17

DAY 5: A Good God - Deuteronomy 32:3-4

DAY 6: A Promise - Acts 2:25



DAY 1

A Faithful God

Judges 7:9-11

9 During that night the LORD said to Gideon, “Get up, go down against the camp, because I am going to give it into your hands.” 10 If you are afraid to attack, go down to the camp with your servant Purah 11 and listen to what they are saying. Afterward, you will be encouraged to attack the camp.” ...

(NIV Version)



DAY 1

The story of Gideon is one of my all-time favourite stories, and it's not because Gideon was a born-for-battle general. He was the opposite. If you want the whole story, it's in Judges 6 and 7.

God came to Gideon while he was threshing wheat in a wine press because he feared the Midianites (those are the guys that were oppressing Israel at the time). I don't know how much you know about ancient Israelite threshing technique, but the wine press isn't where wheat was threshed. The story has only just begun, and we already know that Gideon is *scared*. So, when God appears and tells him to gather an army to free his home, he's more than a little on-edge. He asks God for a sign - and then another when the first sign isn't convincing enough. Now, with two signs from God, he gathers an army of 32 000 men. That might sound like a lot, but the Midianite army still outnumbered them by more than 40%. And yet, God tells Gideon that his army is *too big*.

So through a divine hazing process, the army is shaved down from 32 000 to a measly 300. Gideon's army is now dwarfed by the Midianites, one Israelite to four hundred and fifty Midianites. Now we come to our passage.

The thing that I found beautiful about these verses is that even though we know that God comes through in the end, God tells Gideon that *it is okay to be scared*. Everything up to this passage seemed to point towards a horrible defeat. But God didn't scare Gideon into doing what he commanded. He gently reminded him that He was in control, and that if Gideon had faith, that the battle would be his.

He gives you the same promise. He knows that whatever you might be facing is terrifying, but He is always there, and He promises victory even though the odds aren't in your favour.

God is with you now. God is with you always.



DAY 1

1. Gideon's first and biggest problem was fear. God didn't take away his fear, but He reassured him that everything would work out according to his plan, and that the outcome wasn't in Gideon's hands, but God's. What in your life do you need to hand over to God?
2. Gideon also asked for multiple signs before he accepted the call to lead God's people. Are there any calls in your life that you're hesitant to take, or that you might be ignoring? If so, what are they?
3. We want to invite you now to take a minute to pray. In particular, pray for the strength to do His work even though you might be scared. If you haven't prayed before, don't worry: it's not supposed to be complicated or impressive. Remember God knows everything on your mind before you say it. Spend some time with Him and don't be afraid to put your life in His hands.



That's day 1! We're glad you're going on this journey with us. If you have any questions about what you've read today or if you want to get in touch with someone, here are some key contacts:

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DAY 2

A Loving God

Hosea 3:1

1 The LORD said to me, “Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another man and is an adulteress. Love her as the LORD loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods and love the sacred raisin cakes.”

(NIV Version)



DAY 2

If you're not familiar with the story, I want to encourage you to go check it out, it's over in Hosea 1-3.

Hosea married a woman that he knew would eventually leave him, and gave his children names that sent messages of doom and gloom to Israel. He lived his ministry; you could see his sermons flowing out of the life of his family.

Hosea's wife Gomer cheated on him, and then left him. The law at the time did not allow remarriage, and it even ordered the execution of the adulterer. By law, he was fully justified, even legally obligated, to stone her.

It's the exact same in terms of God's relationship to us. Yes, God loved us. But because we had strayed from His word, He no longer held our allegiance. We were now Satan's property. But Hosea's story paints a beautiful story of redemption and restoration that defies the law. God tells Hosea in today's passage to take back his wife, who was now living with another man, and he does. He *buys her back*. And God tells him to love her as God loved the Israelites *even though* they fail.

God's story of love is the same. Without breaking the law, God sent his son to buy us back with His own blood. Hosea's love for Gomer perfectly reflects God's unashamed love for His chosen people.

God didn't set Hosea up with an unfaithful woman for nothing. His point was simple: Yes, God will bring judgement on sin. But He will always bring His people back to Him. During Hosea's time, Israel was more interested in themselves than how God was involved in their lives. Hosea's life shows what God's love looks like to those that have chosen another path, as well as what His forgiveness looks and feels like.

No matter what you feel, no matter the sin, you can *always* come back to God.



DAY 2

1. Do you think Gomer deserved to be taken back by Hosea? What was the “right” thing to do?
2. This story is a reflection of the betrayal that God feels regularly from each and every one of us, and the sacrifice that Jesus made on the cross. Does this story give you a new perspective on the crucifixion that you hadn’t considered before?
3. Think of a time when you felt betrayed by someone. When they betrayed you, how did you react? Did you brush it off and start loving them again immediately? Or did it take time? With this in mind, can you imagine the incredible grace of God that told Hosea to take back his unfaithful and untrustworthy wife and love her again unconditionally? If you feel inclined, please take a moment to thank God for His unconditional love for you.



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DAY 3

A Just God

Joshua 7:10-12

¹⁰ The LORD said to Joshua, “Stand up! What are you doing down on your face? ¹¹ Israel has sinned; they have violated my covenant, which I commanded them to keep. They have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen, they have lied, they have put them with their own possessions. ¹² That is why the Israelites cannot stand against their enemies; they turn their backs and run because they have been made liable to destruction. I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy whatever among you is devoted to destruction.”

(NIV Version)



DAY 3

This passage is in Joshua 7, but the story goes into chapter 8 as well. Achan was an Israelite that stole spoils of war that were meant for God from Jericho's ruins. The Israelites then moved on from Jericho to a small city called Ai, which should have been an easy win for them. But God's spirit abandoned them because of Achan's sin, and the 'hearts of the people melted and became like water.'

Why hadn't God supported Israel in battle? Joshua was lost - until God gave him the answer that is in the passage. Israel stole and lied. So God commanded Joshua to destroy whatever was "devoted to destruction."

This story seems extreme, but in truth it is a reflection of the Garden of Eden.

1. Achan ignored God's one instruction to not take anything for themselves after the destruction of Jericho.
2. Achan does not come forward when his sin is revealed. He hid like Adam and Eve did.
3. When he is exposed, he confessed, much like Adam and Eve. He saw the forbidden things, he coveted them, and he took them.

While the circumstances seem extreme, this story has justice written all over it. Achan's sin resulted in 32 men dead after the failed attack on Ai, as well as his family members when they are stoned for his sin.

The repercussions of sin *cannot* be avoided. But here comes the best part. God is just. His judgements reign supreme. But He is also fair and graceful. If the people that remembered and told this story had drawn the parallels between Achan's sin and the garden, then they would have also remembered God's promise that one day someone would come and take away the sins of the world.



DAY 3

1. Can you relate to Achan in any way? How?
2. Do you think God was justified in punishing Achan so severely?
3. What do you think God wants you to remove from your life? What is standing in the way of a closer relationship with him?
4. We would love you to pray, this time asking God for help in removing the part of you that stands between you and Him. After that, make an effort: Achan had every chance to come forward with his sin, and even though we don't know how God would have treated him after a confession, we do know that He is a loving and merciful God, and it is a strong possibility that God would have forgiven Achan provided he took the right action. So take a step towards eradicating your distractions so that you can focus on God.



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DAY 4

A Patient God

Nehemiah 9:17

¹⁷ “They refused to listen and failed to remember the miracles you performed among them. They became stiff-necked and in their rebellion appointed a leader in order to return to their slavery.

But you are a forgiving God, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love. Therefore you did not desert them,...”

(NIV Version)



DAY 4

Nehemiah was written at a time when Israel was just starting to get back on its feet after being invaded and destroyed by the Babylonians. Nehemiah was the Israelite cupbearer to a Persian king. This was an important official position in the Persian court, so Nehemiah was well educated and had a good understanding of Israel's patchy history with God. Because of this, he was given the important task of going back to Jerusalem and restoring it to its former glory.

He was the political head of the project, while Ezra (who wrote the book before Nehemiah) was the spiritual head. Together, they spearheaded the restoration effort. In Nehemiah, specifically chapter 9, he documents the rocky relationship that the Israelites had with God.

The passage for today is in two parts: the first part is the end of a segment that detailed the sinful response of man to God's goodness. The Israelites were too proud. What makes it worse is that they weren't just sinful, but they were sinful against a God that treated them only fairly and with love.

But halfway through the verse, Nehemiah changes the narrative.

“But you are a forgiving God, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love. Therefore, you did not hurt them...”

Israel had an unhealthy habit of leaving God behind when things got easy, and then sinking back into sin. But every time, like clockwork, God lovingly accepted them back into His arms.

When things are going wrong, and when things are going right, He is always with you. Even if you lock Him in the boot of the car, He will always be ready and waiting to help you get back on track.

You just have to ask.



DAY 4

1. Nehemiah wasn't in a religious job, and yet God used him to help rebuild a nation. How can you serve God in your field?
2. Nehemiah was only able to be used by God in this way because he had the guts to ask his king to be released. Keep in mind that he was asking to rebuild a nation that had once been the enemy of the Persians. Where in your life is it risky to stand for God's purpose?
3. What was the source of his courage? What can be your source of courage?
4. Nehemiah was met with hard opposition when he started rebuilding Jerusalem's wall. What oppositions might you face in doing God's work?



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DAY 5

A Good God

Deuteronomy 32:3-4

3 I will proclaim the name of the LORD.

Oh, praise the greatness of our God!

4 He is the Rock, his works are perfect,

And all his ways are just.

A faithful God who does no wrong,

Upright and just is he.

(NIV Version)



DAY 5

Welcome to day 5! Up until now in this section, we've unpacked the verses and then talked about what the verses are trying to tell us. For today and for the rest of the week we encourage you to read the verse and then try to digest for yourself what it's trying to say. We recommend that you get some paper or maybe use the notes app on your phone and write down the areas that surprise you about the verses or the areas that you believe are important. We want to journey through the Bible with you, but we also want you to be able to think for yourself. If you don't know where to start, we've got some questions on the next page to help you out. If you would like to read the full song of praise that today's verse comes from, we invite you to read the whole chapter of Deuteronomy 32.



DAY 5

1. What is new to you?
2. What surprises you?
3. What do you not understand?
4. What will you obey this week?
5. Who (and what) can you share with someone this week?



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DAY 6

A Promise

Acts 2:25-26

25 David said about him:

“I saw the LORD always before me.

Because he is at my right hand,

I will not be shaken.

26 Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;

my body also will rest in hope,...

(NIV Version)



DAY 6

Welcome to day 6! Up until now in this section, we've unpacked the verses and then talked about what the verses are trying to tell us. For today and for the rest of the week we encourage you to read the verse and then try to digest for yourself what it's trying to say. We recommend that you get some paper or maybe use the notes app on your phone and write down the areas that surprise you about the verses or the areas that you believe are important. We want to journey through the Bible with you, but we also want you to be able to think for yourself. If you don't know where to start, we've got some questions on the next page to help you out. If you want to get a full picture of the verse and its context, feel free to read all of Acts 2.



DAY 6

1. What is new to you?
2. What surprises you?
3. What do you not understand?
4. What will you obey this week?
5. Who (and what) can you share with someone this week?



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THANK YOU FOR JOINING US!

Our overarching verse for the week was Hebrews 4:16:

“Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”

Our last verse, Acts 2:25, showed us that through everything, we will have Jesus walking in front of us and beside us. And now, even when we approach God's throne in Heaven, we have our divine representative in front and beside us, to take the blame for all of our sin and allow us to enter His presence. Now go, receive the grace and mercy that is promised to you.

If you have any questions, comments or feedback, please don't be afraid to reach out to us and let us hear your thoughts! We would love to engage with you on a more personal level.

We want to thank you for coming on this journey with us this week. We hope you've learned something along the way, and we would love to have you along on our devotions in the future!

