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**WHAT'S THE
POINT?**

It's not about
me, it's about
God and His
Glory.



1. CAN GOD USE SOMEONE LIKE ME?

GOD USED WHO?!

Can you imagine a prostitute being used by God? What about a lonely widow grieving the loss of her husband and both sons? Or a pregnant, unwed teenager? How could these women possibly be of use to the Lord?

How about a coward being used in one of the most dramatic rescues ever? Or a young shepherd boy bringing down Israel's fiercest enemy? What about a man who sent another woman's husband to his death so he could have his wife? Or a testosterone-driven man who couldn't resist the temptations of a beautiful woman?

Believe it or not, these are all true stories in the Bible.

God used Rahab the prostitute to help His spies escape from Jericho when they were scoping out the Promised Land (Josh. 2).

God used Naomi to bring about the marriage of Ruth and Boaz, which eventually led to the birth of Jesus (Ruth 3–4).

God used young Mary to conceive and give birth to the Son of God, Jesus (Luke 1:26-38).

God used fearful, stammering Moses to rescue God's people from slavery in Egypt (Exod. 4).

God used young David and his slingshot to bring down Goliath with just a single stone (1 Sam. 17).

God used David as king to lead the nation of Israel, even calling him 'a man after God's own heart' – despite David getting Bathsheba pregnant and then murdering her husband, Uriah, to cover it up (2 Sam. 11).

God used Samson, after his foolish pursuit of multiple women and love-induced confession to Delilah, to dramatically execute judgment on the Philistines in the moment of his own death (Judg. 14–16).

The Bible is full of weak, sinful people failing to do what is right again and again.



JAMES

Why? Why is the Bible full of failures, misfits and criminals? Isn't the Bible meant to show us how we should live, how to do the right thing?

STOP

What do we think of James' question? Is he right or is he wrong?

Is one of the reasons God gave us these stories so that we can feel better about ourselves? I mean when we measure ourselves up to this group of losers, It's easy to think that at least we're not as bad as them! Or is God showing us these failures as a warning to us? Maybe this is God's way of saying to us, 'Watch out, or this could happen to you.'

I don't think either of those thoughts are correct. The Bible hasn't been written to make us feel better, and nor is it a warning that what happened to people back then could happen to us today. That's not to say that there are no consequences for our sins.

There quite clearly are. But, I think we read these stories in our Bibles because they are meant to push us toward Jesus. They are meant to help us to realise that:

WE NEED A HERO

Here's the point: The Bible is not mainly about the people in it. And the Bible isn't mainly about you or me. Yes, the Bible has 'do's and don'ts' in it, but it is not primarily a set of rules.

The Bible is about God. God is the hero, the main character, the main act and the star turn!



ILLUSTRATION

There's nothing like a rousing battle scene. Think *Lord of the Rings* – the good guys advance, struggle, only to advance again. We love it even more when the underdog rallies to defeat a larger-than-life bully. But in God's story, the only one winning any victory is God. One story about a fear-filled bloke named Gideon shows us how much God cares about His own glory. God deliberately shaves down the army of the Israelites from about 32,000 to only 300 men, just so they won't think that they were the ones who won the battle:



'The LORD said to Gideon, "The people with you are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hand, lest Israel boast over me, saying, 'My own hand has saved me.' Now therefore proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, 'Whoever is fearful and trembling, let him return home and hurry away from Mount Gilead.'" Then 22,000 of the people returned, and 10,000 remained.

And the LORD said to Gideon, "The people are still too many. Take them down to the water, and I will test them for you there, and anyone of whom I say to you, 'This one shall go with you,' shall go with you, and anyone of whom I say to you, 'This one shall not go with you,' shall not go." ... So the people took provisions in their hands, and their

trumpets. And he sent all the rest of Israel every man to his tent, but retained the 300 men. And the camp of Midian was below him in the valley.

...And he divided the 300 men into three companies...

...So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the outskirts of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, when they had just set the watch. And they blew the trumpets and smashed the jars that were in their hands. Then the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the jars. They held in their left hands the torches, and in their right hands the trumpets to blow. And they cried out, "A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!" Every man stood in his place around the camp, and all the army ran. They cried out and fled. (Judg. 7:2-4, 8, 16, 19-21)



JAMES

I still don't see how God can use someone like me. I have no skills or experience or background. If I had some qualifications, had done an apprenticeship or been a Christian for a long time, maybe I could serve others by teaching the Bible – but what do I have to offer?

STOP

How do you think we should advise James based on what we have learned so far?

The problem is that we tend to look at ourselves first. But remember, God is the hero of this story, not us.

If we get it right, it's only because of God's kindness to us.

When we fail, we are still safe in God's family because of what Jesus did. We have done nothing to earn our salvation. God isn't impressed with our talents, achievements or qualifications. And

neither is He put off by our failures, mess-ups and inadequacies. So why do we think we can obey God in our own strength, or please Him out of our own skill?

When we look at ourselves instead of God, we can't see how God will use us. And to be honest, we are right to wonder about that, aren't we? We know our own fears and weaknesses. In the cold light of day, we all know that we make pretty rubbish heroes.

The great news is that God can and does use weak people to do what He wants them to do.

In fact, He specialises in it!

They, and we, do nothing to contribute to God's work. Remember Gideon's sparse army of 300 soldiers – all they did was blow their trumpets and shout, and the enemy went running away!

It is not the strength of the people, or their capacity to serve that makes it happen – it's God alone.

God is the Hero.

God is always the Hero.

Don't get me wrong, it's not that we're irrelevant. God uses individual people, with our own individual strengths, preferences and quirks. **But God gets all of the glory.**

GLORY ADDICTS

One barrier to serving is that we want glory for ourselves. We want to be seen and acknowledged. We want others to admire us. We want people to see how much we've changed, how much we love God, how sacrificial and generous we are. And we don't want to disappoint! So, we're tempted to do two things: we either serve so we look good, or we don't step up and serve in case we mess up.