

GOD INVITES YOU TO JOIN HIM IN HIS WORK

Before I shaped you in the womb, I knew all about you. Before you saw the light of day, I had holy plans for you: A prophet to the nations—that's what I had in mind for you.

Jeremiah 1:5 (MSG)

1. God is always at work to accomplish His purpose in the world.
2. God wants to have a personal relationship with you because He loves you.

❖ Understanding God's Invitation:

For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. This is the wonderful message he has given us to tell others. ²⁰We are Christ's ambassadors, and God is using us to speak to you. We urge you, as though Christ himself were here pleading with you, "Be reconciled to God!"

2 Corinthians 5:19-20 (NLT)

1. God has one clear PURPOSE in this world.

It is God who saved us and chose us to live a holy life. He did this not because we deserved it, but because that was his plan long before the world began—to show his love and kindness to us through Christ Jesus.

2 Timothy 1:9 (NLT)

2. God's purpose involves PEOPLE who will ACCEPT and OBEY His mission.

"And now, O Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul."

Deuteronomy 10:12 (NIV)

3. God's purpose for your life is based on who God CREATED you to BE.

God has made us what we are. In Christ Jesus, God made us to do good works, which God planned in advance for us to live our lives doing.

Ephesians 2:10 (NCV)

❖ A Man Named Gideon:

Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord, and for seven years he gave them into the hands of the Midianites. ⁵... It was impossible to count these men and their camels; they invaded the land to ravage it. ⁶Midian so impoverished the Israelites that they cried out to the Lord for help.

Judges 6:1, 5b-6 (NIV)

1. God is always at work around us... His PURPOSE will always prevail.

When the Israelites cried to the Lord because of Midian, ⁸he sent them a prophet, who said, "This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: I brought you up out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. ⁹I snatched you from the power of Egypt and from the hand of all your oppressors. I drove them from before you and gave you their land. ¹⁰I said to you, 'I am the Lord your God; do not worship the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you live.' But you have not listened to me."

2. God pursues a LOVE RELATIONSHIP with you.

The angel of the Lord came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites.¹² When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he said, "The Lord is with you, mighty warrior."

Judges 6:11-12 (NIV)

3. God invites you to JOIN HIM in His work.

"But sir," Gideon replied, "if the Lord is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our fathers told us about when they said, 'Did not the Lord bring us up out of Egypt?' But now the Lord has abandoned us and put us into the hand of Midian."¹⁴ The Lord turned to him and said, "Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you?"

Judges 6:13-14 (NIV)

4. God speaks to you to REVEAL His PURPOSE.

"But Lord," Gideon asked, "how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family."¹⁶ The Lord answered, "I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites together."¹⁷ Gideon replied, "If now I have found favor in your eyes, give me a sign that it is really you talking to me."¹⁸ Please do not go away until I come back and bring my offering and set it before you." And the Lord said, "I will wait until you return."

Judges 6:15-18 (NIV)

5. God's invitation always leads to a CRISIS of BELIEF.

Now all the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples joined forces and crossed over the Jordan and camped in the Valley of Jezreel.³⁶ ... Gideon said to God, "If you will save Israel by my hand as you have promised—³⁷look, I will place a wool fleece on the threshing floor. If there is dew only on the fleece and all the ground is dry, then I will know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you said."³⁸ And that is what happened. Gideon rose early the next day; he squeezed the fleece and wrung out the dew—a bowlful of water.³⁹ Then Gideon said to God, "Do not be angry with me. Let me make just one more request. Allow me one more test with the fleece. This time make the fleece dry and the ground covered with dew."⁴⁰ That night God did so. Only the fleece was dry; all the ground was covered with dew.

Judges 6:33, 36-40 (NIV)

6. You must make MAJOR ADJUSTMENTS in your life to join God in His work.

Early in the morning, Jerub-Baal (that is, Gideon) and all his men camped at the spring of Harod.² ... The Lord said to Gideon, "You have too many men for me to deliver Midian into their hands. In order that Israel may not boast against me that her own strength has saved her,³ announce now to the people, 'Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back and leave Mount Gilead.'" So twenty-two thousand men left, while ten thousand remained.⁴ But the Lord said to Gideon, "There are still too many men..."⁷ The Lord said to Gideon, "With the three hundred men that lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hands..."

Judges 7:1-4, 7 (NIV)

7. You will come to EXPERIENCE GOD as you obey Him and He works through you.

"Get up, go down against the camp, because I am going to give it into your hands."¹³ ... Gideon arrived just as a man was telling a friend his dream. "I had a dream," he was saying. "A round loaf

of barley bread came tumbling into the Midianite camp. It struck the tent with such force that the tent overturned and collapsed.”¹⁴ His friend responded, “This can be nothing other than the sword of Gideon son of Joash, the Israelite. God has given the Midianites and the whole camp into his hands.”¹⁵ When Gideon heard the dream and its interpretation, he worshiped God. He returned to the camp of Israel and called out, “Get up! The Lord has given the Midianite camp into your hands.”¹⁹ ... Gideon and the hundred men with him reached the edge of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, just after they had changed the guard. They blew their trumpets and broke the jars that were in their hands.²⁰ The three companies blew the trumpets and smashed the jars. Grasping the torches in their left hands and holding in their right hands the trumpets they were to blow, they shouted, “A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!”²¹ While each man held his position around the camp, all the Midianites ran, crying out as they fled.²² ... the Lord caused the men throughout the camp to turn on each other with their swords.²⁵ ... They killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb at the winepress of Zeeb. They pursued the Midianites and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon, who was by the Jordan.

Judges 7:9, 13-15, 19-22b, 25 (NIV)

❖ Understanding God’s Invitation:

For it is God who is working in you, enabling you both to will and to act for His good purpose.

Philippians 2:13 (NIV)

1. God’s invitation requires our first step... SURRENDER.

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

Galatians 2:20 (NIV)

2. God’s invitation demands that we begin to see with... SPIRITUAL EYES.

“Do you not say, ‘Four months more and then the harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.”

John 4:35 (NIV)

3. God’s invitation implies that we will be willing to... SACRIFICE.

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.

Romans 12:1 (NIV)

4. God’s invitation recognizes that we accept that God is... SUFFICIENT.

And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:19 (NIV)