

THE ANGEL OF THE LORD APPEARED TO HIM AND SAID TO HIM, "THE LORD IS WITH YOU, O VALIANT WARRIOR."- JUDGES 6:12

Week 4

GET GOING

START

Welcome to session 4 of Kingdom Men Rising.

Look back at your answers to the exercise on page 56. Would someone share how this exercise was helpful to them?

Last session Dr. Evans taught about getting up from your struggles. This week we talk about how to get going to move beyond the idols in our lives.

How does loyalty and commitment contribute to healthy relationships?

No man with an intention of marrying a woman he is dating will do what we often refer to as "two-time" her. To "two-time" is to date two different women at the same time. When a man desires to date and marry a specific woman, he makes sure his loyalty and commitment to her are known, and felt.

This is common sense to most men. But somehow we lose common sense when it comes to maintaining and cultivating our relationship with God. To "two-time" God is to set any competing interest at the same level as Him in our hearts. That could show up in a number of areas—entertainment, focus, relationships, addiction, money, and any number of things.

As we've already seen in this study, idolatry is intimacy with an image. We don't have to bow down to a carved statues to be idolaters. We worship idols when we allow anything to usurp God's rightful place in our lives.

WATCH

Use this space to take notes during the video teaching.

MAN UP

Use the following questions to discuss the video teaching.

Read Jonah 2:8 together.

Those who cling to worthless idols turn away from God's love for them.-Jonah 2:8, NIV

What does it mean to “cling” to an idol? How do idols cause us to “turn away from God’s love” for us?

The number one sin in the Bible, second to none, is the sin of idolatry. From Genesis to Revelation, you will see God condemning idols. An idol is a “God substitute” or any noun—person, place, thing, or thought—that you look to as your source. Whenever anything becomes your source, it is an automatic idol. There are primitive idols that we may not identify with today. But then there are American idols. It can be materialism. It can be greed. It can be relationships. It can be sports. It can be your career because it’s your source. And God will always judge idolatry.

In the video, Dr. Evans lists five idols that plague men. How can each of these things become idols that rob our affection for God?

Materialism:

Greed:

Relationships:

Sports:

Career:

How are the idols we just listed widely accepted by men today?

How can a sense of entitlement lead to idolatry?

Living with idols, as we read in Jonah 2:8, creates distance in our relationship with God. Like a two-timing man, our attention is divided between God and the idols we are pursuing. Far too many men are failing to advance in their careers as God had intended, or thrive in their homes and communities as they have been designed to do so because they have chosen to embrace idolatry in one form or another. Many pursue idols without even realizing what they're doing.

What do you think has contributed to a lack of awareness of how our personal choices lead us to idolatry?

What could be done to increase our awareness and ownership of how contemporary idols are harming our relationship with God and our culture?

Too many men today have identified with too many false gods. Men need to step up, get going, and move away from the lifeless idols robbing them of spiritual vitality and impact. When we put away our idols and embrace God's better plan for our lives, He will use us to do something bigger than what we could have ever done on our own.

In the teaching, Dr. Evans gave Gideon and Moses as examples of men God used beyond their limited human ability. How did God use these men? How did God overwhelm and overcome their limitations?

Describe a time in your life, or in the life of someone you know, when God's purpose or calling was bigger than what could be done on your own.

PRAYER

Father, remove from my heart any dependence or loyalty on anything I place higher than You. I confess any and all idolatry I have allowed in my life and I take full responsibility for having let it into my heart. Forgive me and show me a better way. Give me a "burning bush" experience and an encounter with You in order to guide me in a new direction of honoring You first and foremost in all I think, say, and do. In Christ's name, amen.

HIT THE STREETS

GOD GOES FIRST

In this session's video teaching, we are exploring the life of a man named Gideon. Gideon was a man of no reputation. He would not have been the first chosen in any backyard football game. And where Gideon lacked in known abilities, he equaled in a lack of confidence. Yet, God used Gideon in a mighty way in order to defeat a more powerful army who had held his people oppressed for far too long. How did Gideon rise up and become victorious? He learned that spiritual success in spiritual war depends entirely upon spiritual solutions.

Gideon first had to learn that God was His source. When we meet Gideon, he is fearful and timid. But God had other plans, as He often does. Gideon had to learn to see himself from God's viewpoint. Read the following verses that describe Gideon's call from God and consider the three principles we can learn from this account.

Then the angel of the Lord came and sat under the oak that was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite as his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the wine press in order to save it from the Midianites. The angel of the Lord appeared to him and said to him, "The Lord is with you, O valiant warrior." Then Gideon said to him, "O my lord, if the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, 'Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?' But now the Lord has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian." The Lord looked at him and said, "Go in this your strength and deliver Israel from the hand of Midian. Have I not sent you?" He said to Him, "O Lord, how shall I deliver Israel? Behold, my family is the least in Manasseh, and I am the youngest in my father's house." But the Lord said to him, "Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat Midian as one man."-Judges 6:11-16

1

GOD SEES OUR CIRCUMSTANCES CLEARLY

Gideon was overwhelmed with his circumstances because he failed to see that God was with him (vv. 11-13). The Midianites were fearsome enemies, but they were no match for God. As He brought Israel out of Egypt, He would deliver them from the Midianites. He was waiting on Gideon's participation.

2

GOD SEES A WARRIOR WHERE WE SEE A WIMP

God saw Gideon differently than Gideon saw himself. When God charged Gideon with a task, Gideon responded, "my family is the least in Manasseh, and I am the youngest in my father's house" (v. 15). While he thought he was a wimp, God knew he was a "valiant warrior" (v. 12). Gideon was so overwhelmed by His circumstances that He forgot how God saw him.

3

GOD SEES HIS ABILITY MORE THAN OUR LIMITATIONS

God told Gideon He was with Him (v. 12), that Gideon was a warrior (v. 12). Based on that truth, God sent Gideon on a mission—He told Gideon he would "defeat Midian as one man" (v. 16). Gideon only saw his ability instead of God's. For too long, he had trusted in idols rather than the God of Israel, but God was about to change all of that.

Rising up as a kingdom man requires alignment with God's plans and purposes. As we see from the passages above, as well as through the life of Gideon, God's presence produces the victory we seek. Yet one way we often remove God's presence from our lives is through the sin of idolatry. Gideon had to first tear down the idols in order to open the gap for God to move in his situation (Judg. 6:25-32).

Which of these principles is most meaningful to you?

Which do you need to take hold of right now?

BIBLE STUDY 1

USE WHAT HE GAVE YOU

We should not expect God to do something through us outside of our home or inner circle if we are not first willing to get things right within it. You may have heard me say it like this:

A messed-up man contributes to a messed-up family, which then contributes to a messed-up church. A messed-up church contributes to a messed-up community, which then contributes to a messed-up county. A messed-up county contributes to a messed-up state, which then contributes to a messed-up country. And a messed-up country contributes to a messed-up world. Therefore, if you want a better world comprising better countries made up of better states containing better counties populated by better communities housing better churches attended by better families, it starts off with being a better man. It starts with you. Right now. Right here.

The deliverance of the entire nation of Israel from the hands of the Midianites started with one man seeking a better world. It started with Gideon, right in his own home. Before Gideon could ever take on a national enemy, he had to first tear down his family's idols. God had raised up Gideon for a mighty conquest but he had to demonstrate faithfulness first. Before God would bless Gideon's work, He asked him to be obedient with what he had around him.

Read Matthew 13:12 and Luke 16:10 and answer the following questions.

For whoever has, to him more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him. -Matthew 13:12

He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much. -Luke 16:10

Restate Jesus' teaching in those two verses in your own words.

Why is it important to demonstrate faithfulness with what you have?

What are some reasons we might not be willing to use what God has given us?

Why might a person wait on God to give him more or to open doors rather than moving forward with what he has right now, in order to serve Him?

Describe the end result of not investing your spiritual gifts in those around you. How does this contribute to the continuation of a chaotic culture?

Faithfulness with what you have right now and right where you are is always the first step toward further use in God's kingdom. We see this not only with Gideon, but throughout the Bible, and in our own lives. We expect God to move in our lives, but we refuse to get going. Instead we stand still in place, waiting for the right time when all along God has given us everything we need. .

God wants you to follow Him right where you are. He wants you to be faithful now—whether it's with your family and friends or even in your neighborhood and church. Don't waste your time on visions of grandeur if you are not willing to get moving where God has placed you. Waiting on "the right time" can be an idol just like anything else.

List some of the benefits you receive when you choose to relinquish your plans and trust solely in God and His plan.

Despite having all of these benefits, why do you think some men still choose to "play it safe" and not risk full surrender to God's will and ways?

What might it look like for you to overcome the idol of comfort?

We experience our greatest spiritual success when we are willing to lay down our plans, purposes, devices, and strategies, and completely devote ourselves to God and His way. God is not interested in divided hearts. He wants your undivided attention, devotion, and obedience. He wants you to get up and get going toward the destiny He has created you to live out.

The Lord has said, "For I know the plans that I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope." -Jeremiah 29:11

Life is not found in sitting around and waiting on the right time. Neither is it found in looking for other people to stand up and make a difference. You are to use your voice, your actions, and your life to advance God's kingdom agenda on earth. If, and when, enough kingdom men choose to rise up for what is right and just in this world, the enemy will be forced to back down. But we can only rise up when we are first willing to relinquish the plans and the idols who have locked us in place for far too long. God has given us all we need to get going. We need to take the steps He has laid before us.

Spend some time considering God's leading in your life to make a difference in your home, community and country. What do you believe God is asking you to do in order advance His kingdom of love, righteousness and justice on earth?

God will often use our skills and knowledge from past experiences in order to enable us to make a greater impact for good in the lives of those around us.

What are some identifiable skills and talents God has developed in you which could be used to further His plans for well-being in your circles of influence?

What will you do as a result of identifying these skills and talents and their potential impact for good?

What step you can take this week to break out of your comfort zone and seek to make a difference for God in an area you have never sought to before?

Pray about how you can rise up as a kingdom man in order to impact your home, church, community, country, and world. Ask God to reveal to you anything He has already equipped you with which can be used to bring about a positive impact on the lives of those around you. Ask Him for the wisdom and courage to go after the destiny and purpose He has for you to fulfill.

BIBLE STUDY 2

STAND IN THE GAP

Quick question for you, but relevant. Do you know that you are somebody special? You're not ordinary; you are extraordinary. You're not average; you're superlative. And because of this truth, God is calling you to do something bigger than you ever dreamed was possible.

But He needs to get you to get out of your wine press, like Gideon, and stop letting the culture hold you hostage. He needs you to deal with the idols that are consuming you, as well as those that surround you. He needs you to publicly and unashamedly decide, "Yes, I'm going to be defined by God now. And I'm going to let it be known that I don't deal with idols. I surrender to and follow the true and living God."

Read Ezekiel 22:30 then answer the following questions.

I searched for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand in the gap before Me for the land, so that I would not destroy it; but I found no one. -Ezekiel 22:30

How can a man "stand in the gap" before God?

What are some demonstrable actions a man can take to stand up for righteousness and justice in order to advance God's kingdom agenda?

God can give you the ability to stand up for Him. But it will take courage. Gideon was so frightened by the time God reached out to him that he was literally threshing wheat in a wine press. He was hiding so that the enemy would not see what he was doing and steal it. Yet by the end of the story of Gideon's life, he had risen to

become a feared and honored man of great courage. In fact, he had so much courage that his reputation spread (Judg. 6:32).

You have all you need within you to do and be the same. But it will take standing up for what you believe in and following God's leading in your life. You can't remain hidden, seeking to protect what is yours, and expect to defeat the enemy. You have a choice to make. Will you live as a man of fear and preservation or will you lead those within your sphere of influence to spiritual victory as a kingdom man of courage?

What's the difference between "privately declaring" and "publicly proclaiming" your allegiance to God and standing for Him?

Why do you think so few men are willing to rise up and publicly align themselves with God in today's culture?

What are some strategies the enemy uses to keep a man silent on what is right and true?

Many men, like Gideon, are initially afraid to stand in the gap. Don't wait for absence of fear in order to step out in faith. Obedience as a kingdom man isn't always couched in calm. Sometimes that obedience takes place in a mixture of emotions. There is no doubt that Gideon was scared if he was traipsing around at night when he went to pull down his family's altars (Judg. 6:27).

Courage does not require the absence of fear. Courage means right actions taken in spite of fear's presence. There's nothing courageous about doing something you know will succeed without any opposition. Courage occurs when you rise up to do the task that looks impossible.

If we commit to "get going," how can our action steps override our fear?

Describe how Satan uses "fear" to paralyze people from doing what is right.

When has God helped you or someone you know push past your fears to make an impact? What did you learn from that experience?

Kingdom men exist today in the midst of a pagan nation, on many levels, numbed and held captive by fear. We are living in our own sort of Midian. We are sorely outnumbered. Our broader culture has not only abandoned God, but it has taken up the offensive against the one true God. Much of what our society values stands against key doctrines and beliefs from Scripture. This is our reality whether we like it or not. We can pretend it doesn't exist, but it does.

But it doesn't take millions to take ground back for Christ. In fact, as we saw in the story of Gideon, three hundred will do (see Judg. 7). Gideon demonstrated this truth as he led his charge in the dark night. Similarly, we

are to rise up and get going to do what God has called each of us to do so that we might advance His kingdom agenda on earth. All we have to do is to get going and trust that God is on our side.

We must do this personally, and we must also do this collectively. If we sit around waiting for a majority, we will have waited too long. God knows how to handle the issues we face. It's our role to repent of our sins, clean up our own homes, trust God, and then do what He says. A few kingdom men in the hands of one mighty God can route any evil that opposes them.

Can you identify ways you may have been able to advance God's kingdom through something you said or did, but you chose not to out of fear?

What are some common fears that keep you from moving? List them below.

Looking at your fears, how might God be able to supply all you need despite your fears?

Where is God calling you to stand in the gap?

What is one step you can take this week to stand for God in this gap?

Thinking back over the two personal bible studies from this session, identify one area of growth and one action point.

Pray right now and commit your life to living courageously as a kingdom man. Ask God to make it clear to you the level of impact you are to have for His kingdom, His glory, and others' good. Also ask God as you pray that He will place men in your life whom you can disciple and lead so that more kingdom men can rise up to tackle the troubles suffocating us in our homes, churches, communities, and in our country.