

People of Promise  
Gideon  
603 words

## A Transforming Promise

Gideon:  
Revenge of a Ninety-Pound Weakling

Judges 6:15-16

Israel, during the period of the Judges, looked like a bad day on a grammar school playground: as soon as the regular kids get their kickball game organized, the school bullies barge in and squat right in the middle of the infield, daring anyone to make them move. The intimidated kickballers just stand there inspecting their shoelaces and praying for a teacher.

In Gideon's day, it was the ninety-pound weaklings of Israel versus the hairy bullies of Midian and their pals. Granted, God (the teacher who should have been keeping the bullies at bay), had turned his back on purpose because his students had broken the playground rules so many times. But eventually, things got so bad that God responded. Just when Israel's crops were in the ground, the Midianites, Amalekites, and other nations would invade. They would set up camp right in the fields, crushing the crops and killing the livestock for food. You couldn't even count the number of men and camels and tents--they covered the ground "like swarms of locusts" (Judges 6:1-6).

Because of their suffering, God hoped Israel had learned her lesson, and he came to help. To beat back the bullies and take back the land, God selected a young man named Gideon. If God's selection had been done publicly, all the other "kids" would probably have looked at each other as if to say, "Gideon's going to save us? Let's get our affairs in order; we're going to die." And Gideon would not have argued. He was as shocked as anyone else would have been when God sent the angel of the LORD to him. The angel found Gideon threshing wheat in a winepress--a small, enclosed space. Threshing was normally done on a high, open place so the wind could separate the wheat from the chaff. But because Gideon was so scared of the Midianites (like everyone else), he was threshing wheat in a winepress so as not to be seen. (Needless to say, the bread made from that wheat probably contained a lot of chewy chaff. No wind, no winnowing).

"Me?" Gideon reacted to the angel's commission to deliver Israel from the invaders. "My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family" (6:15). Gideon--the weakest member of the weakest family in the smallest tribe in Israel--probably felt a lot like we do at times. All kinds of bullies enter the land of our life, wreaking havoc in us and those we love. Fear, Doubt, Insecurity, Scarcity, Dissension, Anger, Discouragement--these and their pals camp right in our homes, our work places, our churches, daring us to challenge their presence. And we feel just like Gideon: the weakest of the weakest of the smallest. It took some convincing (6:36-40), but Gideon finally was transformed by God's promise to him: "You will strike down all the

Midianites together” (6:16).

Gideon was transformed by the promise of God--120,000 bullies were killed and another 15,000 were kicked off the playground (8:10). The next time your life is overrun by bullies, think of Gideon:

- First, did the enemy get into your life through disobedience (Eph. 4:26-27)?
- Do you believe that you are “transformable” by the power of God?
- Are you willing to believe that God’s promise is a verbal version of your future?

Who hasn’t felt like a 90-pound spiritual weakling at times? And we feel worse if the cause was our own sin. Do what Israel did and cry out to the LORD (6:6). But do it expectantly. His promises will become your sword to take back your land.