

# Gathering Guide

## for Communities and Friends

*Gideon and the Stranger*

*May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019*

### Where We Are In The Bible

After Joshua leads Israel into the Promised Land and fights off the Canaanites, God's People begin to settle in. They divide into 12 Tribes and make their living. But all is not well in terms of the covenant between God and his people. The people reject God by taking up the idols and worship of the Canaanites. The Book of Judges reveals the rocky interplay between people and God, and the story of Gideon (Judges 6-8) is no exception.

### Finding a bit of ourselves

This vicious cycle of the people rejecting God and then finding him again shows the immaturity of faith of God's people. But do we find a bit of that in ourselves?

- Read Judges 6:11-24. Here we also see an immature, adolescent faith in Gideon, this time in the form of testing and mistrust.
- Read further to Judges 6:36-40. What kind of picture is the Scripture painting about God as he responds to Gideon? Have you experienced God to be just as patient and gracious?

### The Big Idea

Like Gideon, a transactional or bargaining faith reveals our room for growth when it comes to our relationship with God. God eventually disappears from the picture, especially when things get really bad from Gideon's perspective (read Judges 7:18 onward). God's absence here could be a bit of "tough love" for Gideon. Good parents know that proper boundaries and rules are meant to train and prepare children in their growth. And isn't that also a form of grace?

### Where do we go from here?

We all hate to say it, but our struggles tend to teach us a great deal about life, ourselves, and even God.

- Reflect on the times when you really needed God. Did he show up? And if not, what kind of things have you learned from life as a result of persevering through hardship? Even when God seemed absent during your struggle, do you see it differently now looking back?

Scripture reminds us that grace is shared to others (see Phil. 1:7; Gal 1:3; Romans 12:6).

- Where do you succeed or fail in sharing grace to others?

### Prayer Focus

Reflect on God's grace towards you and pray for:

- the overflow of God's grace in your life.
- the strength to practice grace in all situations.
- for the transformational work of grace in non-believers.

