

“INHIBITED BY INADEQUACY” (Judges 6:11-24)

Feelings of inadequacy often paralyse many believers from doing the will of God. Although there are others that are too big headed for God to use, many sincere believers are hindered by a fear of not being adequate enough for God to use them. We all want to be the flawless worker, a perfect spouse/parent, faithful church member, and a dependable friend. But even the most self-confident of us have moments of doubt. Every day we wonder if we'll ever be good enough.

The reality is that to feel inadequate is part of fallen human nature. We may try to cover up by bluster and putting on a show but we know deep down that we are only fooling ourselves. Have you ever felt weak, inadequate or unworthy?



Our world exalts the self-made man but this is illusory. We may boast in our talents, strengths and achievements but we are weak and fragile creatures. A little virus we cannot even see with our eye can cut us down in a few hours! The Psalmist notes how weak man truly is, “*Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.*” (Psalm 103:13-14)

REALITY OF INADEQUACY

Feelings of inadequacy did not begin in the 21st century. It is not even limited to unbelievers. Many saints of the past have suffered with feelings of inadequacy. A quick review of Scripture soon reveals this:

GIDEON - When God first called Gideon it did not look like God had made the right choice. The “brave deliverer” was hiding in fear of the Midianites, “*And there came an angel of the LORD, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the vinepress, to hide it from the Midianites.*” (Judges 6:10) The Lord told Gideon two amazing things about himself,

And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.....And the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?” (Judges 6:12, 14)

Even Gideon doubted that it was possible. He argued, “*Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.*” (Judges 6:15) Gideon argued that he was the least qualified man in all of Israel! Basically, he told God that you've got the wrong address and the wrong person. In twenty first century terms, Gideon was a man with a low self-image. He didn't feel very good about himself or his possibilities. Gideon lived by sight, not by faith.



It is interesting that God didn't argue with him that he was from a very insignificant background. But our ancestry and education is no barrier to God. Indeed, God refused to accept any excuses and simply informed Gideon that He would use him, “*And the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.*” (Judges 6:16)

We all know the rest of this story. Despite his doubts, low self-esteem, unbelief, and constant demand for reassurance, the Lord used this weak, inadequate man to deliver the nation of Israel from the Midianites. Even when the Lord promises him this deliverance, Gideon is not convinced. One of his favorite words was “if.” He sees all the problems and none of the possibilities! Gideon is a man that is of great encouragement to us. We can all identify with this weak man. He may have been an insignificant farmer, fearful, and weak in faith but God could use him for His glory. He is a good example of how God can take a weak thing and make something from it. For **if God could (and did) use a Gideon, He could surely use any of us.**

MOSES - Another man who struggled with feelings of inadequacy when God called him was Moses. Repeatedly, Moses tried to make excuses to follow the will of God to lead his nation out of Egypt. Moses made five excuses to the Lord in Exodus 3-4:

(1) **I AM NOT SIGNIFICANT**, “*And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?”* (Exodus 3:11)

- (2) **I AM NOT A THEOLOGIAN**, “*And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?*” (Exodus 3:13)
- (3) **I AM NOT CONVINCING**, “*And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The LORD hath not appeared unto thee.*” (Exodus 4:1)
- (4) **I AM NOT ELOQUENT**, “*And Moses said unto the LORD, O my LORD, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.*” (Exodus 4:10)
- (5) **I AM NOT INTERESTED**, “*And he said, O my LORD, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send.*” (Exodus 4:13)



These excuses were all rejected by the Lord. Indeed, He was angry with Moses for making them, “*And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses...*” (Exodus 4:13) From a human and spiritual perspective there didn’t appear to be much going for Moses and Gideon. If we were God, we would likely have given up long ago on these two men. They were insignificant, continually fearful, weak in faith, and made excuse after excuse.

REMEDY FOR INADEQUACY

There is a remedy for feelings of inadequacy. It is instructive to return to the two examples of Gideon and Moses to see how God dealt with this weakness in their character.

GIDEON - This man was discouraged and defeated man. He was very poor raw material to become a man of faith! So how did God reassure him? Positive thinking or self-help course? No! The Lord consistently points Gideon to the fact of God’s presence and promised power to overcome the Midianites,

And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour. (Judges 6:12)

And the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee? (Judges 6:14)

And the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man. (Judges 6:16)

God never gave up on Gideon. The Lord saw what Gideon could become if he let the Lord lead him – a mighty man of valour. Indeed, there was probably no one who would have foreseen that Gideon would become a mighty man of valour – Gideon didn’t even foresee it! Gideon was an unlikely candidate for Hebrews 11 but he got there. He is a stark example of what God’s grace can do in the life of a weak and insignificant man. I think that is why we are drawn to this flawed but wonderful man. We really can identify with him.

MOSES – Just like Gideon, the Lord never helped Moses overcome his feelings of inadequacy by building Moses’ sense of self-esteem or self-confidence. Rather, the Lord pointed Moses to His Person and His promised presence.

And He said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain. (Exodus 3:12)

And God said unto Moses, I Am That I Am: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I Am hath sent me unto you. (Exodus 3:14)

And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say. (Exodus 4:11-12)

In other words, the Lord is reminding His fearful servants that it is not about you – it never has been. We all need to be reminded that God is not impressed with your lack of talents, as He knows you don’t have any! It is not your ability that helps you fulfil His calling – it is His ability. You will never face anything stronger than the God who is in you, “*...greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world*” (1 John 4:4) Forget about who you are! Focus on who I am! For whom God calls, God will equip!

JOSHUA – the successor to Moses also seemed to feel inadequate to accept the call of God to lead the nation. The Lord doesn’t deny that the task is great or that the obstacles are insignificant that Joshua has to overcome. Nor does the Lord point to Joshua and give him a self-esteem pep talk – tell him he’s brilliant and really talented. And that if he put his mind to dream big he can achieve anything he wants. God simply reminds Joshua that He had the Person of God with him and the Promises of God that He will take care of him, “*Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.*” (Joshua 1:9)

Often we forget how great God truly is. God is not just the most powerful person in this universe. All power in this universe are tied up in God. He made all things in space, time and matter simply by the Word of His power. The very oxygen we breathe are in His hand. We need to stop looking at ourselves and look to God for help. Paul reminded us all that it is through Christ we can accomplish our calling, “*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*” (Philp. 4:13) In the

Old Testament a great King Jehoshaphat felt unable to face the task ahead. He poured out his heart publicly to the Lord and confessed his inadequacy and need for God's help, "O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee." (2 Chronicles 20:12).



The Lord honoured this humility and gave Jehoshaphat a great victory, "Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, and Jehoshaphat in the forefront of them, to go again to Jerusalem with joy; for the Lord had made them to rejoice over their enemies. . . . And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries, when they had heard that the Lord fought against the enemies of Israel." (2 Chronicles 20:27, 29).

CONCLUSION

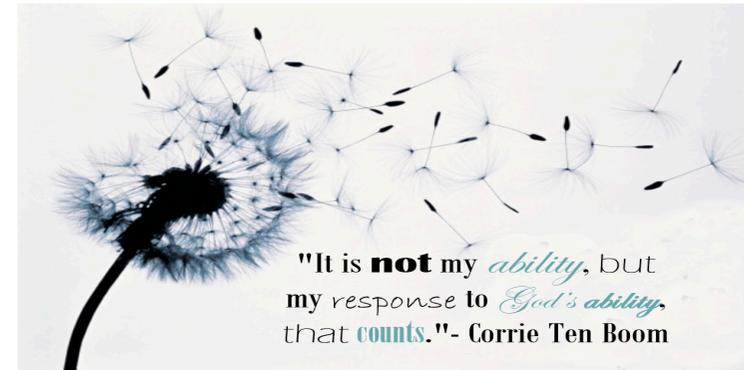
There is a key to freedom from our feelings of inadequacy. Overcoming the fear of insufficiency requires changing our thinking patterns about ourselves and the Lord. Don't let your feelings define who you are. Let the Biblical truth of who you are in Christ define your thoughts and assessments. Remind yourself that God hasn't changed. All He needs is our availability and He will provide the ability. God is not looking for ability because you don't have any to do His work – no one has. It is not your job to be all-powerful and all-sufficient. In fact, you can't be. Only God is. It is never about our strength but His strength. God always invites us to do things far beyond our natural capabilities. We need to begin with grasping those truths.

The Lord Jesus Christ reminded us that without Him we can do nothing. If we try to face the world, flesh and the devil in our own strength we are powerless. Paul pointed out to the proud, self-confident Corinthians, "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves. . ." (2 Cor. 3:5a) Hudson Taylor, the great 19th century founder of The China Inland Mission, made the profound observation, "All God's giants have been weak men who did great things for God because they reckoned on His being with them."

When the Lord calls us to serve Him in the home, workplace or church, our natural tendency is often to think, Who, me? I can't do that! Don't worry about being inadequate to do the will of God. Everyone is! The power is not in you. It never has been. We are not to think we are the manufacturers of God's grace to fulfil our calling. God alone is our source of all that is needed for godly living. God has never called a person without providing the power to fulfil that calling. He knows you are inadequate. But He will never hold back anything that we need for

success. Remember what the Lord said to Paul "my grace is sufficient for you." In fact, the longer you serve the Lord the more inadequate you should feel and the more you realise that you have to depend on the Lord for His blessing. The Apostle Peter often was too self-confident as a young disciple. It led him into great moments of failure. Later in life he wrote to encourage us to trust God for everything that God has called us to do,

If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. (1 Pet. 4:11)



God is the God of the little and insignificant people. Just look at His 12 disciples. No businessmen, politicians or educated classes. But they turned the world upside down. God often uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things. Paul tells us this honours God, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." (2 Cor. 4:7) You cannot be too small for God to use but you can be too big! God is able to use everyone here who is willing to surrender their life to Him. There are fewer greater men in the Bible than the Apostle Paul. Gifted with an incredible mind and a powerful knowledge of the Word of God he still recognised that he was inadequate for the great calling of God in his life. He wrote to the Corinthian believers, "And who is sufficient for these things?" (2 Cor. 2:16)

We all have moments, some small and some big, when we feel disqualified for the call of God. **What is it that God wants from us?** Simple faith. Are you available? If you are, He is able. What new opportunities lay before you? What is God calling you to do today? Purpose in your heart and mind not to let feelings of inadequacy prevent you from fulfilling God's purpose for your life. If you fear inadequacy today, turn to God's Word for comfort and affirmation. You may sometimes feel like the calling is too much for you, but it is never too much for God. Our strength comes from God. Unlike us in our feeble, human bodies – the Lord is unrestricted and limitless in might. You may at times feel totally inadequate. But it is also true that our God is always enough. We just need to trust fully on Him, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." (Eph. 6:10)