## "HE WHO HAS OVERCOME HIS FEARS WILL TRULY BE FREE."

-ARISTOTLE



The Book of Judges is the seventh book of the Bible. It tells the stories of a series of divinely inspired leaders (judges). These judges were sent by God to help the Israelites live faithful lives. Gideon was one of these leaders. There is a pattern to the stories: The people are unfaithful to God and thus fall into the hands of their enemies. The people repent and call on God for mercy. God's merciful response is to send them a new leader (a judge), who delivers the Israelites from oppression, and they prosper again. But before too long, they get carried away with their prosperity, forget their promises to God, become unfaithful, and repeat the cycle.



In the book of Judges we read about how the Israelites had turned away from God, choosing idolatry and immorality. As a result they fell into slavery again. Then God called on Gideon and he had to make a choice.

Gideon was a young man that God chose to free the people of Israel from their worship of idols.

Gideon was asked to tear down the altar of Baal and to build an altar to the Lord. Was he afraid? Yes. Did he have doubts? Yes. Was he concerned what his friends would think? Yes.

But... he listened to the voice of God—above his doubts, fears, and friends. He trusted in God's word. And he chose good over evil, right over wrong, and bravery over cowardice.

So Gideon, under God's instructions, destroyed the altar of Baal. This is where the Israelites were worshiping false Gods.

The Israelites had:

- · Gone looking for happiness in the wrong places
- Fallen into stinking thinking
- · Turned their back on the truth
- · Been too proud to admit their wrongdoing

Life is choices. Today's culture wants to build an altar of Baal in your heart. In fact, the construction of this altar probably started long ago. I know, because I tore down that altar many years ago, and yet it is amazing how often I notice that the world has started building a new altar to Baal in my heart, and I have to tear it down all over again.

Because like the Israelites, we have all:

- · Gone looking for happiness in the wrong places
- · Fallen into stinking thinking
- · Turned our back on the truth
- · Been too proud to admit our wrongdoing

### ROSE AGAIN ON THE THIRD DAY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SCRIPTURES. HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN AN

Just like with Gideon, a **decision point** is before you today. God is asking you to tear down the altar of Baal that the culture has built in your heart. *Tear it down*.

And now, build in your heart an altar to the Lord.

Anyone or anything that doesn't help you become the best-version-of-yourself is just too small for you.

Decide *today* not to let anything get in the way of becoming the-best-version-of-yourself.

Don't let anything hold you back from becoming the person God created you to be.

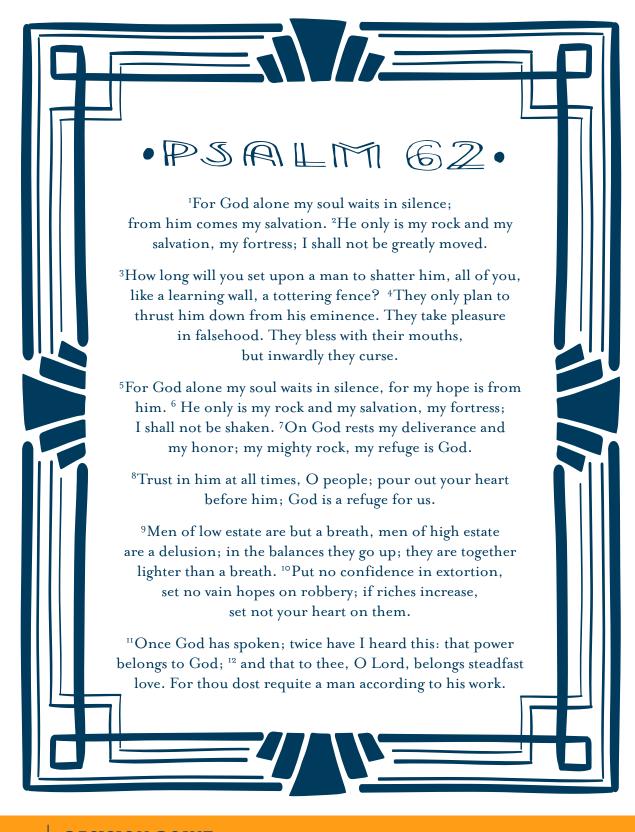




How much courage did Mary need to say yes to God?

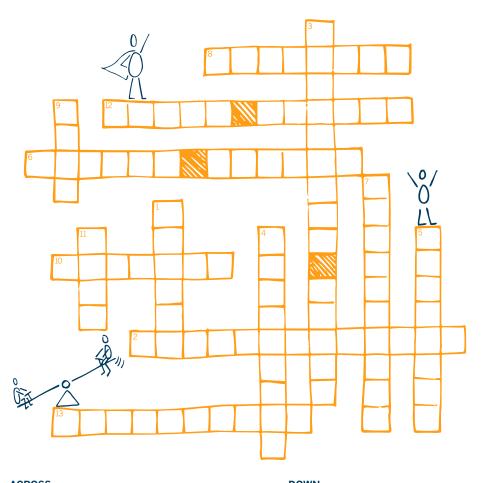


. IF GOD CALLED YOU TO A GREAT MISSION LIKE HE DID GIDEON, DO YOU THINK YOU WOULD SAY YES? WHY? WHY NOT?	
PLACES, FALLEN	ITES, WE HAVE ALL: GONE LOOKING FOR HAPPINESS IN THE WRONG INTO STINKING THINKING, TURNED OUR BACKS ON THE TRUTH, AND D TO ADMIT OUR WRONGDOING. WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU ACTED
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# WHAT'S HOLDING YOU BACK?

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



### ACROSS

- 2. a philosophy centered on the question, "What's in it for me?"
- 6. disordered desire that exists in every person.
- 8. a philosophy that believes pleasure is the ultimate goal in life.
- 10. the moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty
- 12. happiness is the result of
- 13. the mistaken belief that what is true for one person might not be true for everyone.

### DOWN

- 1. the power of the mind to think and understand in a logical way.
- 3. the idea that some things are true for everybody.
- 4. you have an enormous desire for
- 5. poor short-term substitute for happiness.
- 7. a philosophy focused on doing only the bare minimum.
- 9. the dominant emotion in our culture today
- 11. to desire something good and expect it with confidence.