
STEP
UP

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STEP UP!

Five Stories. Five Challenges. One Faithful God.

Throughout Scripture, we encounter ordinary people whom God called to take extraordinary steps of faith. Some faced overwhelming obstacles, while others wrestled with fear, uncertainty, or opposition.

Yet each had a choice to make: remain where they were or step forward in faith and obedience.

Over the next five weeks, we'll explore the lives of Gideon, Daniel, Esther, Elijah, and David. Though their circumstances were different, each faced a defining moment that required them to trust God and take a step of faith.

But these stories aren't simply about remarkable people doing remarkable things. They're about a remarkable God who works through ordinary people to accomplish His extraordinary purposes.

Each week, you'll study Scripture, reflect on God's character, and consider how His Word applies to your life. You'll also be challenged to put what you've learned into action.

As you begin this study, consider one simple question:
Where is God calling you to step up?

Our prayer is that this study encourages you to know God more deeply, trust Him more fully, and follow Him more faithfully, one step at a time.

Character Profile

01 Gideon (also called Jerubbaal)

Place of Origin: Ophrah, in the territory of the Abiezrites (Judges 6–7)

What He Is Most Known For:

Gideon is remembered alongside biblical heroes like Barak, Samson, and David (Hebrews 11:32). He is best known for his unlikely military victory over the Midianites. After God reduced his army to just 300 men, Gideon led them into battle against a far greater force. Armed with trumpets, jars, and torches, Gideon's men witnessed God accomplish what seemed impossible.

Personality Traits:

Gideon exhibited both strengths and weaknesses. Although he questioned, doubted, and repeatedly sought signs and reassurance, he ultimately obeyed God's calling. As his confidence grew, he became courageous, persistent, and determined. His story reveals how God can use someone who initially feels inadequate or reluctant to lead. However, Gideon's later actions also remind us that even those used powerfully by God are not immune to pride and poor decisions.

Where His Story Takes Place:

Gideon's story centers around Ophrah, although the conflict spans a much broader region. The Midianites, Amalekites, and other eastern peoples repeatedly invaded Israel, destroying crops and livestock and leaving the Israelites impoverished (Judges 6–7).

Bible Study | *Judges 6-7*

Explore Judges 6–7 before gathering with your group. Work at your own pace, recording your observations and reflections in your journal.

1. After reading Judges 6–7, what do we learn about God and His character?
2. Read Galatians 5:22–23, which describes the fruit of the Spirit. Which of these qualities do you see reflected in Gideon's story?
3. What was Gideon doing when the angel of the Lord called him a "mighty man of valor"? What does this reveal about the contrast between how God saw Gideon and how Gideon saw himself?
4. Gideon's initial response questioned why God had allowed His people to suffer. Why do you think he responded this way? What does Judges 6:1–2 reveal about Israel's circumstances?
5. Gideon was hesitant to obey God's calling. What excuse did he make? When have you felt similarly inadequate or hesitant to follow God?
6. Gideon asked the Lord for a sign. What sign did God give him (Judges 6:19–21)? What does this reveal about faith and obedience? Where in your life are you seeking reassurance from God?
7. Read Hebrews 11:32, where Gideon is included among other heroes of faith. Considering his doubts and hesitation, why do you think he was included? What does this teach us about true faith?
8. In your own words, summarize Gideon's story and the lessons you've learned in a paragraph.

Come prepared to share with your group!

The Challenge:

"The Midianite Challenge"

This week, identify one area of your life where you've been holding back because you feel unqualified, inadequate, or fearful.

1. Acknowledge the Obstacle: Write down a specific task or step of obedience you've been avoiding. For example, sharing your faith with someone or serving in a ministry where you feel unqualified.

2. Take Your "Gideon Action": Just as Gideon took tangible steps of faith, commit to one small action this week that moves you out of hiding and toward obedience.

3. Pray Daily: Instead of praying for the task to disappear or for yourself to suddenly feel qualified,



Pray with your own words, or try these:
"Lord, I may feel inadequate, but You are more than able. Help me trust You and take the next step of obedience. Use my small act of faith for Your greater purposes."

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02

Character Profile

Daniel (also called Belteshazzar)

Historical Context:

Daniel was taken into exile around 605 BC when Babylon conquered Judah and brought young Jewish men to serve in the royal court. Throughout his life, Daniel served multiple rulers as the Babylonian Empire transitioned to Medo-Persian rule. His life spanned the rise and fall of powerful kingdoms, demonstrating God's sovereignty over nations and rulers.

What He Is Most Known For:

Daniel is remembered for his unwavering faithfulness despite pressure to compromise. His prophetic visions, courage in a hostile culture, and deliverance from the lions' den demonstrate his devotion to God. He rose to prominence through integrity rather than compromise.

Personality Traits:

Daniel demonstrated strong convictions, wisdom, and integrity. He navigated complex political environments without compromising his faith, earning the respect of powerful rulers through his excellence, trustworthiness, and devotion to God.

Where His Story Takes Place:

Daniel's story unfolds primarily in Babylon, where he served in the royal court after being taken captive. His later experiences occurred under Medo-Persian rule (Daniel 1–6).

Bible Study | *Daniel 6*

Explore Daniel 6 before gathering with your group. Work at your own pace, recording your observations and reflections in your journal.

1. *As you read Daniel 6, what stands out about who God is and how He works? What characteristics of God are revealed?*
2. *What do Daniel's actions reveal about his relationship with God? How had his daily habits prepared him to remain faithful under pressure?*
3. *Why do you think Daniel continued praying despite the king's decree? What does his decision reveal about the importance of conviction and obedience?*
4. *How did Daniel's faithfulness influence King Darius and those around him? What does this teach us about the impact of our faith on others?*
5. *Where do you see God's protection, power, and sovereignty demonstrated in Daniel 6? How does this encourage you in your own circumstances?*
6. *Which qualities of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23) do you see reflected in Daniel's actions? Which qualities would you like to grow in?*
7. *In your own words, summarize Daniel 6 and what God is teaching you through this account. How might these lessons shape the way you live out your faith?*

The Challenge:

"Faithful in All Things"

Daniel's life reminds us that faithfulness isn't just about standing firm during opposition. It's about remaining committed to God in every circumstance, decision, and ordinary moment.

1. Identify Three Areas: Consider three areas of your life where you could demonstrate greater faithfulness: your work, relationships, habits, integrity, time, or priorities.

2. Practice Daily Faithfulness: Each day this week, choose one of these areas and take a concrete action that demonstrates faithfulness to God. Remember, faithfulness is often expressed through consistency in ordinary moments.

3. Reflect on Your Growth: At the end of the week, journal about what you discovered. How did practicing faithfulness draw you closer to God? How could greater consistency impact your relationship with Him and your witness to others?

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Character Profile

03 **Esther** (also called Hadassah)

Place of Origin:
Esther was a young Jewish woman living in Persia, raised by her older cousin Mordecai after her parents died. She eventually became queen during the reign of King Ahasuerus (Xerxes I).

Historical Context:
Esther lived in the Persian Empire, where many Jewish people remained far from their homeland. When Haman, a powerful royal official, plotted their destruction, Esther played a key role in saving her people. Though God's name is never mentioned, His providence is evident throughout the story.

What She Is Most Known For:
Esther is remembered for her courage and willingness to risk her life to save her people. Through wisdom and strategic action, she exposed Haman's wicked plot, declaring, "If I perish, I perish" (Esther 4:16).

Personality Traits:
Esther demonstrated wisdom, courage, humility, and discernment. She sought wise counsel, prepared carefully, and acted boldly when necessary, placing the needs of her people above her own comfort and security.

Where Her Story Takes Place:
Esther's story unfolds in the Persian royal palace at Susa, where she became queen and navigated dangerous political circumstances to help save her people from destruction.

Bible Study | *Esther 4 & 5*

These questions are designed to help you explore Esther 4–5 before gathering with your group. Work through them at your own pace, recording your observations and reflections in your journal.

1. *As you read Esther 4–5, what stands out about who God is and how He works, even though His name is never directly mentioned?*
2. *Which qualities of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23) do you see reflected in Esther's actions and decisions?*
3. *In Esther 4:14, Mordecai challenges Esther to consider why she became queen. What does this reveal about God's providence and the opportunities He gives us?*
4. *Esther faced serious consequences if she approached the king without being summoned. What does her response in Esther 4:16 reveal about courage, sacrifice, and faith?*
5. *How did Esther demonstrate wisdom and patience in approaching the king? What can we learn from her example about navigating difficult situations?*
6. *In your own words, summarize Esther 4–5 and what God is teaching you through these chapters. How might these lessons shape the way you live out your faith?*

The Challenge:

"Positioned for Purpose"

Esther's story reminds us that God can place us in unexpected positions, not simply for our comfort or advancement, but to serve others and accomplish His purposes.

1. Recognize Your Position: Where has God given you influence or opportunity? Consider your workplace, family, community, friendships, or church.

2. Listen and Learn: Like Esther, seek wise counsel and listen to those around you. Is there a need, injustice, or difficult situation you're uniquely positioned to address?

3. Take One Step: Identify one courageous but wise action you can take this week. It might mean speaking up, advocating for someone, meeting a need, or encouraging someone who's struggling.

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Character Profile

04 Elijah

Place of Origin:
Tishbe in Gilead, east of the Jordan River.

Historical Context:
During King Ahab's reign, Baal worship spread throughout Israel, largely influenced by his marriage to Jezebel. This widespread idolatry led the nation away from God. Elijah was called to confront Israel's spiritual compromise and turn the people back to worshiping the one true God.

What He Is Most Known For:
Elijah is remembered for his bold confrontation with the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. Through prayer, he witnessed God send fire from heaven, demonstrating His power and calling Israel to recognize the Lord as the one true God.

Personality Traits:
Elijah demonstrated courage, conviction, and unwavering faith in God. He boldly confronted powerful leaders and challenged false worship, even at great personal risk. Yet his moments of fear and discouragement reveal his humanity and God's faithful care for His servants.

Where His Story Takes Place:
Elijah ministered primarily in the northern kingdom of Israel during the reigns of Ahab and Ahaziah. His confrontation with the prophets of Baal took place on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18).

Bible Study *| 1 Kings 18:20–40*

These questions are designed to help you explore 1 Kings 18:20–40 before gathering with your group. Work through them at your own pace, recording your observations and reflections in your journal.

1. *As you read 1 Kings 18:20–40, what stands out about who God is and how He works? What aspects of His character are revealed?*

2. T*he Israelites are described as "limping between two different opinions." What does this reveal about the danger of spiritual indecision and God's desire for wholehearted worship?*

3. *Elijah's prayer, "Answer me, O LORD, answer me," demonstrates his confidence in God. What does his prayer reveal about his relationship with God? How does it contrast with the actions of Baal's prophets?*

4. *Elijah soaked the altar, wood, and offering with water. Why do you think he took such care to demonstrate that only God could bring down fire?*

5. *Earlier in 1 Kings 18, Obadiah risked his life to protect 100 prophets. Which qualities of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23) do you see reflected in Elijah's and Obadiah's actions?*

6. I*n your own words, summarize 1 Kings 18:20–40 and what God is teaching you through Elijah's example. How might these lessons shape the way you live out your faith?*

The Challenge:

"Standing Firm When It Matters"

Elijah stood on Mount Carmel surrounded by 450 prophets of Baal and a nation divided in its worship. His confidence wasn't in his own strength, but in his trust that the Lord alone is God.

1. Identify Where You Need to Stand Firm: Where is God calling you to stand firm, even if it's uncomfortable or unpopular? Consider your convictions, relationships, integrity, or willingness to speak the truth.

2. Prepare Your Heart: Spend time in prayer this week, asking God to strengthen your resolve. Like Elijah, ground your confidence in God's character and faithfulness rather than your own abilities.

3. Take Your Stand: Identify one opportunity this week to stand firm in your convictions. It doesn't need to be dramatic; simply faithful. Respond with humility, courage, and love, trusting God with the outcome.

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Character Profile 05

David (meaning “Beloved”)

Place of Origin:
Bethlehem in Judah; youngest son of Jesse.

Historical Context:
David was an unlikely candidate for kingship. Though overlooked as a young shepherd, God chose him because He looked at the heart rather than outward appearances. After rejecting Saul as king, God directed Samuel to anoint David, preparing him to eventually lead Israel.

What He Is Most Known For:
David is remembered as Israel's greatest king and for his remarkable victory over Goliath. Armed with a sling and stones, he defeated the Philistine giant through faith in God's power rather than his own strength or military experience.

Personality Traits:
David demonstrated courage, bold faith, and a passion for God's glory. His confidence came from his relationship with God and his experiences of God's faithfulness. Though his life included significant failures, he is remembered as a man after God's own heart.

Where His Story Takes Place:
David's confrontation with Goliath took place in the Valley of Elah, where the Philistine and Israelite armies faced one another (1 Samuel 17).

Bible Study | *1 Samuel 17*

These questions are designed to help you explore 1 Samuel 17 before gathering with your group. Work through them at your own pace, recording your observations and reflections in your journal.

1. *As you read 1 Samuel 17, what stands out about who God is and how He works? What aspects of His character are revealed through David's victory?*
2. *Saul's fear contrasts sharply with David's courage. What does this reveal about the difference between relying on human strength and trusting God? Which qualities of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23) do you see in David?*
3. *When David heard Goliath's insults, he asked, "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine?" Why was this question significant? What does it reveal about David's understanding of God's relationship with Israel?*
4. *David declared that God would give him victory so that "all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel." What does this reveal about David's priorities and motivations?*
5. *Goliath mocked David for approaching him with a shepherd's staff, yet David's experience protecting sheep had prepared him for battle. What does this reveal about how God can use our past experiences to prepare us for future challenges?*
6. *In your own words, summarize 1 Samuel 17 and what God is teaching you through David's example. How might these lessons shape the way you live out your faith?*

The Challenge:

"Trust God's Strength, Not Your Own"

David faced a giant who was larger, stronger, and more experienced in battle. Yet his confidence wasn't in weapons or military strategy, but in God's power and faithfulness.

1. Name Your Giant: What challenge feels overwhelming to you or someone you know? Where are you tempted to rely on your own strength or resources rather than trusting God?

2. Remember God's Faithfulness: Recall times God has provided for, protected, strengthened, or guided you. Write down a few examples and consider sharing them with someone who needs encouragement.

3. Throw the Stone: Identify one step of faith you can take in response to your challenge. Invite God to work through prayer, worship, and obedience, trusting His power rather than relying solely on your own strength.

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the next step IS YOURS

Over the past five weeks, we've explored the lives of five individuals who were challenged to step up in faith.

Gideon obeyed despite his fears. Daniel remained faithful even when it came at a cost. Esther courageously stood up for her people. Elijah stood firm in his convictions, and David trusted God's strength when facing an impossible obstacle.

Though their circumstances were different, each story points to the same truth: God is faithful, and He is worthy of our trust.

Through their lives, we're reminded that God doesn't require us to have all the answers or feel completely prepared before we obey Him. He simply calls us to trust Him and take the next step.

So, as we conclude this study, consider one final question:

Where is God calling you to step up?

Maybe it's an act of obedience you've been avoiding, a difficult conversation, an opportunity to serve, or a situation where you need to surrender control and trust Him.

Whatever your next step looks like, our prayer is that you leave this study knowing God more deeply, trusting Him more fully, and following Him more faithfully.

The stories we've studied may be finished, but your next step of faith is still ahead.

WILL YOU TAKE IT?

