

GREAT MEN OF LIKE PASSIONS

“What Was Their Secret?”

By: Phillip Hayes

Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit. [James 5:16-18]

I have been amazed at the awesome acts of faith demonstrated in the Bible. From Moses and the prophets to our Lord Jesus and His disciples; we see the Power of God manifested in their lives. Most of us desire to demonstrate the same power.

We testify of being filled with the Spirit of God, yet we fall pitifully short of accomplishing what the men and women of old accomplished through their faith in God.

Oftentimes I have wondered why we do not see the manifestation of God's Power very often. We say we believe in God. We say we believe the Word of God that clearly reveals the same Power that raised Jesus from the dead is in us. Yes, we say we believe, but somehow doubt floods our hearts when we are confronted with the task of believing God for healing or a miracle.

Is it possible that we have allowed Satan to fill our minds with thoughts of inadequacy or perhaps condemnation and we just don't feel worthy enough for God to use us or answer our prayers?

Our opening scripture tells one of the exploits of the prophet Elijah. He had prayed that it would not rain and it didn't rain for three and one half years. He prayed again and it began raining again. When you go back and read about this great miracle you find these words, *"And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word"* [1Kings 17:1].

This was the very first time we find Elijah mentioned in the Bible. Now, we don't find a scripture stating that Elijah prayed for this great miracle. However, James knew that without prayer this miracle would have been impossible. When Elijah said, "According to my word" he was confident that whatever he said would come to pass. Again, his prayer life was his relationship with God and that gave him the confidence to "Speak The Word Only"!

James said Elijah was a man of "Like Passions" as we are. In other words, there was no difference in Elijah or any of us. He was not a superhuman! This great prophet laughed and mocked the prophets of Baal and then killed 450 of them! But after his great victory over those false prophets look what he did: *"And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time. And when he saw that, he*

arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there” [1Kings 19:1-3]. The great prophet Elijah actually ran from a woman! Elijah knew fear the same as we.

Chapter eleven of Hebrews is known as “The Faith Chapter”. The chapter lists many of the great men and women of the Bible that accomplished awesome things in their lifetimes through faith. One of those mentioned is Moses. The acts of Moses is well known and his acts of faith and power are unequalled in the Old Testament. But, did you know, he first doubted his call?

“Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt. 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 3:10-11]. Think about this, God has appeared to Moses in a burning bush and is speaking directly to him! Yet, Moses is telling God that He has made a huge mistake. He is really saying, “Who do you think you are talking to? Who am I that I should do this? You’re talking to the wrong guy!”

He felt inadequate for such a call of God in his life! How many of you have felt the same? I am sure you have. I know I have!

God does not make mistakes. He knew every fault you have, every mistake you would make, every sin you have committed and would commit, yet He called you anyway!

Look how Moses continued to argue with God about his call! *“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].

"They are not going to accept me! They are not going to believe me"! Moses is concerned about what the people think not what God has commanded. Before you condemn Moses, let me remind you, we are the same way my friend. Many times we have the opportunity to witness to others but fail to do it. We make excuses the same way Moses did. "They wouldn't believe me anyway. They won't listen to me; I'm just an ordinary person, I'm not a preacher".

Moses was making every excuse he could think of to get out of this call of God. *"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].*

Lord, you have made a mistake, I can't even talk well. I stutter! I talk really slow! I'm not a good speaker! I can't do this! Sound familiar? It should! We have all made the same excuse. I know you have! You watch or listen to your favorite preacher and know you can't possibly speak as well as he or she can and you just give up on the call of God in your life. The first thing you need to do is quit comparing yourself to others! God didn't call you to be like anyone else. He called you for a particular and special purpose. Look how God answered Moses: *"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].*

God said, I made your mouth and I will teach you what to say! Wow! I think that should be enough, don't you! This was still not good enough for Moses! I believe Moses felt so unworthy and inadequate that it just overwhelmed him and he just couldn't believe God could possibly use him. I have personally felt this way, especially when Satan would remind me of all my inadequacies and failures. Nevertheless, I thank God who strengthened me through all my tribulations.

Moses continued to make excuses and it angered God. *"And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and he said, Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart"* [Exodus 4:13-14].

God made Moses' brother Aaron His spokesman. This was not God's perfect plan and we should learn from this. Space will not allow for further explanation, other than to say we know Aaron was guilty in preparing a golden calf and an altar to it for the people to worship after Moses delayed coming down from the mountain. God saw this and was so angered that He would have destroyed the people if Moses had not intervened.

When God calls a person, He equips that person to perform exactly His call. God's plan was implemented despite Moses' excuses and God's ultimate plan for your life will be performed. We learn from this that we can resist the call of God. We still have a choice. I don't know about you, but I want to fulfill whatever the call of God is for my life. We should never fear! Whatever God has called you

to do, He will equip you to do it. Moses was a man of like passion as we are.

Let's look at another "mighty man of valor" in the Bible. His name is Gideon.

Please read carefully. *"And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour. And Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites. 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? And he said unto him, 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. And the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man. And he said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, then shew me a sign that thou talkest with me"* [Judges 6:12-17].

I don't know if you have ever seen an angel or not. But, if you were sitting in your living room and an angel suddenly appeared to you, you would probably fall on your knees and say, "Lord what would you have me to do"! Then the angel declares, "You are a mighty man of valor"! Would you be ready to do whatever the angel tells you? In your present mental, spiritual, physical and financial condition, would you believe you were a "mighty man of valor"? Maybe, but more than likely your response would be the same as Gideon. *"Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this*

befallen us?" Gideon also gives another more common excuse, *"Behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house."*

Excuses! We have all made them but rarely admit it. Gideon is looking at his present situation and it is dominating his mind. He complains that his family is poor and he is the least (or the poorest) in his family. Again, we do the same! "If God is with me, why am I in trouble? If God is with me, why am I sick, broke, and depressed?" "I'm broke! I don't have enough money to pay my bills and you're telling me that God is with me and I'm a mighty man of valor?" There must be some mistake! You've got the wrong man!" This is really how Gideon felt and I am sure if you are honest with yourself, you have felt the same.

Gideon is not convinced this is an angel at all! He decides to test this angel and says, *"And he said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, then shew me a sign that thou talkest with me"*. Gideon wants a sign that this angel is actually real and is talking to him!

Although we are supposed to be Spirit filled and Spirit led, I have known many Christians that didn't know what to do in certain situations, so they decided to "put out a fleece". This idea comes from Gideon's experience with this angel. Rather than simply believing and trusting God, the carnal man always looks for a sign. *"And the angel of God said unto him, Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon this rock, and pour out the broth. And he did so. Then the angel of the LORD put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there rose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the*

flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then the angel of the LORD departed out of his sight" [Judges 6:20-21].

Wow! Gideon got his sign and it was a supernatural one at that. *"And when Gideon perceived that he was an angel of the LORD, Gideon said, Alas, O Lord GOD! for because I have seen an angel of the LORD face to face" [Judges 6:22].* Finally, he believes he was talking to an angel. Or, did he?

No! Gideon is still not fully convinced that this is all real. His mind is reeling, and no doubt filled with dread and doubt, but he goes forth trying to fulfill his call. He gathers the men of Israel about him to fight against the enemy, but something happens. He began to doubt the angel! He decides to ask for another sign. *"And Gideon said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said, Behold, I will put a fleece of wool in the floor; and if the dew be on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth beside, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said. And it was so: for he rose up early on the morrow, and thrust the fleece together, and wringed the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water" [Judges 6:36-38].*

Finally, there it was! Surely, this man Gideon is now convinced, or is he? Read on, *"And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once: let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew. And God did so that night: for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground" [Judges 39-40].*

Gideon finally got it! God really was with him. Every time I meditate on this, I am amazed. First of all, that Gideon would have the audacity to ask God to prove Himself to him with three separate fleeces! Secondly, that God would actually provide him with these supernatural answers. In all fairness to Gideon, he did not have the Holy Spirit in him to teach and guide him. We don't have that excuse!

Not only are we supposed to be filled with God's Spirit; we are the body of Christ in the earth today. We are one spirit with the Lord and have been given power and authority over all devils. We don't need fleeces or signs today; we need to obey that still small voice that lies within us. We should not walk by sight, but by faith (2Cor. 5:7)!

Now, in contrast to Moses and Gideon, let's look at Caleb and Joshua. There should be no doubt, they were also men of like passion. However, they demonstrated a bold faith in God that is indeed rare. Faith was their secret!

We find Caleb among the twelve spies that were sent to spy out the land of Canaan God had promised His people. When the twelve spies came back they brought good news and bad news. *"And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it" [Numbers 13:27].* This was the good news. The land was exactly like God had promised them! The bad news was, *"Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there" [Numbers 13:28].* The bad news was, there was opposition!

The men that were with Caleb begin to tell the people how terrible this opposition was. Read on, *"But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we. And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight"* [Numbers 13:31-33].

They saw the opposition as men of great stature! And they saw giants over there! As a matter of fact we were like grasshoppers in their sight and also in our own sight. We are not able to go up against them! That's what eleven men saw.

All the people believed the bad report of the eleven spies. They began to complain to God about their situation. Look at some of their comments found in chapter fourteen: *"And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night." "Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt." "Would God we had died in this wilderness!" "Were it not better for us to return into Egypt?"*

God heard what they said and He also heard what Caleb said! Caleb was the one man that was not walking by sight! He was walking by faith. Look what Caleb said about the situation, *"And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it"* [Numbers 13:30].

They all saw the same thing. Caleb also saw the men of great stature, and the giants. But his attitude was altogether different than the other eleven men. The Bible says Caleb had a different spirit!

Now, because of the response of the people, let's read how God judged the people. *"Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; Surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it: But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it"* [Numbers 14:22-24].

This is a great lesson my friends. People will always try to influence you. Sadly, the majority are like the eleven spies and walk by sight. When God promises you something there will be opposition. Satan will look like a giant when you confront him in the flesh. But when you confront your opposition in the Spirit, you will see him as he really is. Completely powerless against you! *"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you"* [James 4:7]. When you stand against him in faith, he will run from you! Be a man like Caleb! Walk in another spirit.

Joshua was another great warrior who trusted in God. God had commissioned Joshua after the death of Moses and gave him a great promise. We read about it in the book of Joshua, chapter one: *"Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto*

Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast. There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" [Joshua 1:1-5].

"There shall not any man be able to stand before thee!" "I will be with thee, I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee." This is one of the most powerful mandates given to a man in the Old Testament! Joshua heard, received and believed. He was ready to take the land for God had spoken! *"Have not I commanded thee? 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. Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, Pass through the host, and command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals; for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the LORD your God giveth you to possess it" [Joshua 1:9-11].*

Joshua believed God so strongly that he was able to rally the people to possess the land. This is the kind of man we need today. A man that will disregard the difficulties that face him, and fight the good fight of faith.

You might be thinking, "If I had that kind of mandate from God, I would have the same attitude as Joshua". My friend, you not only have the same mandate, you have been given more power to accomplish your mission than Joshua could have ever dreamed to have! You see, you have a great advantage over Joshua. You actually have Jesus Christ living inside of you! He is eternally connected to your spirit if you are "born again". Joshua didn't have Christ in him. You do! *"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates"* [2Corinthians 13:5]. Praise God! "Christ in you is the hope of glory (Col. 1:27). Let me add one of my very favorite scriptures concerning the power that is inside you, *"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us"* [Ephesians 3:20].

What more promises do you need! Jesus is IN YOU! The Power is IN YOU! The Holy Ghost is IN YOU! *"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own"* [1Corinthians 6:19]. God is IN YOU, we are His temple! *"And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people"* [2Corinthians 6:16].

So you see, we have no excuse today. Yes, we are flesh, blood and bone men and women. But, we are inseparable from the Lord! *"But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit"* [1Corinthians 6:17].

Yes, we have our ups and downs. Many times we are beset with fears and times of unbelief. But we must learn to set our humanity aside and walk in the spirit by faith. We have to acknowledge who we are in Christ. We are not beggars! We are not poor helpless little creatures without any power and guidance! No! We are kings and priests unto God (Rev. 1:5 & 5:10). We are His anointed ones! A special people foreordained before the foundation of the world. We have royal blood flowing through our veins! *"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light"* [1Peter 2-9]. Wake up! Quit living your life like a beggar!

You have power; and just like Joshua, you have this promise, *"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen"* [Matthew 28:20]. Praise God! And again, *"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee"* [Hebrews 13:5]. What a fantastic promise! Jesus forever being with you, even unto the end of the world! Further, He is not only with you, He is in you.

Let's set aside our "pity parties" and let someone else take up that pitiful "poor little me" attitude and be the men and women that God has called us to be.

We are the Over-comers! Rise Up and Believe His Word!