



Hebrews 11:32-35  
**Flawed Men of Faith**

***32 And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: 33 who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. 35 Women received their dead raised to life again.***

Hughes comments that all of the preceding examples and those in these closing verses are consistent with Hebrews 11:1 noting that "faith is a dynamic certainty made up of two certitudes (absolute certainty or conviction that something is the case-to firmly believe in): a future certitude that makes one sure of the future as if it were present, and a visual certitude that brings the invisible within view. One hears God's Word and so believes it that its future fulfillment becomes subjectively present and visible to the spiritual eye." (Hebrews: An Anchor for the Soul)

Time will fail me - Why? Because he had so many OT examples of faith that he could have given to encourage his Hebrew readers. In short he was running out of time, not examples of faithful men and women.

**Modern day examples-** Hebrews 13:7

Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah- These 4 names come from one of the darkest times of Israel's history, the days of the Judges, which is tragically summed up by the declaration in Judges 21:25.

***25 In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.***

He does not list them in chronological order, in that Gideon followed Barak, Samson followed Jephthah, and David followed Samuel. No one knows why he chose this order; perhaps he was just rattling off the names spontaneously.

**The interesting thing is that the first five men all had some serious shortcomings, but in spite of these flaws, God honored their faith.**

## ➤ GIDEON

Judges 6:1-16; 7:7-8

**Gideon by faith defeated the Midianite army with a small band of 300 men.**

a. **Gideon:** He boldly destroyed idols and was mightily used of God to defeat a much larger army of Midianites. Yet he was also a man who doubted God's word to him at first and repeatedly asked for confirmation.

Gideon at first was cowardly and had to be coaxed to do what God called him to do. After his amazing victory with 300 men over the Midianite army of 135,000, he made an ephod that lured Israel into idolatry ([Judges 8:24, 25, 26, 27](#)). Yet in spite of his failures, the author names him as a hero of faith.

## ➤ BARAK

Judges 4:1-10; 14-23; chapter 5- the song of Deborah

By faith Barak with the prodding of Deborah was used by God to defeat the Canaanites.

b. **Barak:** He led the people of Israel in a dramatic victory over the Canaanites ([Judges 4](#)). Yet he hesitated and went forward only when Deborah encouraged him.

Barak won a great victory for Israel over an army that had 900 chariots, but he only did it at the prodding of a woman, Deborah.

**Mighty to conquer was the man who was timid to fight. When faith gave him courage, it made him triumph.**

## ➤ SAMSON

Judges 13:1-5, 24-25; 14:19; 15:14-20; 16:23-31

c. **Samson:** He was used mightily of the Lord to defeat the Philistines. Yet he never lived up to his potential, and had a tragic ending to his life after being enticed by Delilah ([Judges 13-16](#)).

Samson routed the Philistines on numerous occasions, yet he was tripped up by his lust for foreign women.

Who but a man full of faith would have hurled himself upon a thousand men with no weapon in his hand but the jawbone of a donkey? There was a wondrous confidence in God in that weak, strong man, which, though it does not excuse his faults, yet nevertheless puts him in the ranks of the believers. Happy is the man or woman who believes in God.

Samson defeated the Philistines several times most notably in his last act of faith in which he himself was killed.

### ➤ **JEPHTHAH**

Judges 11:1-10; 29-40; 12:7

Jephthah defeated the Ammonites with God's power (Judges 11, 12)

d. **Jephthah**: He was used of God to defeat the Ammonites. Yet Jephthah made a foolish vow and stubbornly kept it ([Judges 11](#)).

[Jephthah](#), the son of a harlot, was at first driven away by his half-brothers. But later, the elders of his home town pled with him to return and lead them in battle against the enemy. He won a victory, but then made a rash vow to sacrifice the first thing that came out of his house when he returned from battle. His only daughter came out to greet him, and he foolishly kept his stupid vow.

**See verses 33-35**

***out of weakness were made strong,***

**Faith enables flawed people to accomplish great things for God.**

Every Christian who has accomplished great things for God has known this truth as the very foundation of what they did. Robert Morrison, a pioneer missionary to China, was asked, "Do you really expect to make an impact on that great land?" He replied, "No sir, but I expect God to" (source unknown).

George Muller's biographer wrote of him, "Nothing is more marked in George Muller, to the very day of his death, than this, that he so looked to God and leaned on God that he felt him-self to be nothing, and God everything" (A. T. Pierson, George Muller of Bristol [Revell]).

Hudson Taylor, the great missionary to inland China, said, "All God's giants have been weak men who did great things for God because they reckoned on God being with them" (source unknown).

Spurgeon: There are certain trials that would rapidly overwhelm our faith and consume us if we did not have a secret source of divine, omnipotent strength. If it were not true that the Lord sits enthroned at the flood and as King forever ([Ps. 29:10](#)), the rivers would long ago have overwhelmed us. If it were not that He makes the flaming fire His messenger and the burning heat His servant, we would be utterly consumed ([Is. 43:2](#)). You may expect that between here and heaven, if you have not met with it yet, you will have enough trouble to destroy you unless the Lord is your Helper. Most of us can sing with the psalmist, "If it had not been the Lord who was on our side ... then the waters would have overwhelmed us, the stream would have gone over our soul" ([Ps. 124:1, 4](#)).

When through the deep waters I call you to go,  
The rivers of sorrow will not overflow,  
For I will be with you, your trials to bless,  
And sanctify to you your deepest distress.

When through fiery trials your pathway shall lie,  
My grace all-sufficient shall be your supply  
The flames shall not hurt you, I only design  
Your dross to consume and your gold to refine.

Oh, the wonderful security of the heaven-born and heaven-bound pilgrim! Floods cannot drown him, nor fires burn him. Thy presence, O Lord, is the protection of thy saints from the varied perils of the road. Behold, in faith I commit myself unto thee, and my spirit enters into rest. (Spurgeon)

**Richards** - This group of words expresses powerlessness. The weak are without strength, incapacitated in some serious way. (Expository Dictionary)

Milton says of the martyrs, "**They shook the powers of darkness with the irresistible power of weakness.**"

**If you feel incapable, throw yourself on the infinite capacity of God.**

***out of weakness were made strong,***

- 1. Faith comes from weakness.**
- 2. Faith produces strength.**
- 3. Faith reveals the power of God.**

My time is ended, although I had much more to say. I can only pray the Lord to give you to believe in him. If I should never again have the pleasure of speaking for my Lord upon the face of this earth, I should like to deliver, as my last confession of faith, this testimony—that nothing but faith can save this nineteenth century; nothing but faith can save old England: nothing but faith can save the present unbelieving church: nothing but firm faith in the grand old doctrines of grace, and in the ever-living and unchanging God can bring back to the church again a full tide of prosperity, and make her to be the deliverer of the nations for Christ: nothing but faith in the Lord Jesus can save you or me. The Lord give you, my brothers, to believe to the utmost degree, for his name's sake! Amen. (Spurgeon)