



outside the zone

stepping outside
our comfort zones
to be used of God

Rachel Wojnarowski

**Outside the Zone:
A Bible Study Focused On Stepping Outside Our
Comfort Zones to Be Used of God**

Rachel Wojnarowski

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Introduction

Being “in the zone” is usually the goal.

Basketball- you want to make the baskets.
Baseball- get it in the strike zone. Volleyball- inside the lines. Soccer- kick it in the goal. I love sports and I’m all about the rules. For a minute, indulge me.

As Christians, suppose that God wants to use you “outside the zone?” He has given you a unique set of talents and you are 100% about using those talents for Him. Awesome. But what if He is calling you to do something that feels over the edge? In other words, you may not be “loving it.”

What if “it” is helping a stranger?

What if “it” is telling a family member about what Christ has done in your life this week?

What if “it” is listening to the Holy Spirit as He prompts you and acting on that prompt?

What if “it” means you have to step outside your comfort zone and let God work through you?

What if “it” means that you won’t be given any credit for your talent?

What if “it” means people may think you are crazy?

Think about this:

Mark 12:43, 44

“Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.”

God has given each of us a unique set of talents and gifts. Our personalities, family backgrounds, and experiences all contribute to the way God wants to use us. But what if He is calling you to do something that is simply not a part of your comfort zone?

What a character we find in Moses, the leader of the children of Israel. God spoke specific instructions to him from the burning bush and Moses’ response was: “Who am I?” In other words, “God, what are you thinking? Do you really know my history? I mean, I killed a man out of anger. I’ve been labeled a traitor and rebel...” Moses seemed to forget his miraculous beginning; that in an era of the decree to kill all baby boys under the age of two, he was saved from immediate death.

To answer Moses’ question, “Who am I?”

“Oh, only that baby who was ingeniously disguised as being ‘thrown into the river.’ That was nothing special. Oh, and the princess just happened to find you and take you to safety. And then there is that little matter of your sister volunteering your birth mother to be your nurse, but that was no big deal.”

Yet we often approach God with that same question and attitude behind it. We make excuses that are illegitimate. We state reasons that are completely full of logic and completely empty of faith in God.

So who are you?

The child of the King.

All Christians have a comfort zone. Whether we realize or not, we have these certain areas we are “called” to serve in. We’ve been “gifted” a particular way and God does that! But.... truthfully, we use that so many times as a limit on how far we will allow God to work in our lives. If an opportunity arises that is “outside of our comfort zone,” then we bypass.

There is always someone better to do the job.

Someone more equipped.

Someone more knowledgeable.

Someone who looks like they fit the part.

Someone whose parents possess that quality.

Someone who is at that particular life stage.

Does it matter that the Holy Spirit spoke to our hearts about doing it? Does it matter that God put the idea in our minds to pursue?

When faith steps in, comfortable is no longer comforting.

One definition of “comfort zone” is a comfortable place where self-imposed boundaries define our thoughts and actions. The boundaries can be physical, mental, emotional or spiritual. The focus of this study is to journey outside our spiritual comfort zones.

In Heb. 11:1, “...Faith is the evidence of things not seen...” and Luke 1:37, “For with God, nothing is impossible”, we begin to Biblically view the real miracle of faith God wants to provide His children when they step outside their comfort zones and trust Him fully. Each and every day, God calls us to step out in faith and passionately pursue Him, regardless of our comfort level.

In [Matthew 9:20-22](#), the woman with the issue of blood is a great example of stepping out in faith. She had obstacles, but overlooked

them. She could have made excuses, but chose to squelch them. Her faith was her sole focus and she was made whole. Her example should be inspiration for us!

As we begin to further study Bible characters who travelled “outside their zone,” consider the questions we will answer:

What do I do when I think “I don’t look the part?”

What do I do when I think “I don’t have that type of personality?”

What do I do when I think “I’m not gifted in that area?”

What do I do when I think “My family doesn’t work that way?”

What do I do when I think “No one will believe me?”

What do I do when I think, “I’m at a different stage of life?”

Do any of these sound familiar?

“If we’re growing, we’re always going to be outside our comfort zone.” – John Maxwell

So: want to be “in the zone” or “outside the zone?”

Notes:

Introduction to the Study

1. What is a comfort zone? What does the term mean to you?

2. "Comfort zone": a _____ place where self-imposed boundaries define our _____ and _____. The boundaries can be _____, _____, _____, or _____.

3. The focus of this study is going outside our _____ comfort zone.

Rev. 3:16

4. The purpose of this study is to Biblically _____ the real miracle of faith God wants to provide His children when they step _____ their comfort zones and trust Him fully. Heb. 11:1; Luke 1:37

5. Each day God calls us to step out in faith and _____ pursue Him, regardless of our _____ level.

6. The woman with the issue of blood
_____ out in faith.
She didn't need to _____ Him.
She didn't need to _____ to Him.

**Complete the following outline using the title
page and chapter headings:**

Bible Characters Who Went "Outside the Zone"

1. Outside the Zone of _____: David
I Samuel 16:1-13
What to do when we think: "I _____
_____ the part."
2. Outside the Zone of _____: Moses
, Part I
Exodus 3 & 4
What to do when we think: "I don't have that
type of _____."
3. Outside the Zone of _____:
Moses, Part II
Exodus 3 & 4
What to do when we think: "I'm not
_____ in that area."

4. Outside the Zone of _____ :
Gideon
Judges 6
What to do when we think: "My family doesn't
_____ that way."

5. Outside the Zone of _____ : Noah
Genesis 6-9
What to do when we think: "No one will
_____ me."

6. Outside the Zone of _____ : Sarah
Genesis 17&18
What to do when we think: "I'm at a different
stage in _____."

"If we're _____, we're always going
to be _____ our
_____."

John Maxwell

Looking Forward

Outside the Zone of *Appearance* : *David*

[Read I Samuel 16:1-13](#)

1. Why did God send Samuel to Bethlehem?
2. What characteristics did the Lord tell Samuel specifically NOT to look for?
3. Why do you think that it is so difficult not to judge a person by their appearance?
4. Is there a particular verse in this passage that stands out to you?

As we look forward to studying David, his comfort zone, and his faith, think about the reasons Christians use their own appearance in avoiding God's instruction. Then think about the reasons Christians use the appearance of other people to avoid doing what God would have them to do.

[Read II Chronicles 19:4-9](#)

1. When Jehoshaphat set up the judges in the land, what did he tell them to be careful to do?
2. What were the three items Jehoshaphat told the judges would not be tolerated? (v. 7)
3. What were the two items he told the judges WOULD be required? (v.9)

Personalizing the Lesson:

Can you remember a time when you have not done something you felt the Lord desired because of how you look? David didn't look the part and yet God gave him the position of King.

Do you recognize the times you have judged others for their appearance and perhaps missed an opportunity to be used of God as a result?

How does our Heavenly Father see us and what is He looking for in His children?

Chapter 1: Outside the Comfort Zone of Appearance: *David, Part 1*

[I Samuel 16:1-13](#)

When men and women of the Bible allowed themselves to go outside of their comfort zones, then the Lord received the most glory. Why?

Because of the obvious evidence that only by HIM could such incredible transformation take place.

David had the lowest beginnings of just about anyone in the Bible. As a shepherd, he was considered as a servant. Yet Samuel was sent by God to anoint a king from the house of Jesse to replace Saul. Two criteria God specifically negated for Samuel's choice: *countenance* and *height*. Verse seven of this passage in I Samuel explains the reason for this:

God doesn't see as man sees; God looks on the heart.

David didn't look the part; and in fact, after all the sons of Jesse had been reviewed by Samuel, he was left asking, "Got any more kids? Cause none of these fit the bill." David was then summoned from the sheepfold.

Step one to going "Outside the Zone", that comfortable place where we create the boundaries

and limit our faith in God, is to stop forming conclusions based on the visual sense.

What you see is not always what you get.

A wonderful Christian lady I admire, Gail Hyatt, posted this picture several years ago.

Photos used by permission



This was her attempt at making a from-scratch caramel frosting that was an heirloom recipe from her husband's family. I just love her authenticity.

Here is a second picture Gail posted:



You see, the experience and taste of the cake completely outweighed its appearance.

What is God calling us to look past? To fully ignore? To make invisible?

Pointblank honesty here. Does your list of convictions include: tatoos, skin color, physical scars, emotional scars, designer labels, poverty, wealth, hairstyles, piercings... And the list could go on. Be honest; you have your list. Those things you judge yourself for or others on without thinking, without extending grace.

How do we look on the heart as God does? How do we get past the comfort zone of our own appearance? How do we get past the physical

appearance of others and peer into the heart of their souls?

By having our own hearts perfect toward the Lord.

God wants us to see as He sees; He wants us to be so close to Him that we are continually looking at hearts, lives, and souls.

He wants us to step outside the comfort zone of appearance and see ourselves and others as He sees us.

Part 2 will discuss how to practically have our heart perfect towards the Lord, but for now:

Do you struggle with the outward appearance of yourself or others to the point of making boundaries that limit your faith in God?

Are you treading water in the shallow comfort zone of appearance?

Chapter 2: Outside the Zone of Appearance: *David, Part 2*

[I Samuel 16:1-13](#)

In the first part of this lesson, we looked at verse 7 of I Samuel 16 in the context of how God wants us to step outside the comfort zone of appearance.

“...Man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart.”

How do we look on the heart as God does?

1. By staying in close communication with Him.

[I Kings 8:57-61](#) is Solomon’s praise to God before the people. The man of wisdom offers his blessing and advice to the people of Israel and in verse 59, a nugget of truth is revealed. Solomon requests that his words be near to God day and night. The more time we spend with God, the more we will see things as He sees them. Our human relationships and scheduling time with the important people in our lives is significant. However, if all the time we spend with those closest to us is scheduled, how close are we truly going to be?

The integration of constant communication and thought is what brings us closer to our loved ones and the same is true with our Heavenly Father.

Continual interaction with God is how we develop our relationship with Him.

While I'm for praying for every meal and at bedtime, if those are the only times we talk to God, how close we will become in having our heart perfect toward the Lord? An old hymn just popped in my head: *There's nothing like sweet communion, a sweet communion with Jesus...There's nothing like a sweet communion with Him.*

2. By keeping good company who will assist your focus on the Lord.

[1 Kings 11](#) begins describing Solomon and his issue of ~~loving~~ lust after women. The first three verses discuss the degree of this problem, but in summary, verse 4 explains the outcome:

As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father had been.

No big mystery, is it?

Choose your close relationships with care.

3. **By doing right.**

[In I Kings 15:1-5](#), David, the man after God's own heart, is described as being fully devoted to the Lord. We are told that he "did that which was right in the sight of the Lord." Except in one situation which was fully revealed. How do we have our hearts perfect toward the Lord, thereby having the ability to step outside of our comfort zones and take a leap of faith? We make the constant choice of proactively doing right. Doing what we KNOW to be right according to what God has revealed to us through His Word is what

Does it mean that we won't make mistakes? David made mistakes. A huge mistake. He committed adultery and then murdered a man over it. There is no scale of sin degree in God's eyes. David was still a man after God's own heart because when he did sin, his heart immediately repented.

Do right, but when you fail, not **if**, but **when**, turn immediately to the Lord again.

"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Psalm 51:10

4. **By knowing God and serving Him with a perfect heart and willing mind.**

In [I Chronicles 28:9](#), David details what having a perfect heart is all about. Essentially, this point

summarizes the practical application section of this lesson.

What steps do we physically take to get out of our comfort zones, those boundaries that hold us in lukewarm spiritual staleness? How do we have a perfect heart before the Lord? We have to willingly use our minds to choose to do the right thing. We nurture the desire to have a close relationship with the Lord.

Whether it is our own appearance or the appearance of others, God wants us to see people as He sees them. Verse seven of the above-named reference tells us:

Man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart.

In previous posts, the discussion focused on comprehending what God wants us to look past, make invisible, and ignore. From a practical application viewpoint, the last post outlined in detail the four Scriptural steps we can take to disallow our comfort zone of appearance to have the control.

Now to look past our comfort zones even further, let's view the incredible promises of security God gives to us when we take baby steps, scissor steps or whatever kind of step you take in faith!

When our hearts are perfect towards the Lord, God provides promises of security.

II Chronicles 16:9

*For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself **strong** in the behalf of them whose **heart is perfect toward him**.*

1. He is looking for us; He watches over us. What is it that He longs for us to understand? *That He wants to reveal Himself mightily in our lives!* There is such security in knowing that God has my back! He also has every other side. He desires to show us the intimacy with Him that a perfect heart will provoke.

Psalm 138:8

The Lord will perfect that which concerns me; Your mercy, O Lord, endures forever; Do not forsake the works of Your hands.

2. Having our hearts perfect toward the Lord is a piece of work. It is! David begged God in the above verse not to stop working on him. In order to have our hearts perfect with the Lord, they must continually be shaped and molded. The promise of security we have in this verse is that all those things we worry about (you know, those little details that keep us awake at night?)- those are the things God will take care of. Not only will He

provide, but it will be perfect. His own will and way in His own time.

His mercy is bigger than any worry I have yet to conceive.

Philippians 1:6

Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

3. He is faithful! He will fulfill his purpose in my life. He is not getting sidetracked when I am. He is not losing focus. He does not take sidebars. He is continually, daily, omnisciently working on keeping my heart perfect toward Him. How? By providing opportunities for me to choose Him. To choose His way. To rely on Him. To be prepared in His name.

And now, pay close attention, because this section brings me to tears every single time I discuss it:

Psalms 78:70-72

He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds: From following the ewes great with young he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance. So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skillfulness of his hands.

Look at David's life: he went from shepherd boy to king of God's holy nation. How? By a process of great detail. Look at David's experiences as a shepherd:

- ❖ Providing care for the maternity ward of the sheepfold crafted character traits of patience, gentleness, and understanding.
- ❖ Learning to play the harp to an audience of sheep, the dumbest animals on the planet, was the forerunner of serenading to sooth the soul of Saul, his predecessor to the throne.
- ❖ Killing the lion and bear was the precursor to freeing God's people from the torment of the giant Goliath.

I don't know what God has called you to do. Maybe you aren't so sure either.

But through the example of David, the Bible is clear that:

The Lord will bring you THROUGH your comfort zone to the other side when you dare to keep your heart perfect towards Him.

No matter how you appear to others...

No matter how you look at others...

The tapestry God is weaving in your life is exceedingly, abundantly above all that we can ask or think, according to the power that works in us. Ephesians 3:20

Just a tad “outside the zone”, don’t ya think?

Notes:

Outside the Zone of Appearance: *David*

I Samuel 16:1-13

When men and women of the Bible allowed themselves to go outside their comfort zones, then the Lord received the most glory. Why?

Because of the _____
that only by HIM could such incredible
_____ take place.

1. Samuel was sent by God to anoint a king to replace _____.
2. Two criteria God specifically negated:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
3. The Lord doesn’t see as _____ sees; God looks on the _____.

4. Step 1 to going “Outside the Zone”, that comfortable place where we create boundaries and limit our faith in God is:

Stop forming _____ based on the visual sense.

What you see is NOT always _____
_____.

5. What is God calling us to look past? To fully ignore? To make invisible?

6. How do we look on the heart as God does?

7. How do we get past the comfort zone of our own appearance?

8. How do we get past the physical appearance of people and peer into the heart of their souls?

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

1. Stay in _____ with the Father. I Kings 8: 57-61
2. Keep good company to _____ your _____. I Kings 11:4
3. Don't walk in _____. I Kings 15:1-5
4. Know God and serve Him with a _____ and a _____ . I Chron. 16:9

SECURITY OF PROMISES

1. The Lord shows himself _____ on behalf of those whose heart is perfect toward him. II Chron. 16:9

2. The Lord will be _____ to fulfill his purpose in me. Psalm 138:8; Phil. 1:6
3. The Lord will bring you _____ your comfort zone to the other side when your _____ is right with him. Psalm 78:70-72

“Difficulty is the very atmosphere of miracle- it is miracle in its first stage. If it’s to be a great miracle, the condition is not difficulty, but impossibility.” Streams in the Desert, Lettie B. Cowman

Looking Forward:

Outside the Zone of Appeal: *Moses*

[Read Exodus 3: 1-22](#)

1. Who appeared to Moses out of the burning bush?
2. Did Moses recognize the call of the Lord?

3. What task did God call Moses to do?

4. What was Moses's overall feeling about this task?

5. How do I respond when the task God has called me to do has no "appeal" to me?

6. Why do we think God can only use our "appealing" characteristics and circumstances?

In the next chapter we are stepping "Outside the Zone" and taking a leap of faith to overcome our spiritual tasks that have no appeal to us. We will also consider the aspect of our own character and the lack of appeal to others that we may feel that we possess.

What we view as a lack of appeal to others is the exact trait God wants to use for His glory!

Chapter 3: Outside the Zone of Appeal: *Moses,* *Part 1*

Last chapter in our study of stepping outside of our comfort zones and taking the leap of faith, we looked at Moses, beginning in Exodus 3 through 4:11. The first point regarding Moses was that somewhere between verse 3 and verse 11 of chapter 3, Moses went from “*Here am I*” to “*Who am I?*” The description of the task God chose for Moses overwhelmed him and he felt completely inadequate. But in viewing Moses for who he was, we find three identifying characteristics that should have told Moses exactly who he was.

1. Moses was the beloved son who was saved from certain death by way of an escape.

Look at the preservation of Moses’ life as a baby boy; when all other Hebrew baby boys were being killed by order of Pharaoh, Moses’ life was preserved through the little ark his mother prepared and hid in the bulrushes.

2. Moses’ story of protection alone should have given him a sense of identity.

When the princess found him in the river, she immediately had a connection with him upon hearing his little cry. Not only did God protect Him by giving the princess this compassion for him, so that Moses then had the protection of the king; but

also Jochabed, Moses' birth mother, was given the privilege of caring for baby Moses as his nurse, providing a protection from God over the potential loss of Moses' true heritage.

3. Moses' story of redemption by way of the heir to the throne should have brought an acknowledgement of a particular plan for his life.

Such irony of how Jochabed "placed her son in the river" as was the command, yet God spared his life through the heir to the throne. After all, it's not every day that you are rescued by a princess!

It seems so simple to view Moses' life and be critical of his question, "Who am I?" But he was not the only one to ask this question. In I Samuel 18:14-18, David asks this question to Saul, due to a lack of security in his called position. Call it humility or insecurity, either way, both Moses and David were re-thinking their God-given assignments at a point in their lives.

I find it so interesting that God called both of these men into training for years prior to their actual task. Both of these men were shepherds before they became the phenomenal leaders of their day. Pause a moment with me and think about this.

The following is an excerpt from Storey's Guide to Raising Sheep:

“...there are some difficulties to raising sheep. They think fences are puzzles that you’ve placed there for them to figure a way out of. Their flocking nature can sometimes make handling a challenge. Although they’re less susceptible to many diseases than other critters, they’re more troubled by parasites. They’re also vulnerable to predators....”

Seems to me that raising sheep is much like leading people. Sheep are often called the “dumbest animals on the planet” and yet, it is obvious that God used these difficult and stubborn animals to teach both David and Moses some very valuable lessons.

Many times the training ground God uses in our lives is not understood by us. We look at particular details, times, places, people and fail to observe the value in our boot camp. God’s way is not ours and when we lean to our own understanding (Prov. 3:5 & 6), we come up short of God’s ultimate blueprint for our lives.

Personally, I can attest to this. There are many circumstances in my life that I can’t comprehend, because they just aren’t the way I’d do things if I were God. I think Moses was completely in this line of thinking at the burning bush, standing in God’s Almighty presence. However...

Isaiah 55:9

His ways are not my ways, His ways are HIGHER than my ways. His thoughts are HIGHER than my thoughts.

So I ask you for now:

What thought is in your current possession that you need to surrender to the Higher One of thinking?

Chapter 4: Outside the Zone of Appeal: *Moses*

Exodus 3 and 4:1-11

In the last chapter about stepping out in faith, outside of our comfort zones, Moses was the central character. Briefly we compared Moses and David; they held the common boot camp assignment: shepherding.

A very interesting point we have yet to cover:

David was a shepherd for years, but probably about fifteen years total. He grew up herding sheep and was anointed to be king by Samuel. Five years passed from the time of David's anointing to the time he actually was on the throne of Israel. However, Moses lived his first forty years as the son of the princess; then his second forty years were his shepherding career. From these observations, we learn that God's timing is different for everyone. While similarities exist in the training field of Moses and David, God's ultimate plan of leadership for each of them held a different course. It is so easy to compare ourselves to each other and think about God's plan for someone else, how it just must be the same as His plan for us. Not the case.

When we reflect on Moses from Part 1 of this study, after asking the Lord, "Who am I?," Moses then asked "Who should I tell the people of Israel is

sending me?” God replied, “I AM.” This means the self-existent and self-sufficient One in a nutshell. Imagine what this name would mean to Moses in the future as the wandering through the wilderness drug on further and further!

So Moses is looking at a task that is completely outside his comfort zone. “Look, God, I’ve been herding sheep for forty years and well, it’s pretty comfortable. Yes, those sheep are stubborn. Yes, they are dumb. But I’m used to it and understand the issues that accompany this position.

I just hate change.”

At this point, Moses’ career switch was not very *appealing* to him.

3 Reasons Moses Gave for His Lack of Desire for the Position

1. The people won’t believe me.

Oh wow. How many of us have used this one? I’m especially convicted in relation to sharing the gospel with others.

2. The people won’t listen to me.

Yikes. Yep, used that one. Doesn’t work. Doesn’t matter if they listen or not; our job is not to do the work of the Holy

Spirit, but to do the task assigned to us by the Holy Spirit.

3. The people will say “The Lord hasn’t appeared to you.”

Can’t blame Moses for thinking this. After all, he hadn’t accomplished anything that would vouch for his walk with the Lord. Oh, killed a man and forced into being a fugitive to avoid death himself. Yep, sounds like a leader I’m just dying to follow.

But the fact is: God DID appear to Moses. The burning bush was real and God was calling Moses to lead His people out of Egypt. For each of the above excuses, God gave a miracle to Moses to perform. A tangible, physical miracle that would prove to the children of Israel and to Pharaoh that God had indeed appeared to Moses. And He is the I AM.

What is God calling me to do that is “Outside the Zone?”

Am I asking “Is this task appealing to me?”

Am I asking “Will I appeal to others?”

Satan’s tactics are old; he uses the same tricks on us that he tried to use on Moses. How do we respond? WHO AM I, as a Christian?

1. The beloved child who was saved from certain death by way of escape.
2. My story of protection alone should give me a sense of identity.
3. My story of redemption by way of the heir to the throne should bring the acknowledgment of a particular plan for my life.

Have you ever had a moment with God when you were 100% sure of His plan for you? Max Lucado's book, "Cast of Characters" is subtitled "Common People in the Hands of An Uncommon God."

Here is a short excerpt from the book:

"...I am not a great man! How can I go down to the king and lead the Israelites out of Egypt?" (Ex. 3:11)

I'm glad Moses asked that question. It's a good one. Why Moses? Or more specifically, why eighty-year-old Moses?

The forty year old version was more **appealing** (my emphasis)...

"School's out," God tells him. "Now it's time to get to work." Poor Moses. He didn't even know he was enrolled.

But he was. And guess what? So are you. The voice from the bush is the voice that whispers to you. It reminds you that God is not finished with you yet.”

Time to step: Outside the Zone. I can't wait to discuss Moses in the next chapter: “Outside the Zone of *Ability*.”

Notes:

Outside the Zone of Appeal: *Moses*

[Exodus 3 and 4:1-11](#)

Somewhere between verse 3 and verse 11, Moses' “ _____ ” changed to “ _____ .”

Who was Moses?

1. Moses was the _____ son who was saved from _____ by way of an _____.
2. Moses' story of _____ alone should have given him a sense of _____.
3. Moses' story of _____ by way of the heir to the throne should have brought

_____ of a particular plan for his life.

4. Moses was not the only Bible character to ask “ _____ _____ _____?”
5. Moses had to ask “Who is _____ me?”
Isaiah 9:6 The _____ _____.

3 Reasons Moses Gave for his Lack of Desire for the Position

1. The people will _____ _____ me.
2. The people _____ _____ to me.
3. The people say “Who is _____ me?”

God gave Moses a miracle for each excuse.

What is God calling you to do that is “Outside the Zone?”

Am I asking “Is this task _____ to me?”

Am I asking “Will I _____ to others?”

Satan’s tactics are old; he uses the same trick on us that he used on Moses. What should our response be? Who am I? Who are you?

1. The beloved _____ who was saved from certain _____ by way of escape.
2. My story of _____ alone should give me a sense of _____.
3. My story of _____ by way of the heir to the throne should bring the _____ of a _____ plan for my life.

Looking Forward:

Outside the Zone of Ability: *Moses*

[Exodus 4:10-31](#); [Hebrews 11:23-29](#)

1. What are the “new” excuses Moses uses to excuse his God-assigned task?
2. How did the Lord respond to Moses’ reasons for desiring to skip out on the job?
3. Who enters Moses’ era of leadership in this passage?
4. What are the first four words of verse 31? What are the words that contrast these in verse 1 of this same chapter?

Perhaps we know our strengths and weaknesses. Why would God call us to do something that seems so outside of our character? What does it take to move outside of our comfort zones and take the leap of faith?

Let's look closely at that very step that names Moses as an icon in the Faith Chapter of Hebrews 11.

Chapter 4: Outside the Zone of Ability: Moses, Part 2

[Exodus 4:10-31](#); [Hebrews 11:23-29](#)

As Christians, God gives us spiritual gifts and uses them uniquely. He equips each of us individually; but what do we do when the task He is calling us to do is not a part of our comfort zone? What if it seems to be completely outside our abilities or skill set? When this happens, we must have the FAITH to step out and follow His command.

In continuing to view Moses and his long list of excuses as to why he could not possibly lead the children of Israel, upon reaching chapter 4 of Exodus, we read a new list of excuses that Moses uses to decline God's assignment.

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.

Look, God:

1. "I am not eloquent. Hasn't changed since You started talking to me either. I just can't think of what I'm going to say before it starts to tumble out and run together."

2. "I am slow of speech." The Hebrew word for slow is "kated." It means "heavy." The Hebrew word for speech is "peh" meaning mouth. Most scholars believe Moses was trying to describe an actual physical deformity here. A "heavy mouth." Most likely a palate issue.
3. "I have a slow tongue." Same Hebrew word for slow: heavy. The medical condition is ankyloglossia or "tongue-tied."

Moses is trying to identify three different disabilities he possessed in relation to what God wanted to do in His life. These hang-ups were real and literal. Moses isn't telling God something He doesn't already know!

"Who created you, Moses? Who creates every person with physical, mental, or emotional deformities? I did. I love you and created you specifically this way. It is part of your purpose in life. I'm giving you the opportunity to reveal my utmost glory! But you have to agree. You have to choose to allow My will in your life."

At this point, God is angry with Moses, yet He provides again, by giving Aaron to be his spokesperson.

I love what happens between verse 1 of chapter 4 and verse 31 of chapter 4. Looking back at verse 1 of the chapter, Moses has all the reasons why he

shouldn't be the leader. The first thing he says is "they won't believe me."

How many times do we use that excuse when God gives us a task? Whether speaking to a family member about forgiveness or being kind to a stranger, our minds doubt the power of the Holy Spirit and we think, "Oh, they won't believe me."

But just look at verse 31! The first four words:

And the people believed.

Once Moses started the journey to meet Aaron, once the sin was removed from his life, once he gave God the control, then

the people believed.

Just what God wants to do in your life: show others the way to believe.

Chapter 5: Outside the Zone of Ability: *Moses*

[Exodus 4:10-31; Hebrews 11:23-29](#)

How to Take the Leap of Faith,

One Baby Step at a Time....(Hey you can take scissor steps, giant steps, whatever steps you want, but just take a step!) Here we go:

1. Refuse to be a part of the world.

What does that mean? Verse 24 tells us that Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He was IN the world, but didn't think as the world. He chose his friends carefully. He loved Pharaoh's daughter for saving him and having him cared for, but chose not to be a part of her daily life on an intimate level.

2. Remember that sin only lasts for a short time.

There are always consequences. My hang-ups may seem to be the easy way out for a while, but they catch up with me. Moses chose the path of affliction with the people of God over the luxury of sin for a short time. Both paths were temporary, but only one yielded eternal heavenly rewards. If only we could remember this!

If we continually make the daily choice not to spend time in prayer and Bible reading, then we

are choosing to miss out on a close personal relationship with our Heavenly Father.

3. Weigh what matters and place your heart there.

Verse 26 says: “Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.” Moses knew where the gain would be. He looked at the eternal; not the temporal. “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” Matt. 6:21

4. Do not be afraid; claim God’s promises.

Verse 27 tells us that Moses was not afraid of Pharaoh because he kept his eyes on Christ. Fear paralyzes us. On every level. The best way I know to combat fear is through the Word. Another great resource on this topic is Max Lucado’s book, [Fearless](#). This link provides free download samples of his material and encourages us to think:

“Envision a day, just one day, when you could trust more and fear less.”

5. After discarding the ways of the world, don’t look back.

Verse 27 tells us that Moses forsook Egypt. He followed God and never looked back. Oh, he

sinned. He wasn't perfect. But he never turned around and starting going the direction of Egypt full force.

6. Be faithful to God's calling on your life.

Verse 28 tells us that Moses kept the passover. He followed instructions to the detail. He was faithful to follow through with the responsibilities God gave to him as he was shown the way. Maybe you feel like you should be doing something else. That you are just waiting for God to show you the right path. That proper connection just hasn't happened yet. What do you do in the mean time? What you know is right. What is revealed to you each day as it occurs. You make one correct decision after another as the opportunity presents itself.

Psalm 37:4-7

Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this: He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun. Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him;

Whatever avenue God uses to reveal Himself to you, be faithful to Him in that direction.

We can follow the path of Moses to the Hall of Faith or ...we can continue in mediocrity and wallow in fear.

So which will it be? Faith or fear?

Notes:

Outside the Zone of Ability: *Moses*

Exodus 4:10-31; Hebrews 11:23-29

1. God gives us _____
_____ and uses them uniquely. (I Cor. 12)
2. When God calls us to do something for which we are not gifted, we must have the _____ to step out and follow His command.

Moses' 3 "New" Excuses for Declining God's Assignment

1. He was _____. The Hebrew word for "eloquent" is _____. In other words, he was not good with words.
2. He was _____. The Hebrew word for "slow" is _____. The Hebrew

word for “speech” is _____, meaning
_____. Most scholars believe that
this was a _____ issue.

3. He had a _____.
Same Hebrew word for slow-
_____. Possibly what we would
call today “_____.”
4. The Lord’s wrath is _____ against
Moses, yet he provides again, this time by
giving _____ to be his spokesperson.
5. After all was said and done, the last verse in
Chapter 4 tells us:

And the _____
_____.

Practical Steps In Taking the Leap of Faith, Patterned after Moses (Heb. 11:23-29)

1. Refuse to be a _____ of the
world. v. 24
2. Remember that the
_____ of sin only lasts for
a short time. v. 25

3. Weigh what matters _____ and place your _____ there.
v.26
4. Do not be _____; claim God's promises. v.27
5. After discarding the _____ of the world, don't look back.v.27
6. Be _____ to God's calling in your life.v.28

Looking Forward:

Outside the Zone of Ancestry: *Gideon*

[Judges 6](#)

Read Judges 6 and ask yourself:

1. What was the status of the children of Israel?
2. What was the status of Gideon within the community?
3. How did he initially respond to God's calling on his life?

4. How many questions did Gideon ask in his interview with God?

5. How many questions do I ask God before I adhere to His will?

Next we will be looking at how to step outside our family background- our ancestry.

Overcoming personality or character traits passed down through generations is difficult at best, horrendous at worst.

How can we begin to overcome the strongholds and step "Outside the Zone" of Ancestry?

Chapter 5: Outside the Zone of Ancestry: *Gideon*

[Judges 6-8](#)

Stepping outside our comfort zones as Christians so often requires a leap of faith in the direction of forgiving and forgetting ancestry. You know what I'm talking about? Maybe for you it is some fleshly desire that was a result of your family environment. Maybe it is something your relative did to you years ago and you can't let it go. Perhaps you just simply grew up on what you felt was the wrong side of the tracks. Regardless of what it is, as humans, our tendency is to use the "defect" as a reason for other decisions we make. And that is exactly what happened to Gideon.

The background of Gideon's story is the story of the children of Israel. They just didn't learn their lesson and we find them once again disobeying God's laws and turning to idols. As a result, they are living in utter poverty and held completely at bay by the Midianite people. Even their crops have to be hidden in an effort to have some minuscule amount of food. This is where we find Gideon, hiding by the winepress, threshing the grain. Not on the threshing floor... that would have been too obvious. In an unexpected subtle place where no one would be looking for food.

The Bible tells us God showed up here to give Gideon some encouragement. “The Lord is with you, thou mighty man of valour.” I just love this. Not only was God telling Gideon that He was with him, but he was also telling him just what Gideon was as a result of that.

The word “valor” in the Hebrew is the word “chayil.” This word requires five English words to explain its value.

Strength.

Height.

Efficiency.

Wealth.

Army.

God was telling Gideon that he was equipped for what God had called him to do. The Lord had given him strength. He had made him physically appropriate for the job. He created Gideon with an efficient mind. He possessed a wealth that was beyond his knowledge. He was trained and ready for battle. In one sentence, God is telling Gideon all this. Incredible!

For a minute, please think with me about Gideon's status at this time...What was Gideon doing? Where was he at? How did he feel?

Let me propose that he was first:

1. **Alone.** Gideon was away from distractions. He was hiding from the Midianites and was most likely away from other people.

2. **Active.** He was working at threshing the wheat in an attempt to feed his family. He didn't just sit around and give up; he did what he knew to do.

3. **Anxious.** The fact that he was threshing by the wine floor and not on the threshing floor explains that he was under pressing circumstances.

All of us as Christians have the desire to be close to the Lord. We have different levels of that desire, but the more we obey His Word and pursue our relationship with Him, the deeper the desire becomes. How do we feed that desire? By placing ourselves in situations where we are completely available to Him. Typically that means we should be:

1. **Alone.** Want to grow a relationship? Spend intimate, isolated time with God and what happens? Growth.

2. **Active.** While we wait on the Lord to show us the path we anticipate, we should be doing what we KNOW to do. If God gave you a family, provide and care for them. Be involved faithfully in your local body of believers. Live your life in the community in a manner pleasing to Him.

3. **Anxious.** Wow. “Be anxious for nothing- Phil. 4:6.” The first place to turn in our worry should be prayer: “Let your requests be made known to God- Phil. 4:7.”

Ancestry is not just your heritage of tangible means. I’m talking about...well, the family baggage. The “business” that everyone hopes stays closed. The dirty laundry that the entire family hopes never gets aired. Maybe nothing heavy, just a simple unforgiven misconception. Whatever it is, if you’re human, you have some form of *ancestry*.

So we’re at the point in our study where Gideon has been informed by God that he is the chosen one to deliver Israel from their current state of encompassing fear of the Midianites. And Gideon’s response to this call from God?

“Say what?”

Well, that’s the RCV (Rachel’s country version), but essentially, Gideon is thinking, “Are you sure, God? Because do you know who I am?” Funny

that he should be asking the “I AM” if He knows who Gideon is.

[Judges 6:13](#)

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.

Gideon had key questions he had been storing up for God:

- a. If God is with us, then why is this happening?*
- b. Where are the miracles our forefathers saw?*
- c. How am I going to deliver Israel?*

At that point, Gideon unloads the family baggage:

After all, my family is poor in Manasseh and I am the least in my father's house.

If you take a look back at the original tribes of Israel, Manasseh was not one of Jacob's sons. Manasseh was the son of Joseph. With Joseph being second to the last in his family, Manasseh was almost the lowest on the totem pole of generational position. Then, Gideon is saying, “Not only is Manasseh at the bottom of the tribes, but good grief, my family has

nothing. We're poor. That's why I'm trying to scrape a little flour together here. And if that were not enough, I'm the youngest in my father's house. You can't get any lower than I am!" (You can study this further in [Genesis 48:20](#) and [Joshua 17:2](#).)

But Gideon was exactly where God wanted him to be.

God doesn't care about our position of ancestral heritage; He wants to know our position of obedience.

Make note of Gideon's expectation of deliverance, to come in the same manner that his forefathers saw it, we'll come back to it shortly.

Gideon was commissioned to go and he requests a sign. When the sign is given, he is overcome with fear and thinks he is going to die. Ultimately, though, he receives the deliverance he was seeking. God delivers the miracle of *peace*, both to Gideon (Judges 6:23) and to the children of Israel (Judges 8:28.)

The depth of these three chapters on Gideon's life seem inexhaustible and we've barely skimmed the surface. However, looking back on his life, what can we learn to assist us in stepping outside the comfort zone of our ancestry?

Gideon posed three questions that all of us today still use:

a. If God ..., then why...?

b. Where's the miracle when I need it? (Where's God?)

c. How am I...?

You can fill in the blanks.

Your situation. Your circumstances. Your divorce. Your disease. Your disaster. But the truth is:

When God says go, then we go. We stop making excuses and start making time.

My friend, Heather, was at a conference years ago and graciously included me by texting key statements from the speakers. One of them was:

Slow obedience is no obedience.

In regards to Gideon's expectation of seeing God work in his generation in the same way that He had worked in his forefathers' lives, suffice it to say that God does not work in the parameters of our boxes. He knows no limits.

He is...

Outside the Zone.

Notes:

Outside the Zone of Ancestry: *Gideon*

Judges 6-8

1. What we think is a _____ may be _____.
2. Regardless of whether trial or chastisement, our _____ should be to turn to the Lord. (NOT 7 years later.)

Enter Gideon

3. When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he said:

- a. The _____ is with you.
- b. Thou _____ man of valor.
Valor: Hebrew word "*chayil*"

4. Gideon's status at the time of the Lord's call was:

- a. _____: away from distractions
- b. _____: working for the Lord
- c. _____: by the winepress, not on the threshing floor

6. Gideon's response: _____
_____? (RCV)

7. Gideon's questions:

- a. If _____ (where is God when I need Him?)
- b. Then _____?
- c. How am I going to _____
_____?

After all, "My family is _____ in Manasseh, and I am the _____ in my father's house."

[Genesis 48:20](#); [Joshua 17:2](#)

d. Where are the _____ our
_____ saw?

8. Gideon was expecting _____ to
come in the same manner that his
_____ saw it.

**“God doesn’t _____ in our
_____.”**

9. Gideon’s commission: _____ in this
thy might. Our translation: Phil. 4:13
10. Gideon requested a _____
when it was given he was _____
with _____.

Ultimately:

11. God delivers the miracle: _____
both to _____ (Judges 8:23)
and to the _____ of Israel
(Judges 8:28)

[Phil. 4:7](#)

Looking Forward:

Outside the Zone of Adversity: *Noah*

[Genesis 6-9:19](#)

We've discussed going outside our comfort zones for quite some time at this point. Taking a leap of faith and doing what God has called us to do, regardless of how we feel about it. Regardless of our mind being able to wrap around it.

In this chapter, we are going to discuss stepping outside the zone of *adversity*. In other words, how did Noah handle the pressure of being a pioneer and forerunner in his time?

Study our reference and ask yourself:

1. What kind of world was Noah living in?
2. How evil was the world at the point God chose to deliver the flood?
3. What was the reason "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord?"
4. Try to name three different adversities that Noah faced in his assigned task.

Chapter 6: Outside the Zone of Adversity: *Noah*

[Genesis 6:1-9:19](#)

I'm going to ask you to think a bit about something before you dig into this lesson. Would you take just a moment and think about the word "adversity?" When you see that word, what do you immediately think of? Is it a physical problem? A worry? A fear? A circumstance? Write it down somewhere... and we'll return to it.

At the time God chose to issue the flood, the world was in the worst position that it had ever been. Attempt to imagine this phrase:

Every thought was only evil continually.

Sounds familiar! Can we begin to grasp the environment in which Noah was living?

But:

Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. (Genesis 6:8)

I love this verse! A huge "but" right in the middle of a horrid descriptive state of the earth and its inhabitants.

Verse 9 further explains why he found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Three reasons outlined:

1. He was just; meaning righteous in conduct and character.
2. He was perfect in his generations: meaning completely true to his beliefs in the period in which he lived.
3. He walked with God. This word “walked” means “traversed.” His every move was with the Lord. He traveled with Him everywhere he went.

And in spite of all the adversity, Noah “did everything according to all that God commanded him.”

Can you imagine how difficult that was? Not one person was doing right except for him. The entire known world was doing evil against God, except for the one lone ranger, Noah.

Yet when Noah woke up, God was with him. And he was with God.

When Noah went to work, God was with him. And he was with God.

When Noah went to sleep, God was with him. And he was with God.

When Noah shopped for groceries, God was with him. And he was with God.

I think we can see that the word “traversing” means **constant**.

He didn’t go anywhere that he would be embarrassed for God to be with him.

He didn’t do anything that he would be embarrassed for God to see.

We will come back to “adversity” in the next part... but for now:

Think about your walk with God.

Can you fill in the blank with your name?

But _____ found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

Moving over to the book of Hebrews, we find Noah’s task ahead outlined in a unique fashion. Verse seven of the Faith chapter tells us:

By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

Such depth in one verse! Noah's task was three things:

1. Specific.

Noah received detailed instructions from God in Genesis 6 about constructing the ark. After all, a boat had never been built before. Ever. There was no one for Noah to go to for advice except God. I read an interesting quote by an unknown author regarding this and thought I would share it with you:

Never be afraid to try. Remember, amateurs built the ark. Professionals built the Titanic.

Genesis 6 uses eight verses to explain God's command to Noah. Then I love what the Bible says at the end of the chapter. "And Noah did all that God commanded him." What a task; what an obedience!

2. Sacrificial.

There was a lot of time involved in Noah's assignment. A lot. In fact, 120 years. Can you imagine? The ridicule. The laughter. The puzzlement. The finger pointing. For all those years Because Noah invested time and energy, this meant he invested his life.

Take a moment and think about where your time and energy is being invested. Why? Because that is where your **life** is being invested.

3. **Synergistic.**

Noah's job took teamwork! He didn't do it completely alone; his family believed him and as a result, they were saved from the flood. The lesson here is to surround yourself with those who have a vision for your vision. God brings people in your life for support of your ministry, whatever it is. Embrace them and love them. Thank God for them!

So what really was Noah's adversity? If we examine the passages, we find three obstacles:

- Others had no vision for Noah's task.
- Such a chore had never been endeavored.
- The end goal required a phenomenal amount of both faith and work.

When your vision is not a part of what others are seeing, the task becomes doubly difficult. When God has called you to do something that has never been accomplished, your faith has to be bigger than your logic. And while your faith requires strength, the work of your hands must support that faith.

[MadChristian.com had this](#) to say about the topic:

As Christians, if we are to have a more complete faith, (we) must learn to have joy “even though” adversity strikes to the ground. This does not mean that we should not feel sorrow at the loss of a loved one, a reversal of financial stability, or illness. But it does mean that when these things face us, we must not let the darkness of them crowd out the light of the God of our salvation. We should maintain our joy in spite of life’s difficulties, because they refine our characters.

Dr. Bill Bright uses [this analogy](#) to help us comprehend **why Christians face adversity...why they endure suffering...**

God uses suffering to produce...**TRIUMPH**

Training in obedience

Refinement of your character

Intimacy with your compassionate God and Savior

Understanding of the hurts of others

Maturity for ministering to others

Perseverance in difficult times

Hope for the future

So I end this lesson on adversity with that last key word.

Hope.

II Peter 2:4-9 offers God's history of faithfulness to His people.

The NIV gives such conclusion to our question of suffering:

*For **if** God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment ;**if** he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others; **if** he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; and **if** he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men(for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)-**if** this is so, **then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.***

The essence of this lesson?

Think back to that word “adversity.” What did you write down?

Whatever it is:

If God delivered Noah from his adversity, then He will do the same for you.

Notes:

Outside the Zone of Adversity: *Noah*

Genesis 6:1-9:19

12. At the time God chose to issue a flood, the _____ was in the worst position it had ever been. Every _____ was only evil _____.

13. The reasons Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord:

a. He was just : meaning _____ in _____ and _____.

b. He was perfect in his generations: meaning _____ in the period in which he lived.

- c. He walked with God: meaning _____ with God. His every move was with the Lord.

14. In spite of all the adversity, Noah did everything “ _____

_____.”

Hebrews 11:7

15. Noah’s task:

- a. _____
b. _____
c. _____

16. Noah’s Adversity:

Obstacle #1: Others had no _____
for Noah’s task.

Obstacle #2: Such a chore had never been
_____.

Obstacle #3: The end goal required a
phenomenal amount of both _____
and _____.

II Peter 2:5-9

If God delivered Noah from his _____,

He will do the _____.

Looking Forward: Outside the Zone of Age: Sarah

Genesis 17:15-19

Genesis 18:6-15

Genesis 21:1-8

Hebrews 11:8-12

In this chapter, we have several passages that mention Sarah and this topic of her age. God's plan for her life was quite unusual as she brought into the world a son promised for almost an entire generation.

1. What was God's covenant to Abraham in relation to Sarah's part of the task?
2. What does Sarah say that God made her do?
3. What are the true reasons as to why Sarah thought the idea of being pregnant at her age was completely preposterous?

4. What is your favorite phrase in Hebrews 11 regarding Sarah?

Chapter 7: Outside the Zone of Age: Sarah

Various Scriptures

In preparing your train of thought for this lesson, think about your answers to the following questions.

What role does age play in our society?

Do I ever act judgmental because of a person's age?

How does God view the topic of age?

Is there something I believe I should be doing for the Lord, but perhaps am waiting until I feel "mature" enough?

Is there something that I'm waiting on God to do in my life and I'm just plain ol' sick and tired of the wait? My faith is waning and I have accepted that perhaps it is just not going to happen.

The first passage we read is [Genesis 17:1-2 and 15-22](#). God chose Abraham and promised to multiply him exceedingly. We are not talking addition here! We're talking multiplication! Exceedingly! So Abraham and his wife, Sarah, were promised a wonderful heritage. Children and grandchildren that numbered above the stars in heaven.

Only a little itty bitty problem: they were old. Past child-bearing years. We visit the next chapter of Genesis, [chapter 18:6-15](#), and we discover Sarah's response to this covenant promise of God. What was her response? She laughed! I think it is so easy to judge Sarah for this laughter...we think of her sarcasm. Her boldness at disbelieving God's covenant. But just think about why she was laughing...she laughed because of her AGE. Her physical body was not conducive to God's plan, in her thinking.

The conception of a child was preposterous at best, but the actual physical birth of the child was virtually impossible.

Consider the physical attributes of the current state of Sarah's body.

- Estrogen Deficiency
- Mood Disturbance
- Breast Atrophy
- Osteoporosis
- Slow Digestive System
- Overactive Urinary System
- Aged Respiratory System
- Strained Cardiovascular System

Verse 11 of Genesis 18 spells out very clearly that Abraham and Sarah were "well stricken in age." Another interpretation of this verse might say that they were like well-worn garments. A little

thin...perhaps a few strings were hanging at the hems...the color faded. This is the description of Sarah at this time... and she's going to have a baby?!

The key phrase in this passage, verse 15:

Is anything too hard for the Lord?

Truthfully, we know the answer, but do we believe it? Do we have the faith to step out of our comfort zone...whether it is appearance, appeal, ability, ancestry, adversity, or age... and believe that HE IS?

Luke 1:37

For nothing shall be impossible with God.

Is anything too hard for the Lord?

And while we immediately think, "Well, no. Nothing is too hard for God," our actions tend to show otherwise.

At this point, we should look at that verse once more.

Genesis 18:14

Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.

Much of our “lack of faith” is truthfully just impatience. We hate waiting. I hate waiting. We live in a world of instant everything. Pudding, mashed potatoes, milk. We drive through for all kinds of items available at our every whim. Milkshakes, burgers, coffee, breakfast. Yet the worst part about a drive-thru window? The wait. And THAT was difficult for Abraham and Sarah. They had been waiting for years! But the key words after the question in the above verse:

At the appointed time.

When Isaac arrived, he brought immeasurable joy! Because of the wait, Sarah and Abraham received their covenant son with more than average happiness. The meaning of Isaac’s very name is “he is laughter.” Sarah’s desire was that her child would be a living example of God’s grace, mercy and JOY. Sarah said, “God has brought me laughter.”

So how do we step outside our comfort zones and take the leap of faith, as Sarah did? Maybe you are thinking...

“Wait a minute. Sarah laughed at God’s announcement. She didn’t have faith. She thought it hysterical.”

But Sarah’s sarcastic laughter was transformed into joyous laughter. Amazement at God’s miracle performed in her life.

I truly believe the New Testament reveals just how much of a miracle God did in Sarah’s life. Read these verses; they make me want to shout!

Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, [so many] as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable. Hebrews 11:11&12

Say what? Sarah is in the Great Hall of Faith? Yep. The "Famed Faith Chapter" lists Sarah individually and personally. Her sarcastic laughter forgiven and her faith in the God of the impossible is publicized. Personally, I think God is the One who might have had a good laugh. “Look at the ol’ girl! Not only did I transform her body to give it the capability to give life; I transformed her heart into trusting me completely.”

Because she judged him faithful who had promised.

What a legacy of faith we have in Sarah....and Noah...and Gideon...and Moses...and David. Those who stepped “outside the zone” and took God at His Word.

Lord Jesus:

I praise You for Your Word that is everlasting. Thank you for the opportunity to hold it in my hand freely, study it and let it be my guide. I pray you will use this study in the lives’ of those who read these printed words...that they would see You as the Faithful One.

In Your Name,

Amen.

For with God, nothing shall be impossible.

Notes:

Outside the Zone of Age: Sarah

Think about it:

What role does age play in our society? Do I ever act judgmental because of a person’s age? How does God view the topic of age?

Genesis 17:1-2;15-22

1. God chose to bless Abraham and promised to _____ him _____.
2. This promise was a _____; meaning an _____ or _____.

Genesis 18:6-15

3. Sarah laughed because of her _____. Her physical body was not _____ to God's plan, in her thinking.
4. The _____ of the child was _____ at best, but the actual _____ birth of the child was virtually _____.

Attributes to Consider:

Streams in the Desert- Lettie B. Cowman

Difficulty is the very atmosphere of a _____ - it is _____ in its first stage. If it's to be a great _____, the condition is not difficulty, but _____.

5. Key phrase: Is _____ too hard for the Lord?

Genesis 21:1-8

6. The meaning of the name "Isaac" is _____
_____.

Sarah's desire was that her child would a
_____ of God's
grace, mercy, and JOY.

7. Sarah's _____ laughter was
turned into _____ laughter.

Hebrews 11:8-12

8. The great Hall of Faith lists Sarah
_____; her sarcastic laughter
forgiven and her _____ in the God of
the impossible is _____.

Bonus Section:

A Real “Outside the Zone” Story...

Not so long ago but quite far away, there lived a couple in the state of Washington.

“Oh,” you say, “That’s not too far.”

But it was to them.

Because God was moving them to the land of central Ohio.

Not to say it didn’t have its perks. Having work is a good thing in light of the economy for the past few years. But being separated from each other for more than a year, selling a house, one of the two having double hip replacements, and having a son get married during that time...a bit overwhelming.

Just a bit!

You might say that they were “outside their comfort zone.”

However, this particular couple love God and sought His will. And so they endured the difficult period and were faithful to church and obedient to the Lord’s calling.

The wife of this team was determined to be in the Word and upon the opportunity to connect with other women and study the Bible, she sent an email requesting a phone call in order to ask a few questions about the type of study being offered. Then, having never met anyone at that particular study, she knocked on the door and introduced herself bravely.

After a week or so, this awesome lady was asked at the Bible study if she works, and where. She replied that she is a sonographer for Children's Hospital. She is one of nine who performs the scans for the children's hearts in the outpatient clinic in downtown Columbus. What an intense job!

My sweet daughter, Taylor, had been experiencing some symptoms that we just weren't excited about. The doctor indicated that we should set up an appointment and so we did.

As we entered our appointment and after the EKG testing, when it came time for the echocardiogram, Paula entered the room.

Why was that so miraculous?

- Last summer, God began a work in my heart to offer another summer Bible study from my home.
- Around that same time, from the distant Washington state, God was leading Randy and Paula to central Ohio.
- Upon the prompting of the Holy Spirit, it was MY door that Paula knocked on that first week of study.
- Of all the places in the world, Paula works in the Cardiology Clinic at Children's Hospital in Columbus, OH.
- Out of nine sonographers who rotate patients, our test slot was assigned to her.

Someone I knew.

Someone I knew that loves the Lord.

Someone I knew that already understood my prayer concerns for Taylor.

Someone I knew that was obedient to the Lord's will.

Many thanks to Paula and Randy, for their obedience in taking the leap of faith, and stepping... Outside the Zone.

If you have an "Outside the Zone" story, I'd love to share it if you'll share it with me. It could be either a story of someone you know who stepped outside their comfort zone and took a leap of faith or a story of your own steps. Just email Rachel@rachelwojo.com and specify whether you're sharing the story with me only or you'd like for me to share it.



About the Author:

Rachel Wojnarowski is a wife, mom to 7, blogger and piano teacher. She and her husband, Matt, enjoy caring for their busy family, whose ages span 22 months to 21 years and includes a special needs

daughter. Rachel leads community ladies' Bible studies in central Ohio and serves as an event planner and speaker. In her "free time" she crochets, knits, and sews handmade clothing. Ok, not really. She enjoys running and she's a tech geek at heart. Reader, writer, speaker and dreamer, you can find Rachel on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Pinterest](#), and of course, [RachelWojo.com](#).