

1. Trust.
 - a. Hebrew has several meanings for this word.
 - i. To feel secure, to trust.
 - ii. To be confident.
 - iii. Unsuspecting.
 - iv. To cause to rely on someone.
 - v. To inspire confidence.¹
 - b. The Greek has even more definitions.
 - i. To persuade.
 - ii. To be assured.
 - iii. To obey.²
 - iv. And many more.
 - c. Merriam-Webster's definition.
 - i. From Middle English, probably of Scandinavian origin; akin to Old Norse *traust* trust; akin to Old English *treowe* faithful.
 - ii. Assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something.
 - iii. One in which confidence is placed.³
 - d. Maybe if we combine hope and faith, we come up with trust and loyalty?
 - e. In our text, Jesus offers us His yoke (eternal salvation); do we trust him enough to take it?
2. Doubt.
 - a. Gideon, a mighty man of valor.
 - i. Judges 6:11–12: “Now the angel of the Lord came and sat under the terebinth at Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the winepress to hide it from the Midianites. And the angel of the Lord appeared to him and said to him, “The Lord is with you, O mighty man of valor.”
 - ii. The LORD saw something in Gideon that is not evident to us; he is hiding from the Midianites; how can he be a “man of valor?”
 - iii. Judges 6:13–14: “And Gideon said to him, “Please, my lord, if the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all his wonderful deeds that our fathers recounted to us, saying, ‘Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?’ But now the Lord has forsaken us and given us into the hand of Midian.” And the Lord turned to him and said, “Go in this might of yours and save Israel from the hand of Midian; do not I send you?”
 - iv. Notice the words the LORD uses, “Go in this might of yours.”
 - v. Gideon is hiding in the winepress threshing wheat; what ‘might’ does he have?
 - vi. The LORD assures Gideon that He will be with him in verse 16.
 - vii. Gideon asks for a sign and then prepares an offering for the LORD.
 - viii. We don't read that God granted any sign for Gideon

¹ Koehler, Ludwig, Walter Baumgartner, M. E. J. Richardson, and Johann Jakob Stamm. The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994–2000.

² Thomas, Robert L. New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries : Updated Edition. Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc., 1998

³ Merriam-Webster, Inc. Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary. Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2003.

- ix. After tearing down an altar to Baal and facing the people, Gideon harbors doubts and asks for another sign.
 - 1. The first time, Gideon asks that the ground be dry and the fleece full of dew, and it is.
 - 2. The second time, Gideon asks that the ground have dew, but the fleece be dry, and it is.
 - x. Gideon gets set up against the enemy, and God does something that most generals would never do.
 - 1. Judges 7:1–3: “Then Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) and all the people who were with him rose early and encamped beside the spring of Harod. And the camp of Midian was north of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley. The Lord said to Gideon, “The people with you are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hand, lest Israel boast over me, saying, ‘My own hand has saved me.’ Now therefore proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, ‘Whoever is fearful and trembling, let him return home and hurry away from Mount Gilead.’ ” Then 22,000 of the people returned, and 10,000 remained.”
 - 2. Gideon starts with 32,000 warriors and loses 22,000 to fear.
 - 3. Judges 7:4–6: “And the Lord said to Gideon, “The people are still too many. Take them down to the water, and I will test them for you there, and anyone of whom I say to you, ‘This one shall go with you,’ shall go with you, and anyone of whom I say to you, ‘This one shall not go with you,’ shall not go.” So he brought the people down to the water. And the Lord said to Gideon, “Every one who laps the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set by himself. Likewise, every one who kneels down to drink.” And the number of those who lapped, putting their hands to their mouths, was 300 men, but all the rest of the people knelt down to drink water.”
 - 4. At this point, there is a group with 300 men and a group with 9700 men. Which group is Gideon counting on?
 - 5. Judges 7:5: “So he brought the people down to the water. And the Lord said to Gideon, “Every one who laps the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set by himself. Likewise, every one who kneels down to drink.”
 - 6. Gideon starts with 32,000 men and ends with 300. That is quite a difference in numbers.
 - xi. We know the rest of the Story, Gideon is successful.
 - xii. I want you to imagine that you are Gideon with only 300 people and facing 135,000 enemy soldiers (Judges 8:10).
 - xiii. Would you want the entire 32,000 for your army?
 - b. In the face of doubt, the implicit trust that Gideon had to have is amazing, all because of a wet and a dry fleece.
3. Fear.
- a. Paul begins his 2nd letter to the church in Corinth, talking about comfort from God.
 - b. Paul relayed his fear when something happened to him and his companions in Asia.
 - i. 2 Corinthians 1:8–9: “For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the

sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead.”

- ii. The Bible Sense Lexicon says despair is to fall apart, to lose one’s emotional or mental composure, to break down, implying both anxiety and fear.
 - iii. I have never been close to death.
 - 1. My only experience with even thinking about dying is my second ablation.
 - 2. As the nurse wheeled me back to the operating room, I remember thinking, “I can’t be here; something is going to happen, and I am going to die.”
 - 3. All I could think about was leaving my wife and kids without a husband or father.
 - 4. It took some praying to calm me down (I guess the operating room wasn’t ready, and they put me next to a window looking out in some kind of courtyard for about 20 minutes).
 - iv. I cannot even begin to imagine what Paul and his companions must have been going through.
 - 1. We can read some of the things Paul so calmly writes about later in the book.
 - 2. 2 Corinthians 11:23–28: “Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one—I am talking like a madman—with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches.”
 - 3. With all these things that Paul experienced in 2 Corinthians 11, something happened in Asia that made him despair of life.
 - 4. He felt he was already dead.
 - c. Paul tells us that this happened so he would more fully rely on God (really! Paul! Did we not just read all the hardships he experienced?).
4. Trust
- a. Gideon and Paul trusted God in some very tough situations.
 - b. Do we trust God?
 - i. We have all been put in situations that will either grow or shrink our trust.
 - 1. When loved ones die (either unexpectedly or after a long, hard-fought battle with illness).
 - a. I know several people who have reacted completely differently to the loss of loved ones.
 - b. Some grew their faith (trust), some lost their faith (trust), and some changed their faith (trust).
 - 2. Unemployment.
 - a. How are we going to survive?
 - b. How are we going to eat?
 - 3. There are so many more examples.
 - ii. How do we respond to these situations?

1. Do we trust God and His promises?
 2. Matthew 6 promises to give us everything we need if we only seek out God.
 3. Matthew 6:33: “But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”
 4. Romans 8 promises that all our suffering makes us better.
 5. Romans 8:28: “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.”
 6. It is not easy to trust God with our very lives.
- c. We know that God keeps His promises.
- i. We just look at the death of Jesus.
 - ii. We look at the promise of eternity with Him for all those who trust Him.
- d. Jesus offers us His yoke; do we trust Him?