

### **Gideon: Part 2 — Lessons Before Battle**

God had great lessons to teach Gideon about himself and his God. Would Gideon rise to the challenge and let his knowledge of God be matured, or would he settle for the life and relationship he currently had with God? For it was only after Gideon learned these lessons that he could be victorious in his calling.

Stop and Pray - Prepare me for battle, Lord, by showing me Your character and all that You want to do on my behalf in my life.

1. Is there a task or challenge that God has placed in front of you that feels too scary or too enormous to even begin? What is it and what about it hinders you from starting?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. As a review, what lessons did Gideon learn in his own backyard that could have prepared him to be victorious against Midian (Judges 6:25-31)?

Read Judges 6:33-40 – Fleece. Mark your text, found on page 6 of this lesson, as instructed.

*Note:* When the enemy arrived, “*the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon*” (Judges 6:34). In the Hebrew, this literally means the Spirit was put on Gideon “*like a garment,*” thus imparting warlike energy and executive and administrative power to him.

3.
  - a. After the Midianites showed up, what happened in 6:34-35? (Notice what was done and who comes.)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. In your opinion, should the response to Gideon’s call have been enough confirmation for him to know it was time to “*Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian’s hand*” (Judges 6:14)? Why or why not?

- c. How did he respond?

Let's think for a moment about what Gideon was trying to accomplish through the fleece.

- 4. a. Was Gideon trying to find out the will of God? \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Was Gideon asking for any new information? \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Gideon already knew what God expected of him, therefore, in your opinion what was Gideon using the fleece to accomplish?
- d. What if God had not acted upon the fleece? Do you think Gideon's call would have been nullified, if God did not re-confirm His will through the fleece?

Thoughts on using a fleece: "God, if You do \_\_\_\_\_, I will know You want me to do \_\_\_\_\_." When the components of using a fleece are orchestrated and interpreted by man and not God, basing our lives on the outcome seems shaky. However, God met Gideon in his limited experiential knowledge of Himself and ministered to his fear once again. As our knowledge of God and His Word increases, God may not answer a fleece of our own creation, but will rather lead us more and more through His Word.

Gideon put out a fleece and since then, many have followed suit. But if putting out a fleece is not God's ideal method of determining His will, what is? Let's look at what Scripture has to say about the will of God.

- 5. What do the following verses say about each aspect of His will? It is God's will and desire that we be:

Saved - John 6:40; I Timothy 2:3-4

Spirit Filled/Walk by the Spirit - Galatians 5:25

Sanctified - I Thessalonians 4:3-7

Submissive - I Peter 2:13-15; Ephesians 5:21

Suffer/willing to suffer for Christ's sake - I Peter 3:17; I Peter 4:19

Satisfied/thankful - I Thessalonians 5:16-18

6. From Romans 12:1-2, fill in the rest of this statement: I will *know* God's will when I....

*Verses of encouragement: "Commit your way to the LORD; trust in Him and He will do this:...If the LORD delights in a man's way, He makes his steps firm; though he stumble, he will not fall, for the LORD upholds him with His hand." (Psalm 37:5, 23-24) "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight." (Proverbs 3:5-6)*

7. Summarize what you learned about God's will and how we can know it.

Pause: Take a moment in prayer to respond to God, concerning the truths you've just read.

Read Judges 7:1-8 – You are too many. Mark the text on pages 6 and 7.

OK God, you said Gideon would win...isn't it time to fight? Not yet. God had another lesson for Gideon to learn. Yes, Gideon would win, but not in the way he was thinking. God needed to redirect his focus.

8. The odds of Israel versus Midian were 32,000:135,000 (Judges 7:3; 8:10). With these odds in mind, what did God say He needed to do and why?

9. When God sent home “the fearful” (Deuteronomy 20:8) and implemented the “lap test”, what was the result and what were the new odds?
10. a. What lesson did Gideon need to learn before he could effectively fight the enemy? (You may find 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 applicable.)
- b. Relate how you have or how you might apply this same lesson in your life.

Read Judges 7:8-15 - The Midianite’s Dream. Mark the text on page 7.

After being told by God that he would win and that it would be by God’s strength, not his own, Gideon was still fearful. Seeing that “*the Midianites, the Amalekites and all the other eastern peoples had settled in the valley, thick as locusts. Their camels could no more be counted than the sand on the seashore,*” (Judges 7:12) his fear was understandable. Thus, God met Gideon’s fear once more with a sign of encouragement.

11. Event by event, describe the final sign that God orchestrated to minister to Gideon’s fear. How could each part of this experience have given Gideon the courage to begin the battle to which God had called him?
12. After God again met Gideon in his fear, what did Gideon do that showed he finally understood his mission?

13. Refer back to your answer in question 1. What lesson(s) have you learned from our examination of Gideon's story that would encourage you to take action on that task?

Final thoughts: How long do we wait to obey after God has spoken His will? God tells us we do not need to know the outcome, but rather it is more important and fruitful to our faith to trust Him in the journey. However, we must know God's Word. We must seek to know all that God has already told us about His will in His Scriptures so that we can focus our energies on those things. While we are seeking to obey what we do know, we can be sure that God will direct and correct our path as necessary.

God had said nothing about the timing of Gideon's task. When the enemy presented itself, it was time to move. Any delay at that point meant more days under oppression. God will bring us to a moment when all human confidence is stripped away. He wants us to sit silently in humble adoration of our God as the One who is totally sufficient against all odds to accomplish His divine will. Then, and only then, are we ready to move forward to taste God's victory.

Pray - We thank You that You meet us in our fear and weak faith to mature us, Lord. As our faith increases, may we leave behind our old methods of discerning Your will and boldly obey and trust You in the journey. As we face our multitudes of Midianites, may we trust that You will give the enemy into our hand and wait with excitement to see the marvelous ways that You will orchestrate the victory.

Kyna Richie (original 2002; revised 2013)

## **Lesson 13 — Gideon: Part II — Judges 6:24-7:15**

Examine your text. You will be instructed to mark certain sections of this text periodically in this lesson. Each section is titled and corresponds to a section of questions in the lesson.

Mark your text. Put a box around time words (e.g. now, on that day, then, when). Put a circle around conditional words (e.g. but, therefore, so that). Underline all references, including pronouns (e.g. they, he, you, whom):

- God in red
- Gideon in green
- an enemy in black (groups or individuals)
- Israel in blue (designating with the first letter of their tribe above the pronoun when necessary for clarification)

### **Judges 6:33-40 - Fleece**

33 Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the sons of the east assembled themselves; and they crossed over and camped in the valley of Jezreel. 34 So the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon; and he blew a trumpet, and the Abiezrites were called together to follow him.

35 He sent messengers throughout Manasseh, and they also were called together to follow him; and he sent messengers to Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, and they came up to meet them.

36 Then Gideon said to God, "If You will deliver Israel through me, as You have spoken,

37 behold, I will put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor. If there is dew on the fleece only, and it is dry on all the ground, then I will know that You will deliver Israel through me, as You

have spoken." 38 And it was so. When he arose early the next morning and squeezed the fleece, he drained the dew from the fleece, a bowl full of water. 39 Then Gideon said to God, "Do not let Your anger burn against me that I may speak once more; please let me make a test once more with the fleece, let it now be dry only on the fleece, and let there be dew on all the ground."

40 God did so that night; for it was dry only on the fleece, and dew was on all the ground.

(Judges 6:33-40, NASB95)

### **Judges 7:1-8 - You are too many**

1 Then Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) and all the people who were with him, rose early and camped beside the spring of Harod; and the camp of Midian was on the north side of them by the hill of Moreh in the valley. 2 The LORD said to Gideon, "The people who are with you are too many

for Me to give Midian into their hands, for Israel would become boastful, saying, 'My own power has delivered me.' 3 "Now therefore come, proclaim in the hearing of the people, saying,

'Whoever is afraid and trembling, let him return and depart from Mount Gilead.'" So 22,000

people returned, but 10,000 remained. 4 Then the LORD said to Gideon, "The people are still too many; bring them down to the water and I will test them for you there. Therefore it shall be that he of whom I say to you, 'This one shall go with you,' he shall go with you; but everyone of whom I say to you, 'This one shall not go with you,' he shall not go." 5 So he brought the people down to the water. And the LORD said to Gideon, "You shall separate everyone who laps the water with his tongue as a dog laps, as well as everyone who kneels to drink." 6 Now the number of those who lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, was 300 men; but all the rest of the people kneeled to drink water. 7 The LORD said to Gideon, "I will deliver you with the 300 men who lapped and will give the Midianites into your hands; so let all the other people go, each man to his home." 8 So the 300 men took the people's provisions and their trumpets into their hands. And Gideon sent all the other men of Israel, each to his tent, but retained the 300 men; and the camp of Midian was below him in the valley.

(Judges 7:1-8, NASB95)

#### **Judges 7:8-15 - The Midianite's Dream**

8 So the 300 men took the people's provisions and their trumpets into their hands. And Gideon sent all the other men of Israel, each to his tent, but retained the 300 men; and the camp of Midian was below him in the valley. 9 Now the same night it came about that the LORD said to him, "Arise, go down against the camp, for I have given it into your hands. 10 "But if you are afraid to go down, go with Purah your servant down to the camp, 11 and you will hear what they say; and afterward your hands will be strengthened that you may go down against the camp." So he went with Purah his servant down to the outposts of the army that was in the camp. 12 Now the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the sons of the east were lying in the valley as numerous as locusts; and their camels were without number, as numerous as the sand on the seashore. 13 When Gideon came, behold, a man was relating a dream to his friend. And he said, "Behold, I had a dream; a loaf of barley bread was tumbling into the camp of Midian, and it came to the tent and struck it so that it fell, and turned it upside down so that the tent lay flat." 14 His friend replied, "This is nothing less than the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel; God has given Midian and all the camp into his hand." 15 When Gideon heard the account of the dream and its interpretation, he bowed in worship. He returned to the camp of Israel and said, "Arise, for the LORD has given the camp of Midian into your hands."

(Judges 7:8-15, NASB95)

