

What You Need to Know About GIDEON & SAMSON:

“The Dangers of Losing the Final Lap”

Study Number Two – Judges 6:25-40

Gideon happens to be the fourth judge. They've already been through three cycles of sin and slavery and they've called to the Lord and the Lord's delivered them. But they did evil again in the sight of the Lord.

And for seven years they've been in bondage to the Midianites. This is not what God planned for them. God planned for them to be blessed and prospered if they were obedient to His word. That's what the Lord said to Joshua before they ever went into the land.

But because of disobedience, they're poverty stricken. The Midianites are kind of like gypsies. They just come in and take the harvest and the crops and leave the people destitute without anything to eat.

And as the scene of the story opened in our previous episode, Gideon was down at the winepress trying to get some grain to keep it away from the Midianites. And the Lord comes on the scene and says, “Oh valiant warrior.” And that was humorous because that was the furthest thing from Gideon's mind or anybody else's, because with his melancholy temperament he

naturally was given to fear and especially insecurity in situations that he didn't understand and wasn't sure of.

And so we said from that, the Lord always sees future potential. He doesn't look at the present failure. He looked at Gideon for what he was going to become, not what he was at that particular moment.

Gideon, in response to this tremendous statement, said, "Well, Lord, if that's really You, why's all this happened to us? And where are Your miracles? And Lord, You've just abandoned us into the hands of the Midianites and how am I going to do all this anyway?"

And basically we could relate to that because when unexpected things come into our lives, we say the same thing. "Why did it happen? And Lord, where in the world are You? I just keep on suffering and there doesn't seem to be any answers. And how am I ever going to do what You want me to do?"

And then we also noted in the study that it was not the Lord who abandoned Israel, it was Israel who abandoned the Lord. And there was one principle that we need to remember: We're as close to the Lord as we want to be, but not as close as He wants us to be.

The Lord never abandoned. We make the choice. And like someone said, "If you feel a great distance from the Lord, guess who moved."

God has always taken the initiative for closeness of communion and relationship. We're the ones who make the decision not to be close.

Now after all of that frustration, and he's still fearful, the Lord says, "First, I want you to go." That was the command. Secondly, "I'm going to promise to go with you." That was His companionship.

Now we'd think that'd be enough, but Gideon still says, "I want a solid commitment. I want to go get a sacrifice and bring it out here and then You show me, by receiving the sacrifice, this is really You."

And that's exactly what the Lord does. He very patiently deals with Gideon. In the last scene that we have of him, he was finally at the altar of peace.

And what a great place to be. He was there worshiping the Lord. His focus is on the Lord, so everything's great. We're now at peace. But it doesn't last very long.

While he's at the altar of peace, the Lord has something to say to him.

v. 25 Now the same night it came about that the Lord said to him, "Take your father's bull and a second bull seven years old, and pull down the altar of Baal which belongs to your father, and cut down

the Asherah that is beside it;

“Now the same night it came about that the Lord said to him, ‘Take your father’s bull and a second bull seven years old, and pull down the altar of Baal which belongs to your father, and cut down the Asherah that is beside it;”

Now one of the things we learned was on the property was a high place to the god Baal. And Gideon’s father was an idolater.

Now why does the Lord, as the scene opens, say, “Look, I’ve got a project for you and it has nothing to do with the Midianites.”

“Lord, I’m finally ready to go and blow the Midianites out of the water. I’m ready to say, ‘Sic’em! Let’s get after it.”

Then the Lord says, “Go get the altar to Baal.”

Now why does the Lord say that? There’s a principle. “Gideon, before you ever go to war, we’re going to deal with your worship. And before I ever trust you in the battle, I’m going to deal with your Baal.”

God is a jealous God. Before He ever uses an individual in a significant fashion, that person must allow the Lord Jesus Christ to have first place in his life.

And here God is putting first things first. “We’re going to deal

with Baal and then we'll have time for the Midianites, but let's do first things first. I want that competitor to My cause to come down from the hill and a place for Jehovah God to take its place."

1 John 5:21

My little children, guard yourself from idols.

We are to keep ourselves away from those things which would take the place that belongs to the Lord Jesus—keep ourselves away from idols.

Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." (ref. Matthew 6:33)

As Christians we have to constantly be examining our heart relationship with the Lord, to see how it is with Him. It's an amazing thing, how much closer we get to the Lord, we begin to be aware of the cleansing process that's got to go on constantly.

1 John 1:7

If we're in fellowship with Him, we're experiencing the constant cleansing of His blood from sin.

If we're in fellowship, why do we need that? Simply because it is a lifetime process of the Lord purifying our lives and

making us Christlike. And the closer we get, we're like the apostle Paul who said, "Oh wretched man that I am, who's going to deliver me from the body of this death?" (ref. Romans 7:24)

Perhaps there are idols in our life, things that are more important than our relationship with Jesus Christ and so He can't bless us. He can't use us like He wants to. He's already said He's going to use Gideon. So in the process He has to deal with this problem.

The dearest idol I have known,
Whate'er that idol be.
Help me to tear it from Thy throne,
And worship only Thee.
(source unknown)

There's a very instructive passage in Colossians 1. It's a picture of the Lord Jesus. And as we see the Lord Jesus, He's first head over His creation. Here's a picture of Christ. All these things were created by Him and for Him. All of these things exist and are held together by Jesus Christ.

And then the passage goes on to describe that he's the head of His church. That is, that body of innumerable believers who know Christ, they're a part of His church and He's the head of that body.

And then it's just so neat how in verse 18 the apostle Paul says, "I said all things so I could tell you that all of this is true

in order that Christ might come to have first place in all things.” (see Colossians 1:18)

And when He has first place, then He’s ready to bless, then He’s ready to use, then He’s wanting to bring fruit through our life.

Before the Lord brings blessing, the cleansing has to take place. And He’s going to become first.

Now that little word “Asherah” in our text refers to a sacred pole. A lot of times when they worshipped Baal, they’d find a great big old tree and they’d put the altar on it and the tree would be the Asherah. But if they didn’t have a tree, they’d put a great big sacred pole right beside it. And that was part and parcel of this pagan worship of the god Baal which was a figment of the imagination.

He says, “Tear that down too.”

Now that’s the NEGATIVE in verse 25. Look at the POSITIVE in verse 26:

v. 26 and build an altar to the Lord your God on the top of this stronghold in an orderly manner, and take a second bull and offer a burnt offering with the wood of the Asherah which you shall cut down.”

“and build an altar to the Lord your God on the top of this stronghold in an orderly manner, and take a second bull and

offer a burnt offering with the wood of the Asherah which you shall cut down.”

Alright, **NEGATIVELY**: “Tear the other down but build an altar to Jehovah God and make a sacrifice to Him. Then I’ll be pleased to bless.”

Now these are Israelites. They’re God’s people, but they’re out of fellowship and they’ve fallen into the hands of this substitute worship, which is the god of the now generation. “Just do your own thing.” And they love it. And so they’re caught up in it. This is their sacred spot.

And the Lord says, “Now Gideon, I want you to go up there and tear it down.”

Now, Gideon was a melancholy. And we see it in the next verse.

v. 27 Then Gideon took ten men of his servants and did as the Lord had spoken to him; and it came about, because he was too afraid of his father’s household and the men of the city to do it by day, that he did it by night.

“Then Gideon took ten men of his servants and did as the Lord had spoken to him; and it came about, because he was too afraid of his father’s household and the men of the city to do it by day, that he did it by night.”

Well that tells us a lot. He decides, “Wow, this has to have the most minute of detail in time.” So he gets his football team together. He’s going to quarterback these other ten guys. And he says, “Fellas, you aren’t going to believe it. This is what the Lord said. Guys, we’re going up to the high place tonight and we’re going to pull that down and we’re going to set up an altar to Jehovah God and offer a sacrifice.”

The guy says, “Right. Uh-huh. Yea.”

“But look guys, we’re going to do it at night. Now I realize the Lord gave a commandment and I’m scared.”

We read in Proverbs 29:

Proverbs 29:25

The fear of man brings a snare, but who so puts his trust in the Lord shall be safe.

“It’d be okay if you went up during the day, as the Lord had said it, because He’d protect you.”

What’d Gideon say? He’s one of these kinds of guys who has to have everything right. He says, “Yep. Jerry, get the ropes. Hey John, you go get the bowls. And look man, you go and tell your wife we’ve got to have sandwiches because we’re probably going to be up there all night, and a couple of jugs of coffee. But for heaven’s sakes, don’t tell your wife where we’re going! None of you guys! Don’t say a word. Meet back here at my

place at 8:30.”

Now he had everything set. And at 8:30 they flipped out, nobody even knew they were around. They got to the high place, cranked up the saw, wiped out the Asherah, and began to split it up for firewood. The other guys were pulling down the altar and building the altar to the God Jehovah. And pretty soon they had the sacrifice going. They got the job done

v. 28 When the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was torn down, and the Asherah which was beside it was cut down, and the second bull was offered on the altar which had been built.

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And this guy wakes up, rubs his eyes, looks out and he sees the vacant spot on the high place. And he calls his buddy on the phone and he says, “Hey man, have you looked out this morning?” He says, “No, I’ll take a look.”

“Something was done to the Asherah and there’s smoke up there on the hill.” These false Israelites are so ticked, the temperature’s just rising as they see the destitution and destruction.

And naturally they form their search and destroy mission. They're going to find out who this guy is and they're going to kill him!

Now how do they do it?

v. 29 And they said to one another, “Who did this thing?” And when they searched about and inquired, they said, “Gideon the son of Joash did this thing.”

“And they said to one another, ‘Who did this thing?’ And when they searched about and inquired, they said, ‘Gideon the son of Joash did this thing.’”

Now what happened? They started trucking from door to door to find out. Pretty soon they hit one of the houses where one of the guys was involved. They said, “Were you home last night?”

“Well, no I wasn’t.”

“Where were you?”

“Just out messing around.”

“Well come on now. What’s the deal?”

And they keep grinding away and pretty soon he says, “Just go see Gideon.”

Well, nice going. Spill the whole thing. Now poor Gideon.

Look at the mob. They end up at his house—verse 30.

v. 30 Then the men of the city said to Joash, “Bring out your son, that he may die, for he has torn down the altar of Baal, and indeed, he has cut down the Asherah which was beside it.”

“Then the men of the city said to Joash,”

This is a bad scene.

“Bring out your son, that he may die, for he has torn down the altar of Baal, and indeed, he has cut down the Asherah which was beside it.””

Now let's stop and think for a minute. Who's Joash? Besides being Gideon's daddy? He's the leader of the religious denomination. He's worshipping the god Baal.

Where is Gideon? Probably back in the back bedroom, his knees are playing the Star Spangled Banner, and he says, “Boy Lord, You really did it this time. Looks like my dad's never, ever, ever, ever, ever forsaken the god Baal and I don't expect him to do it now.”

But isn't that beautiful? Isn't that fun to see how God uses even people out of fellowship sometimes?

v. 31 But Joash said to all who stood against him, “Will you contend for Baal, or will you deliver him? Whoever will plead for him shall be put to death by morning. If he is a god, let him contend for himself, because someone has torn down his altar.”

“But Joash said to all who stood against him, ‘Will you contend for Baal, or will you deliver him? Whoever will plead for him shall be put to death by morning. If he is a god, let him contend for himself, because someone has torn down his altar.’”

He looks at these guys and he says, “Okay, who out there’s trying to do Baal’s work? Any of you guys raise a hand to do Baal’s work, you’re going to be dead in the morning.”

What’s he saying? “If Baal really exists, his altar’s been torn down and thank you, he can take care of himself.”

There’s a biblical principle there.

Romans 12:19

Never take vengeance into your own hand, beloved, leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.

Let Baal do his own thing. And when we are in a situation where we’ve been wronged, somebody’s hurt us, it’s not our prerogative to take revenge in our own hands. As a believer

we allow God that privilege. And He and His mills grind exceedingly small. And with time His purposes are ultimately accomplished and He'll vindicate His own so leave that business to the Lord.

And just like Joash said, "Leave that business with Baal."

v. 32 Therefore on that day he named him Jerubbaal, that is to say, "Let Baal contend against him," because he has torn down his altar.

"Therefore on that day he named him Jerubbaal, that is to say, 'Let Baal contend against him,' because he has torn down his altar."

Every time his old dad would say, "Jerubbaal, come in here!" all the people in the city would say, "Let Baal contend against him."

"Well, another day has passed. Gideon's being blessed. Nothing's wrong. I guess Baal doesn't exist because he hasn't done a thing about this."

Every day he lives and every time his name is called, the people are reminded that they've been worshipping a false god. Because Baal isn't doing anything. On top of that, Gideon's being blessed and prospered.

Now the heat is on.

v. 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.

“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.”

Now the Midianites didn’t think they could handle it by themselves, so they called the Amalekites—these are their old buddies.

How many people are in the valley of Jezreel? 135,000.

Now that’s a bunch of tents. And that is a bunch of bodies.

The valley of Jezreel starts way up in the north and it stretches all the way down. That great valley is the place of a final conflict—the Battle of Armageddon.

And a lot of battles have been fought in this place. And in this valley, now we have the Midianites and the Amalekites—135,000 strong down there. What did that do to Gideon?

He’s probably saying, “Boy Lord, I just got out of that last one. Those guys got mad. They nearly strung me up, Lord.”

And the Lord’s saying, “But they didn’t and you’re alright.” And he’s looking out there in the valley, out of the corner of his eye and he says, “Wow, where am I going to find 135,000

bodies to go down so we can have a one-on-one?”

Well, naturally when he sees something like that, something happens—verse 34.

v. 34 So the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon; and he blew a trumpet, and the Abiezerites were called together to follow him.

“So the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon; and he blew a trumpet, and the Abiezerites were called together to follow him.”

Isn't it interesting that the Spirit of the Lord has not yet come on Gideon until Baal has been dealt with? Now that's the sovereign purpose of the Spirit to come on people for service and then to depart in the Old Testament.

But in the New Testament, when we receive Christ, He who is with us shall be in us. The Spirit comes to dwell within. But when there are rivals to His cause in our heart, He is grieved and quenched and we do not experience the blessing of His filling ministry in our life.

If we are not knowing the joy, the fulfillment of God using us as a person, we have a grieved or quenched Spirit in our heart. Literally the Spirit of God closed Himself like an empty glove with Gideon, ready for action. Giving him new perspective and new power, preparing him for what was ahead.

But notice he had to deal with Baal first, before the Spirit of God came on him for service. There always must be a cleansing before clothing.

But Gideon still has a problem. He got a few of the locals together from the Abiezerites and they're part of the tribe of Manasseh.

v. 35 And 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.

“And he sent messengers throughout Manasseh, and they also were called together to follow him;”—and he still didn't have enough as he looked down the valley to see 135,000. He only had about 8,000 so:

“and he sent messengers to Asher,”—that's another tribe—“Zebulun, and Naphtali,”—three other tribes—“and they came up to meet them.”

How many did he get? Thirty-two thousand.

That's still 4-to-1 odds. That is not a good way to go to war. Every Israelite has to survive, and in the process has to get four Midianites and Amalekites before they win!

Now from a natural point of view, that's pretty scary. What does Gideon do? He returns to the Lord and hopes that the

Lord will change His mind.

And now we come to that great passage, the passage on the fleece.

There's a great deal of misunderstandings about discerning the will of God in one place. And justifying the fact that when we're not sure we can feel the fleece and get a sign. Now many people do that.

“Now God, if the Cowboys win the Super Bowl on Sunday I'll go because I believe this.” And that's the way they go.

In true life they trip along with little signs and fetishes. The only problem is, Satan is a master with that. And how quickly we can be deceived and led astray when we stoop to those sorts of things.

Now God is pleased to use it like He does here, but it is not His desire to do so. He'd already spoken and that ought to have been enough. He's already accepted the offering and that should have been enough. He's already promised him His presence and clothed him with the Spirit, that ought to have been enough. But notice what happens to Gideon—verse 36.

v. 36 Then Gideon said to God, “If Thou wilt deliver Israel through me, as Thou hast spoken,

“Then Gideon said to God, ‘If you will deliver Israel through me, as Thou hast spoken,”

“Well, just checking in to see if You may have changed Your mind. Now that You know the statistics of 32,000 against 135,00, I’m just checking to see if maybe You’ve decided not to go through with it.”

“If”— circle that—and then also underline “as Thou hast spoken.”

The Lord already said that. What’s wrong with Gideon right now? Gideon has made the mistake that a lot of us make, and that is he’s got his eyes on his circumstances instead of on the Lord of the circumstances.

Isaiah 26:3

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, as long as your mind is stayed on Him.

He should have been back at the altar of peace. When he was there everything was okay and he’s already forgotten it. He got his eyes off of the Lord and that experience at the altar of peace, and he has them in the valley of Jezreel and he’s scared.

We don’t know what the future holds, but we do know who holds the future!

He should have been expressing those kinds of thoughts, because the Lord had already made it clear. But why is he

having great reservations?

From a human perspective, those people got mad when he tore down that altar. From a human perspective, he nearly lost his life. It was like the Lord delivering him out of the jaws of the lion and he's saying, "Lord, that was a close one! Now at this point if You have spoken..."

v. 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 Thou wilt deliver Israel through me, as Thou hast spoken."

"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 wilt deliver Israel through me, as Thou hast spoken."

Now here's the little test. He's going to get the fleece out. It's a fleece of wool and he's going to put it on the threshing floor. And he's going to say, "Now Lord, the little test is this. If tomorrow morning I get up and the ground is all dry and that fleece is soaking wet, Lord, that's the only explanation—I know You're in this thing and I'm going to be ready to get on with it. Lord, I want You to do something to prove it."

Now what's wrong with that?

1. The Lord's directive had already been given and he should have gone ahead with that.

2. It is always wrong to dictate to the Lord what He has to do to prove to us His will.

We never find the Lord Jesus ever telling the Father that He has to do anything.

3. That points to a deeper problem, and that's an authority problem.

God wants to be God in our lives! And it's great when we learn that, and we let Him be God, let Him do what He wants to do, instead of commanding Him what He must do to prove to us His will! Or to make us spiritual or to do something that we think must be done!

Oftentimes we buck divine authority and we say we know better than God about what has to be done. And yet how many prayers do we hear saying, "Oh God, You must do this and that." And they command the Lord.

We never see Jesus doing that. We never see Him reaching out and pulling His fingers across the will of the Father.

There's only one time we see this. When Jesus is ready to be pinned on the cross the next day, but it is in complete submission to authority, when He says, "Father, if it would be possible, let this cup pass from Me; but nevertheless, not my will but yours be done." (ref. Mathew 26:39)

“Oh Father, I don’t want to be put on that cross but if that’s Your will and that’s necessary, then put Me there! Not My will but Yours be done.”

See that’s the way it ought to be. Gideon doesn’t do that. He has to have a fleece that’s wet.

Let’s look at some verses in Psalms:

Psalm 86:11

Teach me thy way O Lord,
and I will walk in thy truth.

Psalm 86:11

Teach me thy way O Lord,
and I will walk in thy truth.

“Gideon, you shouldn’t be dictating to the Lord what He has to do to prove to you His will.”

But isn’t it gracious of the Lord? He’s been suffering so long through the whole last study and now, when we’re coming down right to the time of the battle and the countdown’s underway and he’s turning chicken, the Lord still is pleased to use it.

v. 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.

“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.”

He’s walking out there and he says, “Hey man, the ground is dry!” And he walks up to the fleece and he grabs it and it’s heavy. He begins to wring it and he’s got a whole bowl full of evidence that the Lord wants him down there delivering the Israelites from the Midianites.

But now he backed off. He’s still scared. We’ve got one test—we’ve got to have two. Verse 39.

v. 39 Then Gideon said to God, “Do not let Thine 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.”

“Then Gideon said to God, ‘Do not let Thine anger burn against me’—yes—“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.””

What’s he saying? “Lord, tomorrow I want the ground so wet it’s going to be slippery to get to the fleece. But when I get to the fleece, I want it bone dry.”

Now what's the natural thinking in that?

"Surely the fleece won't dry out before morning! It's already wet. And surely, I can come out and wring another bowl full of water out of it in the morning and I won't have to go fight the Midianites."

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

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

Just like the Lord was pleased to use the casting of the lot to determine who the replacement would be among the disciples, so the Lord here is pleased to use a fleece. But that is not the way to determine the will of God in our life.

Let's say that someone is a brand-new believer and really concerned about God's expression of His will in their life. How are they going to find it?

There are four points to that:

1. Saturate oneself with the Word of God. Read the Word of God. Be sensitive to our need and allow the Spirit of God to use that Word.
2. Pray a lot. Prayer brings our desires into line with His desires, but we're sensitive to being willing to do whatever He

wants us to do.

3. Take a reading on our circumstances. If we're finding in our circumstances a great deal of difficulty and pressure, we're unhappy, then ask the Lord about that.

"Lord, is this really Your will? Are You getting ready to change?"

Now sometimes the Lord says, "Look, I've put you in those circumstances and I'm going to change you to suit those circumstances. That's why you're in them."

But at other times the reading is very clear that it's time to make a move.

4. When we make the decision there'll be peace.

Colossians 3:15

The peace of God will oft like an umpire, ruling in your heart.

And for those who are married, there is a fifth point and that is:

5. You and your mate are in oneness about that decision.

Now guys are the head of the house, but you are one flesh and don't ever make the mistake of trying to determine the will of God for your wife until you both are in complete oneness.

That's exactly what Jacob does in Genesis 29.

The Lord says, "It's time to leave Laban's house. The circumstances look bad. Laban is really mad." And as he prays about it, he's aware of it and he goes and consults his wives and they say it's time to go too. And when he leaves, there's a sense of peace.

That's how we know the will of God for our life. Through that he played around with signs and fetishes in trying to determine by substitute fashion. Go the long way and we'll be awfully happy that we did.

Here are the lessons that come out of our passage of scripture:

Lesson #1: Before the Lord can use us, there must be a tearing out of all the rivals to His cause.

Maybe God has put His finger in the stillness of this moment on something in our life. And it's become too important to us. More important than the Lord.

Are we willing to just say, in the stillness of the moment as we get ready to conclude, "Lord, I don't want that thing to hurt our relationship. And You've made me aware of it through Your Spirit and I just ask You now take that thing out of my life and give me the grace to live in such a way that would bring greater pleasure to You."

Lesson #2: Examine the boundaries of your heart for those things, by asking yourself this question, “Who has first place in my life?”

Lesson #3: Gideon’s first mission was successful because the Lord called him to do it.

Gideon’s first mission of going up there to tear down that idol and to set up the one to Jehovah God is successful because the Lord called him to do it.

2 Corinthians 2:14 says: “The Lord always leads in a constant pageant of triumph.” When He’s in it, it’s going to be successful.

Lesson #4: The Lord also promises His presence and protection when we’re fulfilling His will.

Lesson #5: The Spirit of the Lord only clothed Himself with Gideon after the cleansing.

Isaiah 52:11, “Must be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.”

Ephesians 5:18, “He’s continually being filled with the Spirit.”

Lesson #6: God’s word to Gideon should have been enough. But he displayed human frailty by seeking other signs.

Many times the Lord is pleased to go and use that to the

accomplishment of His purpose, but that is not His desire in expressing His will.

Lesson #7: Let us learn never to question His authority.

With our limited human perspective, we're not God and He's got the big picture. He's all knowing and all powerful. Let's just let Him be God.

Maybe we're rebellious. Submit to divine authority. Allow the Spirit of God to be God. Allow Him to work in our life. What a blessing is in store.

Father, perhaps there's someone who doesn't know anything at all about that personal relationship with You. We pray that Your Holy Spirit will speak so clearly, that they'll make that personal and private decision to receive the Lord Jesus Christ and to learn that by acknowledging their sin, they come to faith in the Savior. Lord, we know that Your Spirit's not limited to one place. But by His convicting power of sin, You can also show us the righteousness of Jesus Christ and the consequences of judgment that result in our rejection in the privacy of our own bedrooms, in our study, in our office. We pray for those who are thinking about this that have been suspicious. There've been those who've had all kinds of excuses. But soon their sins will be torn away and they'll recognize that now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. Lord, we pray for us as Christians, teach us Lord how to walk hand in hand with You. To have an increasing confidence that You really do go before and that the steps of

good men are ordered by the Lord and we can delight in Your way. We know that when we fall, we're not utterly cast down for You're there to uphold with Your hand. And Lord it's a thrill to know that the task ahead is not any greater than the power behind. That You provide all that's necessary to the accomplishment of Your will. Thank You for being such a faithful God, such a loving God, such a patient God. We've seen You so many times with Gideon in these first two studies where he experiences setbacks, You don't. You just move ahead and satisfy his needs and quietly lead him on. Thank You for the anticipation of what we're going to see in the next study, as You accomplish the mission that You want to be accomplished through him. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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What You Need to Know About GIDEON & SAMSON:

“The Dangers of Losing the Final Lap”

Study Number Two – Judges 6:25-40

NOTES

v. 25 Now the same night it came about that the Lord said to him, “Take your father’s bull and a second bull seven years old, and pull down the altar of Baal which belongs to your father, and cut down the Asherah that is beside it;

v. 26 and build an altar to the Lord your God on the top of this stronghold in an orderly manner, and take a second bull and offer a burnt offering with the wood of the Asherah which you shall cut down.”

v. 27 Then Gideon took ten men of his servants and did as the Lord had spoken to him; and it came about, because he was too afraid of his father’s household and the men of the city to do it by day, that he did it by night.

v. 28 When the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was torn down, and the Asherah which was beside it was cut down, and the second bull was offered on the altar which had been built.

v. 29 And they said to one another, “Who did this thing?” And when they searched about and inquired, they said, “Gideon the son of Joash did this thing.”

v. 30 Then the men of the city said to Joash, “Bring out your son, that he may die, for he has torn down the altar of Baal, and indeed, he has cut down the Asherah which was beside it.”

v. 31 But Joash said to all who stood against him, “Will you contend for Baal, or will you deliver him? Whoever will plead for him shall be put to death by morning. If he is a god, let him contend for himself, because someone has torn down his altar.”

v. 32 Therefore on that day he named him Jerubbaal, that is to say, “Let Baal contend against him,” because he has torn down his altar.

NOTES

v. 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.

v. 34 So the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon; and he blew a trumpet, and the Abiezerites were called together to follow him.

v. 35 And 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.

v. 36 Then Gideon said to God, "If Thou wilt deliver Israel through me, as Thou hast spoken,

v. 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 Thou wilt deliver Israel through me, as Thou hast spoken."

v. 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.

v. 39 Then Gideon said to God, "Do not let Thine 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."

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

QUESTIONS:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

1. Read Judges 6:25-40 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. What does the Lord ask Gideon to do in verses 25 & 26?

3. Why did Gideon fulfill his mission at night, according to verse 27?

4. How does Joash respond in verse 31?

5. What is Gideon's concern in verses 36 & 37?

6. What does Gideon ask of the Lord in verse 37?

7. What does Gideon ask again in verse 39?

8. What do you think about putting a fleece before the Lord in discerning His will?

9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Before the Lord can use us, there must be the tearing out of all rivals to His cause.

LESSON #2: Let us examine the boundaries of our own hearts for idols that can stand in the way of his blessing, those things which are more important than our relationship to the Lord.

LESSON #3: Gideon's first mission was successful because the Lord had called him to do it.

LESSON #4: The Lord had promised protection for his servants when they are fulfilling His will.

LESSON #5: The Spirit of the Lord clothed Himself with Gideon only after the cleansing had taken place.

LESSON #6: God's word to Gideon should have been enough. But he displayed human frailty in seeking further signs of affirmation.

LESSON #7: Let us learn never to question His authority and also to believe when only we have His word.

LESSON #8: Lord, make known Your will.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

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