

Judges & Ruth

God's *Faithfulness* Remains

women's | BIBLE STUDY

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LESSON *Five*

Gideon's Call



Chapter 6 tells of how Israel experienced oppression from yet another enemy, the Midianites. After sending a prophet to tell Israel of their sin, God called Gideon to lead the nation. Bolder than previous judges, Gideon told God his raw thoughts and feelings regarding his call. Even though he was fearful, Gideon obeyed. He destroyed the idol altar in his town. Then, before battle, he confirmed God's victory by asking not once, but twice, for a sign of assurance.

Pause for a moment and reflect: What is hard right now? Has God revealed areas of your life where you are not fully obeying or trusting Him? What are you praying for? Where have you seen God answer prayer? Write your reflections below.

HIDE

It appears that the oppression was so harsh that the Israelites were forced to hide themselves in the mountains for safety.²⁷

IDOLATRY

"Understanding God's way of holiness is more important than absence of pain. We may want out of a bind, whereas God wants us to see our idolatry. God means to instruct us, not pacify us."²⁸

Read Judges 6 before answering the following questions.

1. Take a minute to look back at Judges 2:11, 3:7, 3:12, 4:1, and 6:1. In what ways has Israel surprised you? In what ways has God surprised you?

Read Judges 6:1-24.

2. From verses 1-6, describe the stress the Israelites were under due to the oppression of the Midianites.
3. God responded a little differently to Israel's cry, sending a prophet to speak to the people. What was the main point of the prophet's message? Why might God send a prophet rather than physical help like food or military power?

4. Using your own words, unpack Gideon's interaction with the angel of the Lord. (verses 12-15)

Angel of the Lord: *"The Lord is with you, O mighty man of valor."*

Gideon's Response:

Angel of the Lord: *"Go in this might of yours and save Israel from the hand of Midian; do not I send you?"*

Gideon's Response:

Gideon felt both abandoned by God and inadequate to save Israel. Were his feelings justified? Why or why not?

5. When Gideon expressed his insecurities and fears about judging Israel, the angel of the Lord redirected Gideon's focus. Write down Judges 6:16 in the space below.

In your own life, what are you afraid of right now, and how does God's response encourage you? (See also Matthew 28:19-20.)

Be encouraged. In Judges 6:23-24, Gideon called the alter "The Lord is Peace" after God's messenger stated, "Peace be to you. Do not fear; you shall not die." In the face of Gideon's fear and anxiety, God revealed Himself as the one who can help in his time of need. He is the same God, the Lord of Peace, in your fears today.

GOD'S CALL

For a deeper study on doubting God's call, compare Gideon's experience with that of Moses in Exodus 3-4.

DECAY

"Earlier, the writer described Deborah as sitting under a "palm tree" (4:5), but now we find Gideon sitting under an "oak" (v.11) ["Terebinth," ESV]. The former site was a place of fruitful blessing, but the latter was a center of Canaanite worship. This contrast may be another indication of the decay that was progressing in Israel."²⁹

YOUR POTENTIAL

"If you fail to remember who God is in His power, glory and grace, and you forget who you are as a child in His family, you will always mis-measure your potential to do what God has called you to do."³⁰

HE IS ENOUGH

Notice that God did not change the circumstances or solve the problem at hand just because Gideon was afraid. God simply was present, and that was enough.

MORE INSIGHT

For more insight on this text, read Exodus 34:13 and Deuteronomy 7:5. Don't forget that the people attempting to kill Gideon are Israelites.

ASHERAH

The Asherah was "a wooden cult object, perhaps in the form of a pole or tree, which probably symbolized the fertility of the goddess." As you study about idols such as Asherah, remember, idol worship is ultimately an issue of the heart.³¹

BAAL'S ALTAR

Do not miss the irony: the Baal altar Gideon tore down happened to be his father's—Joash.

DEW

In Canaanite culture, their god Baal controlled the rain and dew. This means Gideon's specific request of God was no coincidence.

BATTLE

Gideon was about to engage in a fierce and violent battle. Think of a war movie you have seen to help you imagine what he was about to encounter. In this context, his fear is understandable.

6. What situation unfolded in verses 19-24? How would you have reacted if you were Gideon?

Read Judges 6:25-35.

7. While Gideon's problems were ultimately outside of Israel (the Midianites), how does this section showcase the troubles within the nation?

8. Verse 34 says "But the Spirit of the Lord clothed Gideon, and he sounded the trumpet, and the Abiezrites were called out to follow him." It appears that God's Spirit came upon Gideon to help him with certain tasks. How is this different from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit for believers today? For help, read John 14:15-17 and Ephesians 1:13-14.

9. At first glance, this section might seem out of place. Why would God use Gideon to cleanse Israel of idol worship before fighting the Midianites?

Read Judges 6:36-40.

10. Gideon was still doubting, so what did he do in verses 36-40?

11. Gideon is often considered a coward because he asked for a sign before going into battle. Take a moment and think: Was this request evidence of a lack of trust in God or was he gaining greater assurance for the difficult task ahead? Was it wrong for Gideon to ask?
12. Gideon was not afraid to ask God for what he thought he needed. Describe the last time you boldly asked God for something. What holds you back from praying like this more often? (See Appendix: Prayer.)

What steps can you take this week toward a bolder, more fearless prayer life?

13. Drawing from this entire passage, what qualified Gideon for leadership and why was he successful? How does this relate to your success in life?

“Prayer does change things, all kinds of things. But the most important thing it changes is us. As we engage in this communion with God more deeply and come to know the One with whom we are speaking more intimately, that growing knowledge of God reveals to us all the more brilliantly who we are and our need to change in conformity to Him. Prayer changes us profoundly.”

– R.C. Sproul³²

THE FLEECE

Gideon's story of the fleece describes what he did but is not prescriptive of what believers today should do. For Scripture on determining God's will, read Psalm 37:5, Proverbs 3:5-6, Romans 12:1-2, Colossians 1:9-12, and Hebrews 13:20-21.

HABIT OF PRAYER

There are many ways to develop a habit of prayer. For you it might be a prayer journal, notecards, or you can even use an app on your phone, such as “Echo.”

ANSWERS

When we cry out to God, sometimes He says yes, like with Gideon. Other times, He says no. Read “What Should I Do When God Says No?” on gotquestions.org to be better equipped if and when this happens.

BIG IDEA

What is your biggest takeaway from this week's lesson?

Pause and reflect for a moment. Step back from the details of the stories and try to see the bigger picture.

So far in Judges, what have you learned about God? Humanity? Yourself?

<i>God</i>	
<i>Humanity</i>	
<i>Yourself</i>	

Notes