

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

God Sends Help: A Study from Judges

Lesson 8: Gideon Questions God

Bible Text
Judges 6:36-40

Memory Verse

"I will show you and teach you in the way you should go. I will tell you what to do with My eye upon you." (Psalm 32:8)

Word List

flawed: having a mistake, fault, or a weakness
gourd: any one of several types of fruits that have a hard shell and that are used for decoration and not for eating
sign: something (such as an action or event) which shows that God exists, is true, or will do what He says He will do

A **gourd** is a vegetable with a hard shell. People make them into pretty things. But gourds often have problems which have to be worked around. Some have weak spots that need to be fixed or cut away. Sometimes the color needs to be changed. Some gourds are shaped strangely. A gourd artist works around those flaws. He makes something beautiful and useful out of that **flawed** shell.

We often hear people make the excuse, "Nobody is perfect." It is true. We are all flawed in some way. We all have weaknesses. We all make mistakes. All of us have sinned. We fall short of what God has planned for us. But we expect the people in the Bible to be perfect. We wonder why God includes their mistakes and flaws in His Word.

Gideon was not perfect. But God calls flawed people. God wants us to know that He has plans for us even with our flaws. There are lessons to be learned from the mistakes and weaknesses of Bible leaders. We learn that God works around our flaws to make something beautiful of our lives.

"As You Have Said" **(Judges 6:36)**

36 Then Gideon said to God, "Save Israel through me, as You have said."

Gideon did not see himself the way God saw him. He thought of himself as unimportant. But God thought Gideon was important enough to speak directly to him. No other judge had that blessing. Gideon doubted God's choice. God had called him a mighty soldier. But Gideon felt weak even after he had torn down the idols of his family. Gideon was not willing to trust God enough to obey even when he had heard instructions from the Lord Himself.

Six things had happened that should have made Gideon sure of what God said. An angel came to him. The Lord Himself came to Gideon. A gift to God was suddenly burned. Gideon saw his father's heart changed. The Spirit of God came upon him. Many men came to help him.

Gideon knew what God had said, but he wanted more proof before he would obey. We are often like Gideon. We know God says for us to live pure lives. But we question if that pure life is for us in these times. We think times have changed. Why can we not live like we want to live in these times? But God's standards have not changed. We all need to trust and obey.

Gideon Asks for a Sign (Judges 6:37-40)

37 “See, I will put wool on the floor where grain is crushed. If the wool is wet, and it is dry on the ground, I will know that You will save Israel through me, as You have said.”

38 It was so. Gideon got up early the next morning and took the wool in his hand. Enough water poured from the wool to fill a pot.

39 Then Gideon said to God, “Do not let Your anger burn against me for speaking to You once again. Let me make one more test with the wool. Let it be dry only on the wool. And

let the ground be wet all around it.”

40 God did so that night. For it was dry only on the wool. And all the ground was wet around it.

The problem with asking for a **sign** is that we are never satisfied. When God proves Himself to us, we always want more. Gideon's problem was not that he did not *know* God's will. His problem was that he did not want to *do* God's will.

God's Word is clear. We never need to wonder if we should read and memorize His Word. There is no question that we should tell others about God's mercy and love. Giving to God should never be a hard decision to make. There is no question that our lives should be free from sin. God's Word clearly tells us to do these things. But very often, we want God to do one more thing to prove to us that we can trust Him. Jesus said that people who want to see God do something special are sinful (Matthew 12:38-39).

Gideon asked God to do a pointless thing. He wanted a piece of wool to be wet when the ground around it was dry. And God did that simple thing so much so that a whole pot of water was in the wool. This could not have happened unless God did it. Surely, then Gideon would get up and do what God told him to do.

Gideon knew that it was wrong to test

God. Moses had told the people, “Do not test the Lord your God...” (Deuteronomy 6:16). He was afraid that God would be angry with him for asking for another sign. So why did he do it? Gideon did not fully trust God. Hebrews tells us, “A man cannot please God unless he has faith” (11:6a). In 2 Corinthians, we read, “Our life is lived by faith. We do not live by what we see in front of us” (5:7). All of us must trust God enough to obey Him even when we have no proof. God does not have to explain His actions to us. We are to follow Him in faith. Sometimes He surprises us because His ways are far above our ways.

So why would God give Gideon yet another sign? And why would Gideon ask for such a pointless sign? He could have asked God to heal someone or feed them from heaven. That would have been a better sign that God was with them. Gideon did not need a piece of wool. He needed faith to obey.

Things to Think About

1. Have you ever used the excuse “nobody is perfect” to explain your failures?
2. How has God worked around your flaws to make something beautiful of your life?
3. Have you ever asked God for a sign?
4. Describe a time when God showed Himself to you, guided you, and used you to do His work.

Things to Remember

But we serve an amazing God! What patience He has with us! What kindness to show Himself to flawed human beings. Gideon asked for a sign and God did exactly what Gideon asked. God’s desire to save His people was so great that He humbled Himself to perform two signs for Gideon. His gentle patience with doubtful Gideon touches our hearts. His gentle, step-by-step guidance comforts us. God has promised He will guide us. He proved it to Gideon. He is still guiding His people today.

But Gideon did some things right. When his faith was weak, he talked to God. We learn what God wants us to do through honest prayer. And Gideon watched to see what God would do. Making good decisions in our lives comes from our relationship with God. We must be quiet before God to hear Him speak to us. We must watch to see what He is doing all around us.

God blesses us abundantly. He has already told us how He wants us to live. He showed us in Christ Jesus just how much He loves us. Jesus set an example for us to follow. He helps us to know His will by knowing His Word. And God is guiding us even today. He wants a relationship with us through prayer and worship. He wants our lives to be changed to be like His Son. He is pleased when we obey Him by faith.

Judges 6:36-40

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Matthew 12:38-39

38 Then some of the teachers of the Law and the proud religious law-keepers said to Jesus, “Teacher, we would like to have you do something special for us to see.”

39 He said to them, “The sinful people of this day look for something special to see. There will be nothing special to see but the powerful works of the early preacher Jonah.”

Deuteronomy 6:16

16 “Do not test the Lord your God, as you put Him to the test at Massah.”

Matthew 4:7

7 Jesus said to the devil, “It is written also, ‘You must not tempt the Lord your God.’”

Hebrews 11:6

6 A man cannot please God unless he has faith. Anyone who comes to God must believe that He is. That one must also know that God gives what is promised to the one who keeps on looking for Him.

2 Corinthians 5:7

7 Our life is lived by faith. We do not live by what we see in front of us.

Romans 11:33

33 God’s riches are so great! The things He knows and His wisdom are so deep! No one can understand His thoughts. No one can understand His ways.