

**A CHALLENGE TO THE AMERICAN CHURCH**  
**THE JUDGES SERIES #5**  
August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2018

**TEXT:** Judges 6:14-40

**CONSIDER THIS:** Do you know the best place to be in the whole world? The best way to live out of all the available options? Do you know the one and only way to reach the end of your life and be at peace as you review your time spent on this earth? Do you know the best way to avoid regret, shame, guilt, depression, despair, futility, angst, unrealized potential, unmet expectations and a sense of failure? Do you know the best way to experience lasting contentment, peace, and joy and to be able to have these good things regardless of your daily circumstances and emotional fluctuations? Do you want to know that you have lived a life that matters, that even now you are truly living the best possible life? There really is a single answer to all of these questions and it is available to you **today, right now**. The answer to all these questions is this: **Live in the center of God's will**. The issue of living in God's will is the main issue in the story of Gideon and he provides a tremendously important example to us of live lived both outside of God's will and in it.

God's will for your life is not hidden.

**I LISTEN TO GOD AND DO WHAT HE SAYS**

- A) A central issue in Judges and in our own lives is expressed in these 7 words "but you have not listened to me." (See 6:1, 7-10).
- B) To "listen" in the biblical sense is to both **hear** and **do**. Israel, including Gideon's family, had not listened to the LORD (see Judges 2:1-2 and James 1:22-24).

You cannot simultaneously disobey God's Word and also be in His will.  
God's blessings for you exist on the inside of His will, not outside of it ...  
and His will is not hidden.

- C) This had all been explained to Israel by Moses in Deuteronomy 28-30. But there is nothing sterile, robotic, or cold-hearted about God calling us to obey Him so that we might be in the center of His will. In Deuteronomy 30:19 the LORD says "NOW CHOOSE LIFE". God wants the best for us because He loves us and He knows what we need:

"People often think of Christian morality as a kind of bargain in which God says, 'If you keep a lot of rules I'll reward you, and if you don't I'll do the other thing.' I do not think that is the best way of looking at it. I would much rather say that every time you make a choice you are turning the central part of you, the part of you that chooses, into something a little different from what it was before. And taking your life as a whole, with all your innumerable choices, all your life long you are slowly turning this central thing either into a heavenly creature or into a hellish creature: either into a creature that is in harmony with God, and with other creatures, and with itself, or else into one that is in a state of war and hatred with God, and with its fellow-creatures, and with itself. To be the one kind of creature is heaven: that is, it is joy and peace and knowledge and power. To be the other means madness, horror, idiocy, rage, impotence, and eternal loneliness. Each of us at each moment is progressing to the one state or the other."

C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity

## II GIDEON'S STORY

- A) Despite his weak faith and poor theology (6:13) Gideon correctly understood the first step in moving into the will of God: draw near to God by worship and offering (6:17-21).

**NOTE:** Genuine offering is always and ultimately an offering of oneself, as in Romans 12:1-2. This connects us to God's will. You will never be in the center of God's will until you make yourself the offering.

- B) Jehovah Shalom (The LORD is Peace, 6:22-24). Peace **with** God and the peace **of** God. Nothing could be better! The world has nothing that approaches this in value.
- C) IT STARTS AT HOME (6:25-27). Gideon's father had an altar to Baal and an Asherah pole that the whole town had access to. The human heart has an unhealthy addiction to idols. Find the idols that are closest to you and tear them down! In his commentary of Judges, Robert Chisholm writes: "It is not enough to build an altar to the LORD if one leaves the altar of a competing god standing."

**KEY:** In last week's study we learned this truth: "God has something very special for you to do and He will help you do it." Many Christians never reach this level because they don't fully offer themselves and because they cling to worthless idols.

- D) Gideon often wavered because of fear and doubt (6:27, 36-40) and he "deserves" to be criticized for it. But what ultimately matters is not the **perfection** in a believer's life but the **direction** of a believer's life.

## III THE FLEECE (6:36-40)

- A) This request by Gideon was inappropriate and shameful (6:21, 39) but God gently and patiently provided. The use of God (Elohim) in 6:20, 36-40 and not LORD (Jehovah) shows Gideon's weak faith.
- B) The dew was very significant because Baal, in Canaanite thought, was a "storm god" who controlled the dew and the rain.

### **Christian!!!**

Do not use "the Gideon's fleece" method for discerning God's will for your life.

God's will for your life is 95% character and 5% circumstance.

The character that puts you in the center of God's will is revealed to you in His Word (for example, I Thessalonians 4:1-3; 5:16-18).

As far as the remaining 5%, if the first 95% is in alignment you can trust your desires according to Psalm 37:4, for those desires come from God to you.

**APPLICATION:** All the good things God wants to accomplish through you and the blessing He wants to bestow on you depend on you being in the center of His will. This is found in presenting yourself as an offering to Him every day and putting His Word into practice each day.