

Lesson 5 - Beyond Your Measure

Ages 10 to 13 and Upwards including Youth & Adults

Notes for preparation by teachers.

Teachers to read Judges 6-8. If required, a summary of the story together with pictures have been provided on the website under the younger age category.

Teachers may include bible mneumonics and other memory verses wherever relevant for further clarity, particularly for the younger classes ie 10 to 13 years.

Question 1: What are the symptoms and signs of fear evident in Judges 6?

1. Symptoms and Signs of Fear

a) Non-Confrontation

Judg 6:2 'and the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel. Because of the Midianites, the children of Israel made for themselves the dens, the caves, and the strongholds which are in the mountains'. (NKJ)

The characteristic feature of fear is a non-confrontational attitude. Just as Israel lived in dens and caves to hide themselves from the Midianites, those bound by fear, avoid contact with the object of their fears.

The Midianites were a group of people that carried the spirit of strife. They imposed these strongholds onto the Israelites and as a result of this fear that was instilled in them; they hid in dens and caves in the mountains because they were bound in fear.

Fear is a hindrance and keeps God's people in bondage. We are not meant to be kept in fear. God's word tells us in:

2 Tim 1:7 - 'For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind'.

The opposite of fear is faith. Faith is believing in the Word of God and acting on that belief. When faith is acted upon, obedience follows and we know faith without works is dead. Therefore our faith must be exercised.

Fear is believing and acting on the words of the devil.

b) Poverty

Judges 6:6 - 'So Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD'. (NKJ)

Fear prevented Israel from reaping what they had sown. Fear weakened the nation, making them subject to abuse by the Midianites.

As the Israelites were fearful of the Midianites, they could not reap what they sowed. This resulted in them experiencing poverty because they were disadvantaged.

c) Inability to obey the Voice of God

Judges 6:10 - 'Also I said to you, "I am the LORD your God; do not fear the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell." But you have not obeyed My voice.' (NKJ)

Fear prevented Israel from obeying God. The Israelites feared the god of the Amorites. This prevented them from hearing the voice of God.

d) Joy turned to Mourning

Judges 6:11 – 'Now the Angel of the LORD came and sat under the terebinth tree which was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress, in order to hide it from the Midianites'. (NKJ)

The winepress is a symbol of joy. The threshing floor is a symbol of pain, sorrow and mourning. For Gideon, the winepress became the threshing floor - the place of joy now became a place of mourning.

Wheat was traditionally threshed on the mountain by oxen. The winds on the mountain would drive the chaff away. In the winepress Gideon was doing the work of the winds and the oxen - the work of the Holy Spirit and the work of the beast. Fear will burn you out.

In past times oxen would thresh the wheat on the mountains, and the wind would separate the chaff away. Because of fear, Gideon took this upon himself and worked in the winepress doing the work of the wind, the oxen and the work of the Holy Spirit.

We can see from this that fear would cause you to burn out and in this instance your joy is turned into mourning.

e) Damaged self-esteem

Judges 6:15 – 'So he said to Him, "O my Lord, how can I save Israel? Indeed my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house'. (NKJ)

Fear will make you feel the weakest and the least, like you are a nothing and the weakest of all. It will remind you that you are not qualified enough to do anything.

Question 2: Why was Gideon called a mighty man of valour?

In the midst of fear the angel of the Lord declared that he was a mighty man of valour for the following reasons:-

2.1 This was a prophetic declaration - the Lord declared his ending.

2.2 vs 12 reads: 'The Lord is with you'

2.3 vs 14 reads: 'Have I not sent you' this means that Gideon was a sent one-an apostle.

2.4 vs 16 reads: 'You shall defeat the Midianites'.

We can see from the above statements that the Lord was re-assuring Gideon that He was with Him; that he need not fear and that he would have victory.

Question 3: How does this apply to the Church?

The church is God's mighty man of valour. Similar promises apply to the church according to the following scriptures:

Hag 2:9 - 'The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former,' says the LORD of hosts. 'And in this place I will give peace,' says the LORD of hosts'. (NKJ)

Eccl 7:8 - 'The end of a thing is better than its beginning; the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit.' (NKJ)

3.2 The Lord is not just with the Church, He is in the Church.

The following scriptures indicate that The Lord is in the Church:

1 Cor 6:19 - 'Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?' (NKJ)

1 Cor 3:16 - 'Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?' (NKJ)

Heb 13:5 - 'Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' (NKJ)

3.3 The Church is also sent.

The following scriptures indicate that The Church is also sent:

Matt 10:16 - 'Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves'. (NKJ)

John 20:21 - 'Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you'. (KJV)

John 17:18 - 'As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world'. (NKJ)

3.4 The Church is also Promised Victory.

The following scriptures indicate that The Church is also Promised Victory:

2 Cor 2:14 - 'Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place'. (NKJ)

Matt 16:18 - 'And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. (NKJ)

1 Cor 15:57 - 'But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ'. (NKJ)

Question 4: Using Gideon and his army as examples select principles that one should operate in, in order to exert an influence beyond one's capacity. Use the underlined verses to draw your conclusions.

Judges 6:17 - 'Then he said to Him, "If now I have found favor in Your sight, then show me a sign that it is You who talk with me'.

18 "Do not depart from here, I pray, until I come to You and bring out my offering and set it before You." And He said, "I will wait until you come back'.

19 So Gideon went in and prepared a young goat, and unleavened bread from an ephah of flour. The meat he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot; and he brought them out to Him under the terebinth tree and presented them'.

20 The Angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened bread and lay them on this rock, and pour out the broth." And he did so'.

21 Then the Angel of the LORD put out the end of the staff that was in His hand, and touched the meat and the unleavened bread; and fire rose out of the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread. And the Angel of the LORD departed out of his sight'. (NKJ)

4.1 Testing a Good Manifestation

Gideon's method of testing bears important relevance for the Church.

1 Jn 4:1 - 'Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world'.

2 By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God,

3 and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world' (NKJ)

Underlined verses:

show me a sign that it is You who talk with me.

Although the angel called Gideon a mighty man of valour, Gideon wanted a sign that He was the angel of the Lord. Gideon tested the supernatural. Most folk test an adverse manifestation. Gideon tested a good manifestation - He tested the angel that had a good word for him.

prepared a young goat, and unleavened bread ; broth in a pot;

He brought 3 items to test the angel: a young goat, unleavened bread, and broth.

The goat is the traditional sin offering. The unleavened bread symbolizes the Body of Christ (His flesh) and the broth, the Blood of Christ. The Body and Blood of Christ speak of His incarnation, His coming in the flesh to take away the sins of the world.

fire rose out of the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread.

The consuming of the offering by the fire from the rock was proof of divine acceptance.

Looking at the whole scene from a New Testament perspective, the manifestation that Gideon saw confessed 'that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh'.

1 Jn 4:1 'Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits'.

Gideon tested that this was the angel of the Lord as he wanted to be sure.

How do we apply this principle to the daily barrages of manifestations that we see in the church today?

Notice the manifestation - fire from the rock consumed the sin offering.

Herein lies the quintessential test - does the manifestation deal with the sin in your life?

If you have been laughing, crying, falling down and jerking, check whether these 'fiery' experiences consumed the hidden sin in your life. If it did not, then your experience was a false fire from a false rock.

4.2 Test Yourself

Judges 6:25 - 'Now it came to pass the same night that the LORD said to him, "Take your father's young bull, the second bull of seven years old, and tear down the altar of Baal that your father has, and cut down the wooden image that is beside it;

26 'and build an altar to the LORD your God on top of this rock in the proper arrangement, and take the second bull and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the image which you shall cut down.' (NKJ)

4.2.1

*tear down the altar of Baal that your father has,
build an altar to the LORD your God on top of this rock in the proper arrangement,*

Gideon, at the command of the Lord had to break the altar of Baal in his own home first. Before you venture into any ministry, deal with the illegitimate altars in your own home first. This means that you must break idolatry and every unscriptural practice in your own home first.

4.2.2

Gideon had to break his father's altar. The unscriptural traditions of your family that have become your current operating system must be broken first before you deal with the enemy on the outside.

4.2.3

Gideon had to break down the altar and cut down the wooden image. He had to deal with the operating system and the false deity. Too often people deal with the false deity (the image) but leave behind the altar - the operating system.

Thus, we find many 'Hindu Christians' in the church. They have given up the image but still possess the altar - they operate in mysticism, addiction to leadership (guru system) and an audience based relationship with God. They have the altar of Hinduism in their homes and the God of the Bible next to it.

4.2.4

Besides breaking the illegitimate altar, Gideon had to build an altar to the Lord.

Build the altar (the church) in your own house first before you launch out into ministry. Build it on the rock - Jesus. Build it in 'the proper arrangement' - give attention to protocol and excellence.

Gideon had to offer a burnt sacrifice - start with the principles of sacrifice in your own home first. Build the new operating system into your lifestyle viz. prayer, praise, repentance, obedience, sacrifice etc.

4.3 The Set Man Test (Recognition)

Judges 6:34 - 'But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon; then he blew the trumpet, and the Abiezrites gathered behind him.

35 And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh, who also gathered behind him. He also sent messengers to Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali; and they came up to meet them'. (NKJ)

4.3.1

Abiezrites gathered behind him; all Manasseh, who also gathered behind him.

If you are not a set man, are you able to gather behind a set man - a man that God has appointed (set). The Abiezrites, Manasseh, Asher, etc gathered behind Gideon.

The Abiezrites, once opposed to him, now gathered behind Gideon. They recognized the Spirit of the Lord upon him. Are you able to recognize the Spirit of the Lord upon a man for leadership?

Many people are opposed to set man teaching, because they are against following a man. They follow Jesus only. The same people give absolute submission to their heathen bosses at the workplace. Many claim that this teaching is from the Old Testament.

It must be noted that the Old Testament is twice as thick as the New Testament - we should be spending twice as much time in studying those things that are written for our admonition and learning.

Attention must be given to the following scriptures:

2 Tim 3:16 - 'All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness' (NKJ)

1 Cor 11:1 - 'And you should follow my example, just as I follow Christ's. (TLB)

Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ. (RSV)

Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ. (NKJ)

Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ. (NIV)

Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ. (NAS)

Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. (KJV)

IMITATE; FOLLOW THE MAN THAT GOD AS APPOINTED AS LONG AS HE IS FOLLOWING CHRIST. REMEMBER GOD'S METHOD IS A HUMAN VESSEL.

4.3.2

If you are calling yourself a set man, is this confirmed by people gathering behind you? If you have no followers, assess your position. Maybe you are called to gather behind some other set man.

If you have followers make sure these are sheep - not goats, pigs, serpents and scorpions that have no passion for the Word of God. They will mislead you by giving you a false perception of your calling.

4.4 The Voice Test

Judg 6:36 - 'So Gideon said to God, 'If You will save Israel by my hand as You have said-

37 'look, I shall 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 shall know that You will save Israel by my hand, as You have said'.

38 'And it was so. When he rose early the next morning and squeezed the fleece together, he wrung the dew out of the fleece, a bowlful of water'.

39 *'Then Gideon said to God, "Do not be angry with me, but let me speak just once more: Let me test, I pray, just once more with the fleece; let it now be dry only on the fleece, but on all the ground let there be dew'.*

40 *'And God did so that night. It was dry on the fleece only, but there was dew on all the ground'. (NKJ)*

*'If You will save Israel by my hand as You have said-
fleece of wool on the threshing floor;
dew on the fleece only, and it is dry on all the ground
let it now be dry only on the fleece, but on all the ground let there be dew.'*

There are many voices seeking to gain our attention today. If you want to move into your position as a mighty man of valour, the issue of gullibility needs to be dealt with. Most people accept every supernatural voice as the voice of God.

They are unskilled in discerning. Gideon used the fleece (wool) because he did not want anyone to pull the wool over his eyes.

Gideon wanted to test *"as You have said"*. He wanted some way to test the voice. He wanted to be led by the dew. If the dew was on the fleece only, then he knew it was the voice of God. If the dew was on the ground only the next day, then this would be convincing evidence to him that God had spoken. He discerned the dew by the WATER.

Now the dew from heaven is a symbol of the Holy Spirit and water is a consistent symbol of the WORD OF GOD. To Gideon the dew and the water were one. We too must be led by the Spirit - the dew of God.

Rom 8:14

'For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God'. (NKJ)

The SPIRIT (THE VOICE - THE DEW) and the WORD (WATER) must agree.

1 Jn 5:7 – 'For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one'. (NKJ)

4.5 The Fear Test

Judges 7:3 - 'Now therefore, proclaim in the hearing of the people, saying, 'Whoever is fearful and afraid, let him turn and depart at once from Mount Gilead.' And twenty-two thousand of the people returned, and ten thousand remained.' (NKJ)

Anxiety disorders are the result of fear. We are in a war. Weak minded people will not last in this battle. Remember God's word to Joshua:

Josh 1:6 - 'Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them'. (NKJ)

God asked the fearful to depart at once. 22000 people left. 10000 remained.

Are you the kind of person who remains when the majority has left? If you remain when the majority leaves, it means that there is no fear in you. It means you understand the following scripture:

2 Tim 1:7 - 'For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind'. (NKJ)

It means your strength is not in the majority, but in God. The fearful always move in big crowds. An additional requirement for you to be a mighty man of valour is the strength to separate from the fearful.

Too often sentiment compels us to carry the fearful into the battlefield. This is extra baggage that could jeopardize your own victory in the purposes of God.

Fear is contagious. The fearful will instigate fear. The 10 spies that returned from the Promised Land transmitted their fear to the whole nation.

4.6 The Water Test

Judges 7:4 - 'But 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. Then it will be, that of whom I say to you, 'This one shall go with you,' the same shall go with you; and of whomever I say to you, 'This one shall not go with you,' the same shall not go'.

5 'So he brought the people down to the water. And the LORD said to Gideon, 'Everyone who lapped from the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set apart by himself; likewise everyone who gets down on his knees to drink'.

6 And the number of those who lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, was three hundred men; but all the rest of the people got down on their knees to drink water.

7 Then the LORD said to Gideon, "By the three hundred men who lapped I will save you, and deliver the Midianites into your hand. Let all the other people go, every man to his place."(NKJ)

This test whittled the crowd from 10 000 to 300. Water is a picture of the Word of God. Notice that all drank the water, yet only 300 were selected.

The separation was based on the manner in which they drank the water. There were 2 distinct groups: those who lapped putting their hand to the mouth and those who got on their knees to drink.

The difference was the speed with which they drank. Those using their hands were obviously faster than those who bent their knees.

The 300 were faster than the rest in accessing the water. The religious position disqualified the rest. There are two truths pictured here as far as the 300 are concerned:

- The purpose of God was greater than their thirst.
- They were quick to access the water - Word of God (revelation).

These 2 principles are important in determining your might in the kingdom of God. Are you propelled by the purposes of God or your own carnal desires?

It is not rare to find many spiritual activities propelled by deep rooted carnal desires like fame, fortune and the desire to prove yourself to others.

This is a day of great illumination of the Word of God. We call this revelation, although it does not mean that in the true sense of the word.

How fast are you in accessing this illumination? There are many who are:

2 Tim 3:7 – ‘always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth’.(NKJ)

Jesus rebuked the two on the road to Emmaus for their slowness.

4.7 The Loaf Test

Judges 7:13 - ‘And when Gideon had come, there was a man telling a dream to his companion. He said, "I have had a dream: To my surprise, a loaf of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian; it came to a tent and struck it so that it fell and overturned, and the tent collapsed’.

14 ‘Then his companion answered and said, "This is nothing else but the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel! Into his hand God has delivered Midian and the whole camp.’(NKJ)

a loaf of barley bread; This is nothing else but the sword of Gideon

Someone from the enemy's camp saw a loaf destroying the Midianite camp. Notice, he did not see 300 loaves. This one loaf was equivalent to the sword of Gideon. God had earlier promised Gideon that he would defeat the Midianite as one man.

Judges 6:16 - ‘And the LORD said to him, "Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat the Midianites as one man’. (NKJ)

This did not mean that Gideon was going to do it on his own. This one loaf was equivalent to the sword of Gideon which in turn was equivalent to Gideon and his 300 men. If we are to be mighty the loaf principle must be realized in our lives.

1 Cor 10:17 – ‘For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread’. (NKJ)

The generation that is fearless, propelled by purpose and accesses the Word of God quickly must function in unity as one loaf.

Note it was not the 32000 who gathered that was one loaf, but Gideon and his 300 men.

4.8 The Trumpet Test

Judges 7:16 - 'Then he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put a trumpet into every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and torches inside the pitchers.' (NKJ)

Every man had a trumpet in his hand. Every man could produce the same sound. The 300 could produce the same sound as their leader. This is a symbolic picture of everyone saying the same thing.

1 Cor 1:10 - 'Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment'. (NKJ)

This is a position that destroys doctrinal strife.

4.9 The Set Man Test 2 - Following the Leader

Judges 7:17 - 'And he said to them, "Look at me and do likewise; watch, and when I come to the edge of the camp you shall do as I do:

18 "When I blow the trumpet, I and all who are with me, then you also blow the trumpets on every side of the whole camp, and say, 'The sword of the LORD and of Gideon!'"(NKJ)

4.9.1 - "look at me and do likewise"

Gideon said do as I do and say as I say. A true leader will DO and SAY. Most leaders can only say - they have no practical theology. Jesus did both.

Acts 1:1 - 'The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach', (KJV)

4.9.2

A true set man (leader) demands imitation. His lifestyle is an example that can be followed.

1 Cor 11:1 - 'Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ'. (NKJ)

4.10 The Pitcher (Earthen Vessel) Test

Judg 7:20 - 'Then the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers-- they held the torches in their left hands and the trumpets in their right hands for blowing-- and they cried, "The sword of the LORD and of Gideon!"' (NKJ)

The torch (light) was hidden in the earthen vessel. The trumpets were blown and the earthen vessels were broken simultaneously. The sudden exposure of light and sound of the trumpets by Gideon's men caused confusion in the camp of the enemy. They

destroyed themselves. 300 men broke the vessels together, exposing the light that was hidden.

2 Cor 4:7 - 'But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us'. (NKJ)

Col 1:27 - 'To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory'. (NKJ)

John 8:12 - 'Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, 'I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life'. (NKJ)

Matt 5:16 – 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven'. (NKJ)

We are the earthen vessels. Christ is the treasure, the light within us. Matt. 5:16 instructs us to let our light shine. One of the ways to do this is to break the earthen vessel - bring your body and soul into subjection and humility.

Corporate humility/brokenness will allow the light of Christ to shine in us. An intact vessel, which is a symbol of pride, will not allow the light of Christ to be seen. God will resist the proud church.

Such a church is like Humpty Dumpty sitting on the wall. When that church falls no apostle or prophet will be able to put it together again.

Thus far this is what we see: 300 fearless men, propelled by purpose rather than carnal desires, accessing revelation quickly, all submitted to a God appointed leader, all saying the same thing and all humbling themselves together - THIS IS THE ONE LOAF OF GOD. This one loaf defeated the enemy that was as numerous as locusts.

Judges 7:12 - 'Now the Midianites and Amalekites, all the people of the East, were lying in the valley as numerous as locusts; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the seashore in multitude.'(NKJ)

The 300 exerted an influence beyond their numerical strength.

4.11 Set Man Test 3

Judges 8:22 – 'Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, 'Rule over us, both you and your son, and your grandson also; for you have delivered us from the hand of Midian'.

23 But Gideon said to them, 'I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; the LORD shall rule over you'. (NKJ)

The people asked Gideon to rule over them. No doubt, Gideon was now a celebrity. He passed the ultimate set man test. He did not use his victory to usurp God's position in the lives of the people.

He declared, *"I will not rule over you --- the Lord shall rule over you."*