

Judges 6:1, 6-10 (ESV) ¹The people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord gave them into the hand of Midian seven years....⁶ And Israel was brought very low because of Midian. And the people of Israel cried out for help to the Lord. ⁷ When the people of Israel cried out to the Lord on account of the Midianites, ⁸ the Lord sent a prophet to the people of Israel. And he said to them, “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: I led you up from Egypt and brought you out of the house of slavery. ⁹ And I delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of all who oppressed you, and drove them out before you and gave you their land. ¹⁰ And I said to you, ‘I am the Lord your God; you shall not fear the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell.’ But you have not obeyed my voice.”

Life Principle: The Lord May Enlighten You To The Cause Of Your Problems Before Providing The Cure For Your Problems.

Judges 6:11–17, 21-22a (ESV) ¹¹ Now the angel of the Lord came and sat under the terebinth at Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the winepress to hide it from the Midianites. ¹² And the angel of the Lord appeared to him and said to him, “The Lord is with you, O mighty man of valor.” ¹³ And Gideon said to him, “Please, my lord, if the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all his wonderful deeds that our fathers recounted to us, saying, ‘Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?’ But now the Lord has forsaken us and given us into the hand of Midian.” ¹⁴ And the Lord turned to him and said, “Go in this might of yours and save Israel from the hand of Midian; do not I send you?” ¹⁵ And he said to him, “Please, Lord, how can I save Israel? Behold, my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father’s house.” ¹⁶ And the Lord said to him, “But I will be with you, and you shall strike the Midianites as one man.” ¹⁷ And he said to him, “If now I have found favor in your eyes, then show me a sign that it is you who speak with me..... ²¹ Then the angel of the Lord reached out the tip of the staff that was in his hand and touched the meat and the unleavened cakes. And fire sprang up from the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened cakes. And the angel of the Lord vanished from his sight. ²² Then Gideon perceived that he was the angel of the Lord.....

Life Principle: God Often Chooses To Use The Weakest Of People And Things To Accomplish His Purposes.

Judges 6:25–31 (ESV) ²⁵ That night the Lord said to him, “Take your father’s bull, and the second bull seven years old, and pull down the altar of Baal that your father has, and cut down the Asherah that is beside it ²⁶ and build an altar to the Lord your God on the top of the stronghold here, with stones laid in due order. Then take the second bull and offer it as a burnt offering with the wood of the Asherah that you shall cut down.” ²⁷ So Gideon took ten men of his servants and did as the Lord had told him. But because he was too afraid of his family and the men of the town to do it by day, he did it by night. ²⁸ When the men of the town rose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was broken down, and the Asherah beside it was cut down, and the second bull was offered on the altar that had been built. ²⁹ And they said to one another, “Who has done this thing?” And after they had searched and inquired, they said, “Gideon the son of Joash has done this thing.” ³⁰ Then the men of the town said to Joash, “Bring out your son, that he may die, for he has broken down the altar of Baal and cut down the Asherah beside it.” ³¹ But Joash said to all who stood against him, “Will you contend for Baal? Or will you save him? Whoever contends for him shall be put to death by morning. If he is a god, let him contend for himself, because his altar has been broken down.”

Life Principle: People Can Become So Spiritually Sick That They Defend What Is Evil And Denounce What Is Righteous.

Isaiah 5:20 (ESV) ²⁰Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!

Proverbs 17:15 (ESV) ¹⁵He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous are both alike an abomination to the Lord.

Judges 6:33–40 (ESV) ³³ Now all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the people of the East came together, and they crossed the Jordan and encamped in the Valley of Jezreel. ³⁴ But the Spirit of the Lord clothed Gideon, and he sounded the trumpet, and the Abiezrites were called out to follow him. ³⁵ And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh, and they too were called out to follow him. And he sent messengers to Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, and they went up to meet them. ³⁶ Then Gideon said to God, “If you will save Israel by my hand, as you have said, ³⁷ behold, I am laying a fleece of wool on the threshing floor. If there is dew on the fleece alone, 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 next morning and squeezed the fleece, he wrung enough dew from the fleece to fill a bowl with water. ³⁹ Then Gideon said to God, “Let not your anger burn against me; let me speak just once more. Please let me test just once more with the fleece. Please let it be dry on the fleece only, and on all the ground let there be dew.” ⁴⁰ And God did so that night; and it was dry on the fleece only, and on all the ground there was dew.

Life Principle: Distrusting God’s Faithfulness To His Word Is What Motivates People To Seek Confirming Signs.

Deuteronomy 6:16 (ESV) ¹⁶“You shall not put the Lord your God to the test, as you tested him at Massah.

Judges 7:1–2 (ESV) Then Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) and all the people who were with him rose early and encamped beside the spring of Harod. And the camp of Midian was north of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley. ² The Lord said to Gideon, “The people with you are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hand, lest Israel boast over me, saying, ‘My own hand has saved me.’

Judges 7:9–11 (ESV) ⁹ That same night the Lord said to him, “Arise, go down against the camp, for I have given it into your hand. ¹⁰ But if you are afraid to go down, go down to the camp with Purah your servant. ¹¹ And you shall hear what they say, and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp.” Then he went down with Purah his servant to the outposts of the armed men who were in the camp.

Judges 7:19–21 (ESV) ¹⁹ So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the outskirts of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, when they had just set the watch. And they blew the trumpets and smashed the jars that were in their hands. ²⁰ Then the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the jars. They held in their left hands the torches, and in their right hands the trumpets to blow. And they cried out, “A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!” ²¹ Every man stood in his place around the camp, and all the army ran. They cried out and fled.

Judges 8:22–27 (ESV) ²² Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, “Rule over us, you and your son and your grandson also, for you have saved us from the hand of Midian.” ²³ Gideon said to them, “I will not rule over you, and my son will not rule over you; the Lord will rule over you.” ²⁴ And Gideon said to them, “Let me make a request of you: every one of you give me the earrings from his spoil.” (For they had golden earrings, because they were Ishmaelites.) ²⁵ And they answered, “We will willingly give them.” And they spread a cloak, and every man threw in it the earrings of his spoil. ²⁶ And the weight of the golden earrings that he requested was 1,700 shekels of gold, besides the crescent ornaments and the pendants and the purple garments worn by the kings of Midian, and besides the collars that were around the necks of their camels. ²⁷ And Gideon made an ephod of it and put it in his city, in Ophrah. And all Israel whored after it there, and it became a snare to Gideon and to his family.

Life Principle: Stay Alert Because You Can Spiritually Stumble At Any Time.

1 Corinthians 9:26–27 (ESV) ²⁶ So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. ²⁷ But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

2 Timothy 4:7 (ESV) ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.