



## Parkway Fellowship

No Regrets • No Fear • Judges 6:11-15,25-40; 7:9-15 • 09/15/2019

### Main Point

Fear of what could happen can make us miss what could happen.

### Introduction

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**Are you the type of person who is comfortable with risk? Why or why not?**

**Are there certain areas of life in which you are more comfortable with risk than others?**

**What is something God could call you to do that would cause you some fear?**

It's easy to get scared or apprehensive when we think God is asking us to do something that seems impossible. And He often does just that. When God appeared to Gideon and called him to be Israel's deliverer, Gideon had some fears. He worried whether it was truly God who was calling him, and he worried whether he had really heard God's instructions correctly. One cannot be too hard on Gideon for his fears; after all, what God was calling Gideon to do was risky and dangerous, and Gideon was not by nature a man dripping with courage. Nevertheless, once Gideon's doubts were dealt with, he was bold in obeying the Lord even though he did not know what the outcome would be.

### Understanding

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| Ask a volunteer to read Judges 6:11-15.

**What fears did Gideon have regarding what God was telling him to do?**

**How do you think Gideon felt when the angel addressed him as “mighty warrior”?**

**Do you think his questions in verse 13 were out of line? Why or why not?**

**Have you ever felt like Gideon? That God was asking you to take a big risk?**

God invites us to do things for His honor that far exceed our own capabilities. When we focus on our own abilities, we impose limits on what we believe God can do. When God assigns a task, He promises His presence and strength to accomplish it.

| Ask a volunteer to read Judges 6:25-40.

**What fears did Gideon have in these verses? What courage did he show?**

**What was Gideon ultimately asking of God in this passage?**

**What does it tell you about God that He allowed Gideon to test Him in this way?**

To ease his fears, Gideon asked God for a sign. Gideon put a wool fleece out on the ground overnight. If, in the morning, the fleece was wet but the ground around it was dry, then God's will would be confirmed. Gideon woke to find that the fleece was so wet that he wrung a bowlful of dew out of it. But, in yet another example of how certainty is no guarantee for obedience, Gideon made another request to God. This sign also involved a fleece, but this time Gideon wanted the fleece to be dry and the ground around it covered with dew. That night, God did exactly as Gideon requested.

| Ask a volunteer to read Judges 7:9-15.

**What did the Lord instruct Gideon to do to allay his fears about advancing on the Midianite camp?**

**What does it tell you about God that He was not frustrated or upset with Gideon over his fear about the upcoming battle?**

God could have been angry at Gideon for being afraid; instead, He showed Him a glimpse of His power. The character of God, not the change in circumstances, is the antidote to our fear. Along with that, God uses other believers to support and encourage us as we face doubts and uncertainty in our attempts to serve Him. We can provide support and encouragement to others who are stepping out in faith to serve the Lord.

**How did God encourage Gideon in this passage?**

**How did Purah’s words bring encouragement to Gideon and acknowledge God’s provision as well?**

**What are some things you need to remind yourself are true about God in order to take on the things He asks you to do?**

**How does reminding yourself of God’s character change your perspective about risk?**

In His grace, God goes before us and then goes with us as we complete the tasks He gives us. When we are afraid, we can trust in the character of the One who is sending us. No matter what the outcome is, we know we will be successful when we are obedient.

## Application

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**In this week’s sermon, we learned from Gideon’s story that “the strength I have is all the strength I need”, “I might have to tear down some things from my past”, “God often gives reassurance but rarely removes fear”, and “God is at work on the other side of what I fear.” Which of those statements most stands out to you as encouragement or challenge right now? Explain.**

**How can we as a group stand together to encourage each other in what God has told us to do?**

## Pray

Thank the Lord for inviting His people to participate in His mission, and that we accomplish His will by His strength, not our own. Thank Him for the ways He encourages us, and ask Him to help us look for ways to encourage one another in serving and honoring Him.

## Commentary

| Judges 6:11-16

6:11-12 The prophetic speech ends abruptly. It is followed neither by repentance nor judgment but, surprisingly, by the provision of another deliverer. The angel of the LORD—the Lord’s personal representative who spoke with his full authority—appeared to Gideon at Ophrah, a town probably located in the Jezreel Valley. Gideon’s name means “the one who hacks or cuts down,” a fitting name for the man whose first task in the Lord’s service would be

to cut down Baal's altar. Other aspects of Gideon's demeanor are less promising. In view of the threat of the Midianites, he was threshing wheat in a winepress, a shallow depression in the rock, a safer location than the more exposed threshing floor. Gideon's natural reserve will emerge again as the narrative unfolds, and it is in sharp contrast to the title given to Gideon by the angel— valiant warrior.

6:13-16 Gideon's response challenged both aspects of the angel's greeting. First, he cast doubt on the Lord's presence with Israel. The angel of the Lord did not appear to hear Gideon's objection. Instead, he commissioned him to be the mighty warrior that God had named him. This provoked Gideon to challenge this aspect of the angel's greeting as well. Gideon claimed that he was doubly unsuited for this task. Yet the rest of the story casts doubt on Gideon's assertions: His father was a substantial landowner in the city, with the resources to build and maintain an altar to Baal, and Gideon was able to call on ten servants to assist him in pulling down the altar. These were hardly the signs of a man whose family was of no importance. All of Gideon's protestations were useless beside the single fact that the Lord would be with him.

## | Judges 7:9-15

7:9-14 The army was now sufficiently small, so the Lord commanded Gideon to get up and begin the action against the camp of the Midianites. Yet instead of immediate action, there was further delay while Gideon's continuing fears were addressed. The Lord told Gideon that if he was afraid to go against the Midianite camp, he should secretly visit it and listen to what the Midianites were saying. He crept down to where he could see the Midianites, Amalekites, and . . . Qedemites, i.e., "eastern peoples" spread out like a swarm of locusts, with innumerable . . . camels. Visually nothing had changed since the opening verses of chap. 6. Yet what Gideon heard told a different story—God had given members of the enemy force a dream that was utterly demoralizing. It is ironic that the Midianites were quick to grasp the significance of a dream, while Gideon was slow to believe repeated signs and direct messages from the Lord.

7:15-16 Eavesdropping on this conversation at last had the desired effect on Gideon. In response, he bowed in worship, acknowledging the truth of the Lord's words, now that he had heard them repeated by pagans. He returned to Israel's camp and finally delivered to his men the instruction he had received from the Lord in v. 9. Gideon divided his small army into three divisions and "armed" them with a ram's-horn trumpet, an empty pitcher, and a torch. Clearly, unless the Lord fought for them they would have no chance of victory.