



Overcoming a Weak Faith Judges 6 - 8

Some causes of a weak faith:

- **My view of sin:** I openly disobey God, causing me to forget His love for me. Judges 6:1-10
"I delivered you from the hands of the Egyptians and from the hands of all your oppressors....But you have not obeyed Me" (v. 9-10)
- **My view of God:** I think He has abandoned me in the midst of my problems. Judges 6:12-13
"But now the LORD has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian." (v. 13)
- **My view of God's Word:** I no longer trust what He says to me. Judges 6:14-17
"But the LORD said to him, 'Surely I will be with you'... So Gideon said to Him, 'If now I have found favor in Your sight, then show me a sign that it is You who speak with me.'" (v. 16-17)
- **My view of myself:** I am unworthy, inadequate, and unable to live for the Lord. Judges 6:15
"He said to Him, 'O Lord, how shall I deliver Israel? Behold, my family is the least in Manasseh, and I am the youngest in my father's house.'" (v. 15)

Some general principles to strengthen faith:

- **Understand how painful circumstances can be a refining process to reveal my need for God.** Judges 6:6-10
"So Israel was brought very low because of Midian, and the sons of Israel cried to the LORD." (v. 6)

Hebrews 12

- **Jesus still will pursue you even if you feel unworthy and abandoned.** Judges 6:11-16
"The angel of the LORD appeared to him..." (v.12)

John 1:10-13, Ephesians 1:3-6

- **Grow in your knowledge of Christ.**
 - **Your identity and strength in Him.** Judges 6:12 *"The LORD is with you, O valiant warrior."*
 - **His patience and grace for you.** Judges 6:18-22 *"Please do not depart from here, until I come back to You..."*

Some specific actions by God to strengthen faith:

- **Make peace with Him by removing any sin that separates you from Jesus.** Judges 6:23-27
"Then Gideon built an altar there to the LORD and named it The LORD is Peace..." (v. 24)
- **Trust in God's clear Word more than a "fleece."** Judges 6:36-40
"Then Gideon said to God, 'If You will deliver Israel through me, as You have spoken, behold, I will put a fleece..." (v. 36-37)
- **Expect some sifting of your life to increase a dependency on God.** Judges 7:2-7
"The LORD said to Gideon, 'The people who are with you are too many for Me to give Midian into their hands, for Israel would become boastful...' (v. 2)
- **Freely ask God to affirm your faith in His plan.** Judges 7:9-15
"When Gideon heard the account of the dream and its interpretation, he bowed in worship..." (v. 15)
- **Step forward in faith and obedience to pursue God's will and mission for your life.** Judges 7:16-25

Be warned: We are still vulnerable to weakness and compromise. Judges 8

Digging Deeper:

Gideon is one of the best known leaders in Judges. God pursued him even though his faith seemed weak and uncertain. No matter how many times God promised to empower and be present with him, he still needed more evidence and support from God. God's patience with Gideon's struggling faith gives us hope as we battle the "Gideon complex" of perpetually feeling inadequate and unworthy. Thankfully the Lord persisted and Gideon was victorious in his battle. However, he did not necessarily finish strong, as you can read in Judges 8. This is a warning to us all, that no matter how much we experience God's power and accomplish His purposes, we are still vulnerable to a weak or compromised faith.

LifeGroup Discussion:

When have you struggled to trust the Lord, His Word or His calling in your life?

Why do you think you struggled with a weak faith?

God sometimes allows a disciplinary pain to strengthen our faith.

What does He teach us in Hebrews 12:4-13 on His discipline? Why does the Lord discipline us?

We can be encouraged knowing that even though Gideon expressed so many doubts about God's Word, God still pursued Gideon rather than rejecting him and finding another leader. Do you believe God loves and pursues you even if you express doubts? Read Ephesians 1:3-8 which shows God's pursuit of us.

Now read Ephesians 2:1-5.

- What was your spiritual life like before God pursued you?
- From Ephesians 1 again, what did God give you in vs. 3?
- Ephesians 1:4. When did God choose you? What change did He make in you in contrast to Ephesians 2:1-5?
- Ephesians 1:5. What kind of relationship do you have with God?
- Ephesians 1:6. Why did God do this for you?
- Ephesians 1:7-8. What did Jesus accomplish for you?
- How much does God love you to pursue, choose, save and redeem you?

Gideon's fleece is often discussed and sometimes followed as a way to know if one should do something for God.

Have you ever used a "fleece" to determine God's will? How did that turn out?

Discuss the following thoughts on the use of "fleeces."

1. The fleece was a miraculous event that would not naturally occur as he reversed the request in Judges 6:36-40. Therefore it was more than just a normal circumstance that could be called a coincidence. Trusting in natural circumstances to know God's will can be very misleading. Read how people's view of Paul changed as his circumstances changed in Acts 28:1-6.
2. The fleece was not used to discover God's will. God's Word already told Gideon what he should do. Gideon needed the fleece to overcome his doubts and build up his confidence to believe and obey God's spoken Word. Judges 6:36-37
3. Weak faith needs constant assurance. God had already given Gideon miracles—the direct word from the angel of the Lord (Judges 6:11, 12), the fire from the rock to consume the food (Judges 6:21, 22), the Spirit of the Lord directly came on Gideon (Judges 6:34). Therefore, the fleece was an indication that Gideon has weak faith even after God spoke to him and performed amazing miracles. Is it better to know and obey God's clear Word or seek a fleece for God to reveal His will?

God can be patient and gracious by allowing the use of a miraculous fleece as He was with Gideon. But how much more blessed to believe without seeing as Jesus said to Thomas in John 20:26-29. Be cautious in using a fleece such as the proverbial "open door." We might say, "if God opens the door for a new job, ministry, place to live, then I know that is God's will." We then might expect all to go well as we enter through that "open door." However, some "open doors" are not necessarily God's will. (II Corinthians 2:12-13) and when we enter other "open doors" we face many adversaries which might cause us to question if that "door" was God's will (I Corinthians 16:8-9). Therefore be careful when determining God's will by the use of fleeces, circumstances and "open doors."

Next Steps:

1. **Do you feel stuck in a cycle of sin or addiction?** Come to Celebrate Recovery on Wednesdays at 7:00 pm in room S-6. Celebrate Recovery is a Christ-centered twelve-step program and a no-judgment, safe haven where people who are hurting can experience hope and healing in a Christian community. calvarylife.org/cr
2. **Do you have questions, or know someone who has questions, about Christianity and following Jesus?** Invite a friend to attend the Alpha Course with you as a way of staying on mission so that you will not compromise. Alpha meets on Wednesdays from 6:30 - 8:30 pm in the Lobby. Explore some of life's big questions over a relaxed time of dinner, honest conversation, learning and group discussion. Learn more at calvarylife.org/alpha
3. **Would you like to strengthen your faith in Jesus?** Get matched up with a discipleship leader who can walk you through the "Following Jesus" course. This course will journey through the foundational elements of following Jesus. Come to the Mentor Meetup on Sunday, February 22 from 7:00 - 8:30 in the Lobby to connect with a mentor over a casual evening of dessert. For more info, contact Laura Copeland at LCopeland@calvarylife.org or visit calvarylife.org/discipleship

