

# ONE MORE *TEST*

unit 8 | session 3



## CHRIST CONNECTION

God Almighty redeems a weak and sinful people who could not earn salvation on their own. Through the work of His Son, Jesus Christ, sinners are redeemed.

## OF PATIENCE

This week, we're covering the passages and main points below. But we encourage you to dig in and read all of the content on this timeline.

### Judges 6—Judges 8

#### GOD SETTLES OUR DOUBTS

##### JUDGES 6:36-40

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.

#### GOD WORKS WITH LITTLE

##### JUDGES 7:1-9

1 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.' 3 Now therefore proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, 'Whoever is fearful and trembling, let him return home and hurry away from Mount Gilead.'" Then 22,000 of the people returned, and 10,000 remained. 4 And the LORD said to Gideon, "The people are still too many. Take them down to the water, and I will test them for you there, and anyone of whom I say to you, 'This one shall go with you,' shall go with you, and anyone of whom I say to you, 'This one shall not go with you,' shall not go." 5 So he brought the people down to the water. And the LORD said to Gideon, "Every one who laps the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set by himself. Likewise, every one who kneels down to drink." 6 And the number of those who lapped, putting their hands to their mouths, was 300 men, but all the rest of the people knelt down to drink water. 7 And the LORD said to Gideon, "With the 300 men who lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hand, and let all the others go every man to his home." 8 So the people took provisions in their hands, and their trumpets. And he sent all the rest of Israel every man to his tent, but retained the 300 men. And the camp of Midian was below him in the valley. 9 That same night the LORD said to him, "Arise, go down against the camp, for I have given it into your hand."

## MAIN POINT.

We can trust God to confirm His will for us.



## THEOLOGY CONNECTION

### GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer for the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. The Holy Spirit enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

# DISCUSSION

## GOD SETTLES OUR DOUBTS

JUDGES 6:36-40



- When have you wanted God to give you a clear sign? How did God react to Gideon's doubt?
- What is the best way to handle our doubts?
- Jesus is the greatest sign that God is with us and that He follows through with His promises. Why do we feel the need for more proof?

## GOD WORKS WITH LITTLE

JUDGES 7:1-9



- Why did God reduce Israel's army? How does He do similar things in our lives too?
- Despite how the men felt about God reducing Israel's army, how was it actually God's kindness?
- In what area of your life are you tempted to rely on your own strength instead of God's?



**HOW CAN YOU TRUST GOD TO USE WHAT YOU HAVE, EVEN IF IT'S VERY LITTLE?**

## CULTURAL CONNECTION

Is doubt a sin? Doubt can certainly lead to sin. We may struggle with wondering why God allows certain things to happen. We may wonder if God cares about our difficult seasons. And if left untended, these doubts can lead us to doubt His existence. To do this would be living without faith, and without faith, we can't know the Lord or please Him (Heb. 11:6). When an angel appeared to Zechariah, who was very old and childless, and announced he'd have a son (John the Baptist), Zechariah doubted that God could do it and said, "How shall I know this?" (Luke 1:18). In other words, he asked, "How can I know this is even true?" He spoke from unbelief and God punished him for his doubt by making him mute. Yet, when an angel visited Mary, she responded with, "How will this be?" (Luke 1:34)—in other words, "How will this happen?" She couldn't understand how, but she spoke in faith that what the angel proclaimed would somehow come to be. One response was sinful doubt; one response was a desire to understand.



## DAY ONE

# JUDGES 6:11-24

Have you ever hoped God would give you a clear sign? You may have had a tough decision and longed for reassurance that you were choosing correctly. Sometimes, it feels like it would make things so much easier if God clearly dropped a sign for us in these situations.

Gideon lived in a time when the Midianites oppressed God's people because Israel had again disobeyed the Lord (Judg. 6:1-10). When an angel of the Lord visited Gideon to call him into leadership, Gideon basically asked, "If God is with us, then why has all this happened? Where is He?" He expressed feeling like God had forgotten His people. We know this wasn't true; we know His people had actually wandered away from Him. Instead of scolding Gideon, the Lord graciously proved that He had never forgotten Israel. Gideon asked for a sign, and the Lord provided it. He gave Gideon what he needed to step forward in faith. In fact, as we read this week, we'll see that God provided multiple signs. Here's what we can take from this: Gideon wasn't acting in sin when he asked for a sign. He wanted assurance that the Lord was indeed speaking to him. There is a difference in questioning who God is and asking Him a question. When we come to the Lord and ask for confirmation, it doesn't always mean we are acting in a lack of faith. When our heart is to hear Him clearly, God will be faithful in confirming His voice. How does He do this though? Well, it isn't always through a drastic sign, though it can be. Instead, God often uses His Word and prayer to confirm His voice to us. He also uses other godly people to confirm what He may be speaking to us through the Holy Spirit. Any sign God gives us will always line up with what He has already spoken through Scripture.

- **WHEN HAVE YOU LONGED FOR GOD TO GIVE YOU A CLEAR SIGN?**
- **WHEN HAVE YOU BEEN SURE THAT YOU HEARD CLEARLY FROM THE LORD? HOW HAS HE SPOKEN TO YOU?**

## PRAY

**GOD, THANK YOU FOR SPEAKING TO ME. I WANT TO  
POSITION MYSELF TO HEAR YOUR VOICE. THANK  
YOU FOR CONFIRMING YOUR WILL THROUGH YOUR  
WORD AND THROUGH YOUR SPIRIT.**



## DAY TWO

### JUDGES 6:25-35

If you've ever had an experience apart from others, then you know it can be difficult to help them understand your experience. Whether it was a good or bad experience, you can only do so much to help another person understand it. It can be this way with our experience with the Lord as well. If you are a believer, then you have likely experienced how difficult it can be for an unbeliever to understand your relationship with the Lord at times.

Gideon had a life-altering encounter with the Lord. We aren't told that Gideon really knew much about Yahweh; in fact, his father's home actually had an altar to Baal. Like their ancestors, Israel mixed idolatry with worship of God. After Gideon's meeting with the angel of the Lord, Gideon built an altar to Yahweh. God further commanded Gideon to tear down the altar to Baal and the Asherah pole, but Gideon was nervous. His family hadn't encountered God like Gideon had. Gideon was afraid of his father's men and the other men in the city, so he completed the task at night. He likely didn't feel like he could make them understand what he was doing. But God was faithful. He protected Gideon, and his father even defended his actions to the men of the city who wanted him killed. Sometimes, people won't understand the things God asks us to do, and this may mean that we'll feel fearful. It could look like you walking away from sins you used to take part in with friends. It could look like breaking ties from a toxic relationship. It could look like speaking out in class about the truth of Scripture when others stay silent. People won't necessarily understand, but God is absolutely faithful. You can obey Him in the light of day and trust He's with you.

- **WHEN HAVE YOU FELT FEARFUL THAT OTHERS WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND THE WAY YOU'RE OBEYING GOD?**
- **ARE YOU MORE GUIDED BY FEAR OF OTHERS' OPINIONS OR BY LOVE OF GOD? EXPLAIN.**

## PRAY

**GOD, I WANT TO OBEY YOU EVEN WHEN I FEAR OTHERS WON'T UNDERSTAND. I TRUST THAT YOU'RE FAITHFUL TO ME AT ALL TIMES AND THAT YOU'LL BE WITH ME EVEN WHEN I'M AFRAID TO OBEY.**



### DAY THREE

## ROMANS 12:2

At times, it can be difficult to determine God's will in our lives. We struggle with decisions and whether or not what we're hearing is from God or if it's simply our own desires. We may think we're hearing the Lord, but sometimes we doubt if that's true.

This verse offers us some guidance in discerning the voice of God in our lives. First, Paul wrote that believers shouldn't conform to the ideas of this age. Think of what it means to conform. The idea is that one thing is shaped by something else. In a sense, it loses part of its unique identity to become more like another object. When we conform to the morals, ideas, and standards of our culture, it's as if we are shaping ourselves around these things. In a sense, we trade the identity God gives us and settle for becoming a copy of someone else's. Paul urges us not to do this but to instead allow our minds to be transformed, or changed. Instead of allowing our minds and hearts to conform to society, we allow God to completely change our minds and hearts. We do this when we seek the Lord through His Word, prayer, and other spiritual disciplines. Notice the rest of the verse: "that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." We connect to God, allowing Him to transform us from the inside so that we can hear His voice and know His will. If you want to be certain you're hearing God's voice, spend time with Him and get to know His voice. Let it be the one voice to which you conform.

- **IN WHAT WAYS ARE YOU CONFORMING TO CULTURE'S STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS?**
- **WHEN HAVE YOU STRUGGLED TO KNOW IF YOU'RE HEARING GOD'S VOICE? WHAT STEPS CAN YOU TAKE TO LEARN HIS VOICE?**

### PRAY

**GOD, I CONFESS THERE ARE TIMES WHEN I'M MORE CONCERNED WITH CONFORMING TO THE STANDARDS OF THIS WORLD. TRANSFORM MY MIND AND MY HEART SO THAT I CAN DISCERN YOUR WILL.**



## DAY FOUR

# PSALM 103:13-14



Can you think of a time when one of your parents or guardians showed you kindness and compassion instead of giving you a punishment you may have deserved? Maybe a teacher or coach did this for you. Maybe you genuinely just had a bad day, and you let something slip. Maybe you were going through a difficult time in your family. Whomever it was that showed you compassion remembered that you're simply human, and they gave you grace.

This passage is a great reminder that God knows us. He remembers what we're made of and that we're unlike Him in so many ways. We're made of dust. We're finite. We mess up. And so often when we do, God shows us compassion. But here's one important thing to remember: When people show us compassion instead of giving us the punishment we deserve, it's usually because we've made an honest mistake. It isn't because we've let it become a pattern. If it were a pattern, then letting us off the hook every single time wouldn't teach us anything. We'd continue to make the same mistake, and we'd be taking advantage of the person's kindness. God shows us more compassion than we deserve. We deserve the ultimate penalty of sin, which is death (Rom. 6:23), but because of His Son, we're forgiven. We can't make a pattern of our sin though. Every time God extends compassion to us is an opportunity to grow from our mistakes instead of settling into them. God remembers we're dust, but He also wants to refine us and make us more like His Son.

- **WHEN HAVE YOU POTENTIALLY TRIED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SOMEONE'S KINDNESS AND COMPASSION? WHY IS THIS DANGEROUS TO DO WITH GOD?**
- **WHAT SIN IN YOUR LIFE IS MORE LIKE A PATTERN? HOW CAN YOU ALLOW GOD'S COMPASSION TO HELP YOU BREAK THE CYCLE OF THIS SIN?**

## PRAY

**GOD, THANK YOU FOR SHOWING ME GRACE AND COMPASSION. WHEN I SIN AND MAKE MISTAKES, HELP ME TO GROW FROM THEM INSTEAD OF TRYING ALLOWING THEM TO TURN INTO A PATTERN.**



## DAY FIVE

### MARK 12:41-44

Comparison is a real issue in our society. We're surrounded by everyone else's social media highlights. There on our phones, we're met with all their highs, yet we know our lows really well. If we're not careful, we can let this frame our entire attitude. It can either make us bitter or proud, depending on if we are in a better or worse position than others.

This week, we read about God using an army of only three hundred men under Gideon's command to defeat over one hundred thousand men. God used very little to accomplish something great so that it would be apparent He alone secured the victory. In the passage today, a woman gave everything she had, but compared to what others gave, it was very little. She gave out of poverty, not abundance. Have you ever felt like what you have to give is small compared to someone else's gift? This doesn't have to apply only to money, either. We often compare ourselves to the people around us. We compare our home lives, our financial situations, our talents, our grades, our social status, and so on. When we fall into this type of comparison, whatever we do have to give ultimately feels very small. We're robbed of any joy we could've felt in giving to the Lord, and we miss out on seeing what only He could do with our offering. When Jesus taught these words, He had been watching people drop their gifts into the temple treasury. The rich would often do this in a very showy manner. But notice who Jesus elevates on this occasion: it isn't the ones giving large sums, it's the one who gave everything. You may feel as if you don't have much to offer, but Jesus is pleased when we bring Him all we do have.

- **WHY IS IT SOMETIMES DIFFICULT NOT TO COMPARE OURSELVES TO OTHERS? HOW HAS COMPARISON HARMED YOU?**
- **WHEN HAVE YOU GIVEN OR SERVED GOD OUT OF ARROGANCE—TO RECEIVE ATTENTION FROM OTHERS?**

### PRAY

**GOD, HELP ME TO GIVE HUMBLY. HELP ME NOT TO FALL INTO A TRAP OF COMPARISON BECAUSE I KNOW IT DOESN'T HONOR YOU. I WANT TO GIVE YOU ALL I HAVE AND TO DO SO JOYFULLY.**