

- ***Judges 6:11-24*** Gideon, the son of Joash, knew that he had to do something in order to protect his crops from the thieving hands of the Midianites. Because of this, we find this man beating out the grain in an unlikely place...in a wine press. In the place where they would strain out the grapes for their juice. But the Lord knew exactly where to find him, and He sent one of his messengers to speak to Gideon and let him know what he needed to do in order to end the reign of terror that had fallen upon his people.
- As the story unfolds, we find Gideon three times asking the Lord for there to be shown to him as sign concerning what exactly he was supposed to do. Many have seen this as a sign that Gideon was scared or weak in his faith, but I see all of this in a different light. When some see this as the weakness of Gideon, I see this story of Gideon in **Judges 6** as showing the prudence of Gideon. What I mean by that is that Gideon took his time to make sure wha God's will was without rushing foolishly into something that he had not thought out. In **Ephesians 5:15-17**, the Apostle Paul instructs the Ephesians to be careful how they walk. The NKJV uses the word circumspectly, meaning that they are to be aware of how they are living. They are to keep their eyes open as the wise do and not be like the foolish who go running headlong into something without think about it at all. I think that Gideon does this in this text and I want to consider the 3 things I see him doing that was wise. These are wise actions that can help us when we are making decisions concerning our faith and the way we will live this life.

I. Gideon assessed the situation.

- A. The current situation of Israel was not good and Gideon was well aware.
 1. Israel had been carried off into sin as was often the case. Because of their sin, God had allowed for them to be oppressed by the Midianites for 7 years. **(6:1)**
 2. The Midianites would come in and just clean house of the Israelites resources. They would still their crops and livestock and the people were helpless to do anything about it. This is why we see Gideon doing what he is doing when we are introduced to him in **6:11**.
 3. This stranger approaches Gideon and begins to tell him about God's plan for His people, but Gideon is wary because of the current state of Israel. The people were oppressed, and it seemed as if God was not with them at all. There had been no miracles at any point recently. Gideon just wasn't buying this story from this person he did not know.
 4. This stranger comes out of nowhere and tells Gideon that he would be the one that the Lord would be with as they rose from the ashes, but Gideon knew that he wasn't anything special. Especially, considering the lack of evidence at this point, Gideon wasn't willing to jump on the bandwagon just yet.
- B. We need to keep our eyes open and not be naive about reality.
 1. Again, think about Paul's admonition to be careful how we walk. **(Eph. 5:15)** There might be times that someone comes to us with some advice or suggestion for how we can improve our situation as disciples of Jesus Christ.
 2. If we are not keeping our eyes open and aware to our situation then we might not recognize that we are in need of some help concerning what this person might be bringing to us. Being naive or not being attentive to what is going around us is not an acceptable excuse for allowing things to get out of hand in situations where we are responsible.
 3. If we are haughty and don't believe that we could allow our situation or faith to have issues then we can't be helped by others. This reminds me of the mindset that was had by the church at Laodicea in **Revelation 3:14-18**. Gideon could've acted as if things were great and wonderful, but that would have been not true, foolish, and just plain not helpful to the current situation. He was wise and observant and was willing to listen to what this person had to say, and we would be well served to have this type of attitude, as well.

II. Gideon tested the source of new information.

- A. As far as I can tell, this messenger appeared to Gideon as a normal person.
 1. The NASB says that an angel appeared to Gideon, but it is important to keep in mind that where our Bibles say "angel", we can sometimes simply replace it with the word messenger. Angels are really just that, messengers. There is no indication that this messenger appeared to Gideon in any sort of glorified form.
 2. Because of this, Gideon was sure to test this person who came and claimed to speak on behalf of the Lord God of heaven. Gideon seemed determined to not just listen to anyone who claimed to speak on behalf of God. This was especially true consider the current state of Israel that we just discussed in our last point. **(6:13)**

3. So Gideon determines to test this individual. He asks the person to stay and he leaves to prepare a sacrifice that he will put before this stranger. He comes back and lays the meat and bread before the man and the man stretches his rod out and it is consumed by fire miraculously. He then disappears and Gideon is convinced that this person was truly from the Lord. **(6:17-22)**
- B. We can listen to new things that are told to us, but we must consider whether or not they are true according to God's perfect Law.
1. Gideon is a great example of someone who was not willing to go along with just anything that is said by someone who claims to be from God. Jesus and His Apostles were sure to warn those who they taught to be aware for those who would come in the name of the Lord who were false proclaimers. **(I John 4:1)**
 2. Because they would be false teachers, God allowed His followers to possess miraculous means that would help confirm the message they were bringing. **(Mark 16:20)** If someone came with a message and couldn't confirm it with the power of God then they were not to be believed.
 3. Then once the word came onto the scene, the people were able to compare what was said with inspired writings. The Bereans were commended for their diligence in finding out whether what they were taught was the truth or not. **(Acts 17:11)**
 4. Again, Paul knew that there would be false teachers. Because of this he strongly warned the church in Galatia that they were to avoid those who would teach contrary to what had been delivered to them by the Apostles. **(Gal. 1:6-9)** God expects for His people to be wise when dealing with someone who brings them a new or different teaching in His name.

III. Gideon considered the evidence and acted accordingly.

- A. Gideon was willing to take the situation for what it was and do what was necessary.
1. Gideon was aware of the current situation, he was willing to consider and test the message of this person, and then he acted according to what the person said because he passed the test.
 2. Thankfully for Gideon, he was willing to do what was told to him. He could've been stubborn and ignore what was told to him by this messenger, but he did what the Lord told him to do and he went and pulled down the Baal alter and destroyed the Asherah.
 3. God's continual communication, confirmation, and usage of Gideon solidifies the fact in my mind that He was satisfied with Gideon's actions in this chapter. These reasons lead me to believe that Gideon's prudence ought to be focused on more than some supposed doubt that many point out.
- B. We must be willing to take what is presented to us and do what is necessary with it.
1. It is so important that we are wise and prudent when we are making decisions concerning our faith. Our faith is of the utmost importance and we ought not take our decision making lightly. We ought to consider the evidence and act accordingly.
 2. The people in **Acts 2** considered the message preached by Peter and the Apostles. A great number were willing to follow based upon the evidence that was presented before them. **(Acts 2:41)** The same thing can be seen later on in **Acts 21:17-20**. There were many who believed the Gospel. However, some rejected it because they were hard of heart and not willing to honestly consider the evidence that had been presented before them. The Ethiopian Eunuch **(Acts 8)** and Cornelius **(Acts 10)** were other individuals who heard the evidence, weighed it, and acted accordingly.
 3. Many of these individuals believed because of the signs that were shown to them by the messengers of the Gospel. We don't have this type of confirmation today, so we must do as the Bereans did and make sure to search the Scriptures. When we find the message to be accurate then we must put aside our thoughts, feelings, or opinions and simply do what God through the text expects for us to do. This type of action is pleasing to God and it follows the prudent actions of Gideon.

It is imperative that we all take the time to consider any teaching or situation that presents itself to us. We need to be prudent and wise in our dealing with issues, new teachings, and situations that might come before us with much prayer and consideration before we run off and do something foolish. I believe that Gideon is a good example of an individual who was wise in assessing the situation, testing the messenger, and then taking all of it together and acting in an appropriate manner. His patience and wisdom lead him to do good things for the Lord and he defeated idolaters and enemies of Israel and the Lord. May we show these same type of characteristics in our lives as we give every effort to live our lives according to the will of God.