

**Judges 6:33-40 (NIV)**

33 Now all the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples joined forces and crossed over the Jordan and camped in the Valley of Jezreel.

34 Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet, summoning the Abiezrites to follow him.

35 He sent messengers throughout Manasseh, calling them to arms, and also into Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali, so that they too went up to meet them.

36 Gideon said to God, "If you will save Israel by my hand as you have promised--

37 look, I will place a wool fleece on the threshing floor. If there is dew only on the fleece and all the ground is dry, then I will know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you said."

38 And that is what happened. Gideon rose early the next day; he squeezed the fleece and wrung out the dew--a bowlful of water.

39 Then Gideon said to God, "Do not be angry with me. Let me make just one more request. Allow me one more test with the fleece. This time make the fleece dry and the ground covered with dew."

40 That night God did so. Only the fleece was dry; all the ground was covered with dew.

07-06-03-Gideon's Need for Assurance

doubt, assurance, testing, mercy, grace

Judges 6:33-40

God's deference to our doubts only doubles our debt to trust Him.

**INTRODUCTION:** (Text as Scripture reading)

–Most of Judges 6 shows how *weak* and *inadequate* Gideon felt. These last verses sum up his tendency to be a *faint-hearted, fearful* man, even though God calls him "mighty warrior!" His story speaks to our own sense of inadequacy or lack of confidence. When *doubts* are added to his *fear*, Gideon asks for more assurances that God will keep His promises.

–**God's deference to our doubts only doubles our debt to trust Him.** God had already yielded to Gideon's desire for "a sign," but His next intervention further increased Gideon's debt to trust God, because...

**I. The Holy Spirit Came Upon Him– v.33-34,** *Now all the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples joined forces and crossed over the Jordan and camped in the Valley of Jezreel. Then **the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon**, and he blew a trumpet, summoning the Abiezrites to follow him.*

- A. God wants us to be "more than conquerors" over our spiritual foe, but for our spiritual victory, we are given help from the Holy Spirit.
1. The *Holy Spirit inspired Gideon* to rally the locals, "*the Abiezrites*," and, later, we find that they were *more than enough* for victory.
  2. [**A note:** OT stories of war often illustrate the NT description of *our warfare against spiritual enemies*.] Life is a battlefield: God's people are in conflict with the forces of darkness who want to destroy us. (The story of Gideon is *our story*, and his doubts are *often ours* too.)
- B. He acts on his doubts in v.35, *He sent messengers throughout Manasseh, calling them to arms, and also into Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali, so that they too went up to meet them.* (Gideon didn't need a larger army, but *his doubts* made him *feel* he needed 4-tribes-worth of more soldiers.)

**TRANS:** *Doubt leads to false trusts. Faith leads to confidence* in God–**Psa 20:7**, Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God. And there's a phrase we need to remember from **Zech 4:6**, 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty. He won't punish us for *doubting*, but His **deference to our doubts** increases **our debt to trust Him**. Gideon was about to increase his debt, because God

was about to *give in again* to Gideon's request for more signs...

- II. Doubtful Gideon Needed More Assurance— v.36-37.** *Gideon said to God, “If you will save Israel by my hand as you have promised—look, I will place a wool fleece on the threshing floor. If there is dew only on the fleece and all the ground is dry, then I will know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you said.”*
- A. *Gideon's request is often misapplied as a way to seek guidance from God. (Gideon had God's guidance already! His petition of laying a “fleece” before God was a sign of his human doubt.)*
- B. *But God yielded to it— v.38. And that is what happened. Gideon rose early the next day; he squeezed the fleece and wrung out the dew—a bowlful of water.*

**TRANS: God's deference to our doubts only doubles our debt to trust Him.** This 1<sup>st</sup> sign of “*the fleece [being] wrung out [to make] a bowlful of water*” might be God's way of saying: “*Doubt makes you dry, but this sign should quench your thirst for more assurance.*” Sadly, it didn't...

- III. Gideon Further Increased His Debt to Trust God— v.39.** *Then Gideon said to God, “Do not be angry with me. Let me make just one more request. Allow me one more test with the fleece. This time make the fleece dry and the ground covered with dew.”*
- A. *Gideon knew he was pushing the envelope with God: “Don't get mad at me, God, but... could you confirm that one more time?”*
1. **We might do that too:** *Suppose we're reading Mat 5:23-24, “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.” After we read this, God reminds us of someone we need to make peace with.*
  2. **Instead, we pray,** “Lord, if You really want me to do that, let my finger fall on another place in the Bible confirming it.” So, we try it, and our finger falls on **Hos 6:6**, “For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.” (That's a fairly clear confirmation...)
  3. But if, after that, we said, “Please, do it one more time, Lord, so it's really confirmed,” then we'd have doubly revealed our doubt, just as Gideon did.]
- B. *But what did God graciously and patiently do?— v.40, That night God did so. Only the fleece was dry; all the ground was covered with dew.*
1. **Instead of getting angry with him** for his *distrustful doubts*, God conceded to meet Gideon's request.
  2. **Why does God put up with our doubts,** especially when we ask things that reveal the *uncertainty* of our hearts? (“O ye of little faith,” said Jesus to His disciples, but He also said, “Fear not, little

flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

### **CONCLUSION:**

**—God's deference to our doubts only doubles our debt to trust Him.**  
We owe it to God to feel that debt in the depths of our hearts— Psa 62:8.  
 Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.  
 —After He's *given us His Word* and *made His will known to us*, we, in our human doubt, *seek confirmations* or *ask for reassurances*. So, He *answers our prayers* and *does miracles in our lives*. Why? Because He won't let us stay in our *weakness* and *insecurity* and *doubtfulness*. He wants us each to be a “mighty warrior,” strong in spiritual warfare and victorious over the hosts of darkness. He sticks with us, until we *pay our debt of trust in this faithful God* Who's been so trustworthy to us.