

## Full assurance of faith

Why do we gain knowledge? Isn't it to put that knowledge to use in some way? To better ourselves, to get a higher paying job, to take care of our families, or perhaps to serve others? Just to obtain knowledge can lead to pride and conceit when we think in terms of ourselves only. 1 Cor 8:1 says that knowledge makes one conceited but love edifies. This knowledge Paul is speaking of is the knowledge of the Gospel, the liberty we have in Christ which makes all things permissible but maybe not beneficial for others. When it comes to idols and even the perception of worshipping them is introduced we can cause a weaker brother to stumble. This does not show love. In fact, it leads others away from the truth. In **1 Timothy 1:5** Paul says: But the goal of our instruction is love from a **pure** heart, *from* a good conscience, and *from* a sincere faith. The end of our commandment, our learning the will of God is love from a heart that is set on one thing. Jesus! The one whose blood cleanses us from all unrighteousness. And a faith that is set fully on Him with no idolatry or double mindedness. To walk by faith we need purified hearts and minds. Ones set on the WORD of God. In Hebrews we see a long list of those who walked according to faith not just knowledge. In their walk their hearts were tested and purified so that they had a full assurance of faith. A full assurance that God was indeed one and there is no other and he gives grace to the humble.

### Gideon was a man of faith

**Heb 11:32** And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of **Gideon**, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets,

**Heb 11:33** who **by faith** conquered kingdoms, performed *acts of* righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions,

**Heb 11:34** quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, **from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.**

### People of faith need hearts full set on Jesus

**Psa 26:1 A Psalm of David.** Vindicate me, LORD, for I have walked in my **integrity** (completeness, simplicity), And I have trusted in the LORD without wavering.

**Psa 26:2** Examine me, LORD, and put me to the test; **Refine** (purge away) my mind(inner man) and my heart.

**Psa 26:3** For Your goodness is before my eyes, And I have walked in Your truth.

In our knowledge of God we may need some refinement of heart and mind. To be complete lacking in nothing (James 1:4). God uses trial or testing to do this. This is when we believe but have trouble with believing. Like the disciples, we are of little faith. But we can come to God and ask for help

**Jas 4:8** Come close to God and He will come close to you. Cleanse *your* hands, you sinners; and **purify your hearts**, you double-minded. (chronic doubter, 2 spirited)

### **God hears the cries of His children and responds**

**Jdg 6:6** So Israel was brought very low because of Midian, and the sons of Israel cried out to the LORD.

A prophet was sent to remind the forgetful hearers what God has said.

**Jdg 6:10** and I said to you, "I am the LORD your God; you shall not fear the gods of the Amorites in whose land you live." **But you have not obeyed Me.**" (Listened to my voice)

The Lord their God was one. They broke His commandment by fearing or rather worshipping the god of the Amorites and now they were out from the protection and provision of God. When we fail to listen to the truth we will soon find ourselves overrun. Having to feed the idol instead of being fed by God. A double mind.

**Jdg 6:12** And the angel of the LORD appeared to him and said to him, "**The LORD is with you, valiant warrior.**"

Gideon's name meant a warrior or a feller of trees or destroyer yet he is here doing work at night to hide from the Midianites so as not to lose their food. Often, God's children need the encouragement of God to set out to do what they are asked. Trying to preserve his and his family's lives but not the way God intended. Judges were to Purge Israel from idolatries and deliver from their enemies.

**Jdg 6:13** Then Gideon said to him, "O my lord, if **the LORD is with us**, why then has all this **happened to us**? And where are all His miracles which our fathers **told us** about, saying, 'Did the LORD not **bring us up from Egypt**?' But now the LORD has **abandoned us** and **handed us over** to Midian."

Here we have knowledge. Gideon knows the truth but is stuck in unbelief as is the nation

**Jdg 6:14** And **the LORD looked at him** and said, "Go in this strength of yours and save Israel from the hand of Midian. Have I not sent you?"

## God's Grace is greater than all our sin

He gives grace to the Humble

**Jdg 6:15** But he said to Him, "O Lord, **how am I to save Israel?** Behold, my family is the least in Manasseh, and I am the youngest in my father's house."

**Jdg 6:16** **Yet** the LORD said to him, "I will certainly be with you, and you will defeat Midian as one man." (the one credited with the victory)

**Jdg 6:17** So Gideon said to Him, "If now I have found favor in Your sight, then **perform for me a sign** that it is You speaking with me."

Because of God's favor to Gideon he allows him to ask for signs. Not as the unbelieving pharisees but as a son weak in faith. This may be perceived as Gideon testing the Lord but it is The Lord testing Gideon as He refines Gideon's mind so he may walk in integrity not just for Himself but for the whole nation. He learns that God is peace.

## When God's grace is understood the idol must be destroyed

God tells Gideon to destroy the idol of his father but the fear of man may bring a snare.

**Jdg 6:27** Then Gideon took ten men from his servants and did as the LORD had spoken to him; and because **he was too afraid of his father's household and the men of the city to do it by day, he did it by night.**

**Jdg 6:31** But Joash said to all who stood against him, "Will you contend for Baal, or will you save him? Whoever will contend for him shall be put to death by morning. If he is a god, let him contend for himself, since *someone* has torn down his altar!"

**Jdg 6:32** Therefore on that day he named Gideon Jerubbaal, that is to say, "**Let Baal contend against him,**" because he had torn down his altar.

**Jdg 6:33** Then all the Midianites, the Amalekites, and the people of the east assembled together; and they crossed over and camped in the Valley of Jezreel.

The idol will try to contend but God is greater

**Jdg 6:34** So **the Spirit of the LORD covered Gideon like clothing;** and he blew a trumpet, and the Abiezrites were called together to follow him.

Even with the full armor of God we need assurance that God is greater the god of those who come against us.

### **Put out the fleece**

Even though the idol was destroyed it still had power in the mind of Gideon and perhaps the people.

**Baal** - the god of fertility, rain, and storms. He was also known as the Lord of Rain and Dew,

these tests were to prove that God was indeed greater than Baal who was supposed to have power over the dew. He was putting God to the test yet because of God's great mercy he received his answer and was strengthened. Honest hearts want to know and God knows this. When you know but you don't know and you need more assurance than you currently have. This was asking in faith. Are you indeed greater than Baal. I need to know because that is the God of the Midianites who is trashing us currently and he seems to be giving them the power to do so.

How often God calls upon His children to do things which seem impossible. But when we cry out to him for confirmation of His word to our hearts he does not berate or chastise but rather fulfills the request. For us to know that His grace is indeed sufficient – God has power over the dew and can be specific with it how much more his grace on undeserving sinners?