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**Grace Fellowship Church, Port Jervis, New York**

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**To Fleece or Not to Fleece**

**Judges 6**

**Prayer:** *Father, we just want to again praise you and thank you for this day, we praise you and thank you for the gift of your word. We thank you that we have this gift, this precious gift that we can look into and study and grow from. And so we pray this morning as we open up your word that we would have the privilege and the presence of your Holy Spirit who makes this make sense. Father, give us the presence of your Spirit, enable us to open your word and again make it a permanent part of our lives, and we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well, we are again looking into Gideon, and one of the first things that I say when we're talking about these kind of things, in fact I say it over and over again, sometimes I sound like a broken record is that we are -- and we have to understand this context -- we are at war. Ever since the first battle that took place in heaven and Satan's subsequent expulsion and banishment to this very same planet that we have to live on, we have been involved in both physical and spiritual warfare with the kingdom of darkness. And

so we've been looking at Gideon, this mighty man of valor as he's going to war against the Midianites, and in this instance the battle is physical. And God is going to use it to defeat the enemy and save and protect Israel so that they, one thousand years in the future, can give birth to the Lord Jesus Christ but also so that Israel and Gideon and all of us could learn some more about how God grows faith in us in the midst of our spiritual battles.

This particular battle that Gideon was involved in was preceded by a very famous incident in which Gideon puts out a fleece before God. And in this fleece Gideon asks God for a miraculous confirmation of something that God had already promised him. So let me just kind of reprise the back story for you a little bit. If we go back to the very beginning, this is Judges 6, but if we go back to the very beginning to Gideon's confrontation with this angel, the angel of the Lord, we find Gideon is hiding out. He's hiding from the Midianites who had utterly dominated and defeated Israel and they had kept them under their thumb for years and here's Gideon and he's threshing out wheat in a winepress and he's complaining to God, he doesn't realize that, he's complaining to God who's in the form of an angel about how God has abandoned Israel. And again I can't help but repeat the irony of Gideon's complaint of God's abandonment of Israel because he's making that very complaint to God whose presence is proving him wrong. And we

learned that this angel is no ordinary angel. This angel is what we call a theophany, he was in fact a pre incarnate appearance of the Son of God. See, God was directly intervening once again in Israel's affairs. Their unfaithfulness had put them in a position where their very existence is now being threatened by the Midianites. God had raised up Gideon to save and preserve Israel because one thousand years later that same nation Israel was going to produce the Lord Jesus Christ, God became man. And this angel is here and he's empowering Gideon to launch a defense of Israel against its enemies that would not only preserve Israel but would also teach them a mighty lesson about trusting God.

We pick up on the story in *Judges 6:12*. It says: *And the angel of the LORD appeared to him and said to him, "The LORD is with you, O mighty man of valor. Go in this might of yours and save Israel from the hand of Midian; do I not send you?"* And Gideon kind of pulls a Moses here, he says, you know, I'm of the least of the tribes. I can't do this. He's backing away at record speed, and he's demurring. And the angel says in verse 16: *"But I will be with you, and you shall strike the Midianites as one man."* Well then Gideon questions who this angel is and he's given a miraculous sign. Gideon had put an offering out for this man, this angel, he put this offering out on a rock, and the angel touches the very tip of his staff and fire comes out of the rock and it consumes the

offering and then the angel disappears. Well, it's such an obvious miracle and Gideon is now so certain that he has encountered God, he's suddenly consumed with terror that he's going to die. Verse 22 says: *Then Gideon perceived that he was the angel of the LORD. And Gideon said, "Alas, O Lord God! For now I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face." But the LORD said to him, "Peace be to you. Do not fear; you shall not die."* Then the angel gives him some instructions. He tells Gideon that he's to tear down the altars to Baal and to Asherah and Gideon goes ahead and he does that but he does it at night because he knows what's going to happen. And true to his fears the next morning there is this huge brouhaha, it's this huge debate and they're debating who should die for this crime of tearing down these altars. You see the Israelites had already grown used to false worship and they are the ones demanding Gideon's execution. They know that he's done it. Well Gideon's father Joash, he demands the execution of all those who worship false gods. He basically says, look, if Baal is a real god, then he should be able to avenge himself if somebody trashes his altar. Well in the midst of this debate going over who should be punished, in the middle of all of this comes the bad news they had all dreaded. That was the Midianites were back and they were assembling for battle. This is verse 33. It says: *Now all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the people of the East came together, and they crossed the Jordan and encamped in the Valley of*

*Jezreel*. Now in case you don't know the significance of the Valley of Jezreel and I didn't before I got into this study, here's what *InterVarsity's Bible Background* says about this valley. It says: "The Valley of Jezreel gets its name from the town of Jezreel at the east end of the valley. It ranges from five to ten miles across its fifteen-mile length. Major trade routes come into the valley by way of Megiddo, so the valley was sometimes referred to as the plain of Megiddo, or, later, Armageddon." That should sound familiar. *Baker's Bible Dictionary* says of Armageddon: It's "a name occurring only once in the Bible and designating the place where the last great battle of the ages will take place. It will coincide with the second coming of Christ and there all the hosts of evil will be defeated."

So I just want you to get a mental picture of what we're painting right here. We're at this place which is one of the most important places on the face of the planet. It's the final place where the battle of the ages is set to take place at the end of time. It's this huge broad plain stretching out for miles and miles in both directions, and because of that Israel can see the Midianites gathering. They can sense the attack that is imminent. And the Holy Spirit then comes down on Gideon. This is verse 34. It says: *But the Spirit of the LORD clothed Gideon, and he sounded the trumpet, and the Abiezrites were called out to follow him. And he*

*sent messengers throughout all of Manasseh, and they too were called out to follow him. And he sent messengers to Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, and they went up to meet them. Now you got to understand, prior to this the Abiezrites had been discussing whether or not they should execute Gideon. He's the one who tore down the altars to Baal and Asherah. Well now the Spirit of God comes on Gideon and those who were going to execute him now become his brothers in arms. He sends out a call to all of Manasseh and the tribes of Asher and Zebulun and Naphtali, all meet up with him. There's this miraculous outpouring of allies, but it's still hopelessly short of the number necessary to even begin to even the stakes against the Midianites. I mean Gideon had gathered some 32,000 men; the Midianites had 135,000. So Gideon asked God for a sign. This is verse 36. It says: *Then Gideon said to God, "If you will save Israel by my hand, as you have said, 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."* And it was so. When he rose early the next morning and squeezed the fleece, he wrung enough dew from the fleece to fill a bowl with water. This is where the term comes "putting out a fleece." This is its history. This is where it came from. I mean Gideon is absolutely desperate to make certain that it is God who is behind his efforts to attack an enemy who is outnumbering him by four. I*

mean he needs to know by certain that this is not his imagination or a fantasy but a revelation from God himself. This battle that Gideon is about to undergo with the Midianites, it really has its counterpart in the lives of every single Christian who battles to know exactly what it is God wants for his or her life. And this whole idea of fleeces needs some further unpacking.

You see, as Christians we are called on to live lives of faith. *2 Corinthians 5* says: *We walk by faith, not by sight.* And every sincere Christian wants to know desperately what God's will for his life is. And you know we all wish that God would drop down on some golden string that had complete instructions with my name and my address and very, very specific, here's what I want you to do, here's how I want you to do it. Then there'd be no need for faith in the first place. And so we live with the tension of wanting to do God's will but having to trust by faith that we are. I mean you can make a case for Gideon doing exactly what he should have by putting out this fleece or you can make the very opposite, that this fleece request was a demonstration of a complete lack of faith. Many Christians have gotten hung up on what Gideon did, why he did it, and whether it was the right thing to do. So I figure we may as well ask ourselves the very same questions.

I mean first, what is it exactly that Gideon did? Well, Gideon

asked for a miraculous confirmation through a miraculous sign that he was indeed to head up this attack on the Midianites. I don't think this is at all what we consider to be putting up a fleece today. You see, we put up a fleece today usually by asking God to confirm something in a totally non miraculous way. God, if you really want me to go to college, let me get accepted to this one on my first try. God, if you really want me to live in such-and-such a city, have so-and-so mention that city in the next week or so. If you want me to marry this person, let me run into them in a grocery store. There was a number of problems that associate with this approach but the most obvious one is that the confirming sign by God is anything but miraculous. I mean it could be the will of God. It could be chance. You know we believe that God is absolutely sovereign and that nothing happens by chance, but that doesn't mean that we can't attempt to manipulate God by setting up a circumstantial situation and then claiming it's God's will. And how are you to know? See, the whole point of Gideon's request was to do something miraculously out of the normal order of things. He asked that the fleece be soaked with dew while the surrounding area remain dry. The only way that that could happen is that God would miraculously alter the dew point of the water on the ground relative to the floor. To put Gideon's test into the context of other examples, it would be like asking God to confirm that he wants you to go to a particular college by having you accepted even

though you never applied, even though you have no money and you've never taken any of the required tests. That would require a miracle. And that's exactly what Gideon was asking for.

Now another issue with regard to what a fleece actually is is our understanding of just what kind of circumstances are worthy of such a test. You see, more often than not our contemporary idea of fleeces lack the terrifying immediacy of Gideon's fleece. I mean, he was looking at potentially being slaughtered as well as being responsible for the destruction of an army of 32,000. Our fleeces are often not quite that desperate. I mean, I know of times where people have put up fleeces that I consider to be legitimate and almost always they were directed at incredibly important ends with extremely significant downsides to a bad decision.

I have a dear friend who once agonized over whether or not the person he was going to ask to be his wife was God's perfect choice for him. He was deeply in love with her but he wanted to make absolutely certain that this was God's choice for him. And so he had been praying and fasting about this and trying to decide what in the world he was going to do to know what God's will was. Finally one day in desperation, he reached in his pocket and he felt three coins, and he prayed a prayer right there and he said, "Lord, I'm going to pull these coins out of my pocket. And if

there's not three heads, I'm going to walk away from this relationship and never see her again." And so with trembling hands he pulled out the coins and it was head, head, head. And he's been married to this person for over 45 years now, so I think he and I would both say God confirmed the decision. And it was probably a very foolish thing to make into a fleece and I absolutely do not recommend it, but I believe that God honored his willingness to put everything on the line. For Gideon, that definitely wasn't an issue because he knew everything was already on the line. I mean he was ridiculously outnumbered, he was staring death in the face. That brings up my next point, and that's why did Gideon do it? You know it's easy to criticize Gideon's lack of faith from the comfortable distance of contemporary 21st century North America. But there's another more salient reason to take issue with why Gideon went about confirming God's will through a fleece. You see, seeking a fleece is like seeking a sign and the problem with signs is they seldom if ever work. In fact in Gideon's case they obviously didn't work. At least at first.

If you remember the story, Gideon has already received one spectacular miracle. The angel of the LORD has caused fire to come out of a rock and consume his offering and then right before his eyes this angel just disappears. But understand how human beings operate. That miracle wasn't enough. He needed another one. And

so he asks for a fleece. So now he's got two miracles under his belt. He's got the sacrifice consumed and the fleece soaked with dew. Guess what Gideon decides he needs? He needs a third miracle. Verse 39 says: *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." And God did so that night; and it was dry on the fleece only, and on all the ground there was dew.* Gideon knows that he is pushing his luck incredibly here and he even begs God not to get angry at his lack of faith. But what he's pointing out here is that no matter how spectacular a miracle we receive, we will always have the ability to second-guess it.

I remember when I was a brand new believer in Christ, I said, God, if you just do some spectacular miracles, everybody will get saved. God, if you just had a gigantic dove appear over Port Jervis and it started to rain up instead of down, and God wrote in the sky exactly what the gospel was and who Jesus Christ was, then everybody in Port Jervis would become a Christian, right? Wrong. That presupposes that all of us are neutral when it comes to accepting God, but we're not. We have been wired since Adam's fall to reject the God who created us. I mean when God says in *Romans 3:10: There is none good, no, not one; no one seeks for God, God*

means absolutely no one seeks. I mean there's no problem whatsoever in getting people to seek after what they think they can get from a god. I mean things like power and security and health and wealth and prosperity and folks will be willing to appear to be willing to crawl over broken glass to get what they think they can get from God, but God says no one actually seeks the real God. That is unless God first does a work in their life. So a miracle can certainly work as a sign to those whom God has already called, and it works as a sign to make it easier to believe. But understand something, miracles themselves will never, never cause an unbeliever to budge from his unbelief.

Jesus once told a story about a rich man and a poor beggar and it illustrates just how powerless miracles are to change people's hearts and attitudes. This is a story Jesus told, it's in *Luke 16*. It says this: *"The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried, and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. And he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.'* But Abraham said, *'Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. And besides all this,*

*between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us." And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house -- for I have five brothers -- so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.'* But Abraham said, *'They have Moses and the prophets -- just to let you know, Moses and the prophets is an Old Testament way of saying "the bible" -- 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.'* And he said, *'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.'* He said to him, *'If it they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.'*" You know, the rich man's thinking like all of us think, he said, God, you know, if you just did something spectacular, I don't know, maybe have Lazarus rise from the dead as a spirit and appear before my brothers and tell them all about these terrible things that are going to happen, well surely they'd be impressed enough by that miracle to turn from their wicked ways, and God says, *"If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead."*

Speaking of rising from the dead, all you have to do is look at Jesus' most spectacular miracle, that's the raising of Lazarus from the dead. I mean here's a man, he's not only dead but in the heat

he's already begun to decompose and Jesus does what is spectacularly impossible, he's raising a rotting corpse to life. But among those who were witnessing the miracle are two very distinct groups. One group is moved by the Spirit. That group acknowledges that only God could do such a thing. In *John 11:45* it says: *Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him.* But there's another group that sees the exact same miracle. They see that miracle and they decide this Jesus has to die. It says: *But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, "What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation." But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all. Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish."*

You see, the miracles actually did their work but they did their work only among those whom God had already touched. Jesus repeatedly did spectacular miracles and all it did for those who were not moved by the Spirit is harden their hearts and whet their appetite for even more signs. I mean this is specifically what

Jesus called people out for. In *Matthew 12:38* he says: *Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you." But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign."* See, there is no amount of supernatural revelation that's going to move a person from unbeliever to believer if the Spirit of God does not do something first because human beings have a built-in bias against the simple gospel. I mean the gospel is Jesus Christ is God made man, came and lived among us, lived a perfect life and then he offered that life up on a cross and that life as a sacrifice was accepted because he rose from the dead and by faith we place our faith in Christ's death and incorporate his righteousness as our own. It's the simple gospel. The bottom line is most folks would rather die than believe it.

You know if you go forward to the days of wrath that are in the book of Revelation, you're going to see there's even more miracles. There's miracles of plenty taking place left and right but these are hideous awful miracles. They're clear displays of God's supernatural power and ability, and listen to how the people respond to those miracles. This is *Revelation 16*. It says: *Then I heard a loud voice from the temple telling the seven angels go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God."* So *the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth, and*

*harmful and painful sores came upon the people who bore the mark of the beast and worshiped its image. The second angel poured out his bowl into the sea, and it became like the blood of a corpse, and every living thing died that was in the sea. The third angel poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of water and they became blood. And I heard the angel in charge of the waters say, "Just are you, O Holy One, who is and who was, for you brought these judgments. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink. It is what they deserve!" And I heard the altar saying, "Yes, Lord God the Almighty, true and just are your judgments!" The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and it was allowed to scorch people with fire. They were scorched by the fierce heat, and they cursed the name of God who had power over these plagues. They did not repent and give him glory. The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and its kingdom was plunged into darkness. So just get this picture here. I mean people are covered in sores, all life in the sea is now dead as well as all life in rivers and lakes and it's followed by scorching heat and then plunging into utter darkness. You think people would be impressed? You think people would be moved. But here's the response. God says: *People gnawed their tongues in anguish and cursed the God of heaven for their pain and sores. They did not repent of their deeds.* You see, signs and wonders, whether they're good or bad are not*

enough to bring people to God.

So we've been asking this question of Gideon, so why then did he ask for a sign considering the fact that signs have this extremely limited value? Well, that's not to say that they have no value. It is to say that their value is limited to those in whom the Spirit of God is moving in the first place, and guess what? That includes Gideon. If we go back to the beginning, we find this statement about the Holy Spirit in Gideon in verse 33. It says: *Now all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the people of the East came together, and they crossed the Jordan and encamped in the Valley of Jezreel. But the Spirit of the LORD clothed Gideon, and he sounded the trumpet, and the Abiezrites were called out to follow him.*

So I want you to picture it once again. Here's the Midianites, they're numbering about 135,000, they're actually there now assembling in the Valley of Jezreel. Push had come to shove. Gideon knew he's hopelessly outmanned. He'd already demonstrated his courage by tearing down the altars to Baal and Asherah knowing that he was putting his life at risk, and so the question is is what Gideon asked God for in causing the fleece to be either dry or wet with dew, is this the right thing to do? And if not, what is the right way to seek God's will? I mean this is an issue that

lots of folks struggle with. I mean does God want me to go to this university or that one? Does he want me to live in this city or that one, marry this one or that one? You know, wanting to make sure that your decisions are pleasing to God is one of the most important tasks we have as Christians. It's also one that is hopelessly fraught with stress and with tension.

One of the best books on the subject is Garry Friesen's, *Decision Making and the Will of God*, came out about almost 40 years ago. But in his book he makes the case for decisions based not on some fleece, not on some sign, but on the wisdom that God gives to everyone who will simply ask for it. You see, his basic premise is that the Bible is crystally clear about the moral will of God because that's what God intends it to be. Now in areas where the Bible does not make clear like whether I should move to Chicago or Atlanta, God expects us to use the wisdom that he gives us. You know, when I'm talking to people about this particular issue and I encounter this all the time, and I talk to people who are struggling to find God's will for their life, his particular will for their life circumstance, I usually ask them if they prayed about what kind of toothpaste they're using. I mean is Crest or Gleem better than something else in God's perfect will? Would God be more pleased with whatever choice you make? And when they say no, I say, okay, we're in agreement that God says there's some

things that I want you to make up your own mind on. Where have to find out is exactly where that line is. Garry Friesen is very helpful in finding that line. He's got an enormous amount of information in his book, but just to sum up in the briefest way he points to four principles that should guide the way we make decisions. There's the principle of obedience, the principle of freedom, the principle of wisdom, and the principle of humble trust.

And the first one is -- first principle is the principle of obedience simply says: Where God commands, we must obey. There's no point whatsoever in seeking God's will as to whether or not you should be dating a married man or marrying an unbeliever or whether you should cheat on your taxes. God makes those things explicitly clear, so don't expect any guidance whatsoever on things that violate God's clear commands. The second principle, the principle of freedom says where there is no command, God gives us the freedom and the responsibility to choose. Now when this book first came out it was a fairly radical statement to make to the evangelical community that the center of God's will is not figuring out how to make certain he wants you to live in Chicago instead of Atlanta or whether he wants you to work for this company or that company. See, God genuinely gives us the freedom to make those choices, but he expects us to make those choices based on wisdom.

And that leads to the third principle which is the principle of wisdom. That is to say, where there's no command, God gives us the wisdom to choose. But now we have to ask ourselves, okay, just what does God mean by that word "wisdom"? Well, one of the shortest definitions I've ever heard and a very apt definition of what wisdom is, it's skillful living. Not clever living but skillful living. And the skill here, the skill that we're talking about, the critical skill is living my life best for the kingdom of God. It's doing my individual part to advance God's kingdom. I've also heard wisdom described as using the best means to the best ends. But what has to be stated here is that when we're looking for wisdom, we have to understand that God is looking at us first and foremost as kingdom citizens. And with that in mind, every single decision that we make should ultimately reflect how best we fit into the kingdom and how best we can use our lives, whether as housewives or presidents, to glorify God and advance his kingdom. There's a great deal of freedom in making your choice based on what you think your best possible life circumstance is, but that doesn't necessarily mean the highest salary, the greatest benefits and the most prestige. What ultimately matters here is how we best fit into the kingdom of God.

And finally, there's the fourth principle which is the principle of humble trust. And Friesen says of that, he says: "When we have

chosen what is moral and wise we must trust the sovereign God to work out all the details together for good." Let me just put this into context by pointing out how Paul exercised this principle. What we're basically saying is you use wisdom to make those decisions that God has not made clear in scripture. And having made that decision, you act on that decision but you always give God the final say. And we have a perfect example of this in Acts 16 which is a description of Paul's missionary journey. And if you look at this journey on paper, it was a disaster. Paul left Derby and he was headed west because that's where he felt wisdom was pointing him. He wasn't compelled to go west, there was no command from God that said, Paul, you have to go west, so Paul exercised the freedom he had to make a decision based on what he thought was a wise course of action. Wisdom pointed Paul west towards Asia. But God had other plans. *Acts 16:6* says: *And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia.* We go back to that and say, okay, did Paul somehow miss out God's perfect will? Did he get it wrong? Was he not paying attention? Was he acting in wisdom? And the answer is, yes, he was. I mean, notice God never reproves Paul for following through what he thought was a wise decision. For God's reasons and his reasons alone, he didn't want the gospel to go first to Asia. And so God by the power of the Holy Spirit made the final decision; he forbade him to speak. So again Paul thinks

wisdom is directing him north into Bithynia, so that's where he takes off. That's where he starts heading. And once again God says nope, nope, not there. This is verse 7, it says: *When they had come to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them.* Well instead, Paul continued west and he wound up going through Philippi and Thessalonica, winding up in Corinth then back to Ephesus before he finally worked his way back to Jerusalem. And we know that each one of those steps along the way produced a letter in the New Testament. I mean we have Philippians, we have First and Second Thessalonians, we have First and Second Corinthians and Ephesians all because of those -- quote -- "detours" that Paul had to take. I mean God obviously had had other plans for Paul. And what must have seemed like setbacks and defeats, they were all part of God's sovereign will that history has proven to be absolutely correct. You see, Paul found God's will not by sitting around and not by waiting for some golden string to drop a note with complete instructions on it but by pursuing the direction that he thought wisdom would lead him in and then allowing God to have the ultimate say. And that's precisely how we should approach decisions. We make our decisions not on some magical subjective fleece that we put out but based on the best possible information with the goal of acting wisely.

And you know wise living, it really comes down to three things.

There's three things that matter most when you want to say how do I live wisely, and the three things are: It's the kingdom, it's the kingdom and it's the kingdom. Jesus summed it all up for us in one statement that he made to his disciples who were just like us, trying to figure out what in the world do I do, how do I make wise decisions about these things that all of us concern ourselves so much about? This is what Jesus said in *Matthew 6:25*. He said: *"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all."* See, God knows precisely what our needs are. He knows precisely what our needs are for today, for tomorrow, and for forever, and you and I can't possibly begin to know that. But Jesus says unequivocally you don't need to. He says: *"But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added to you."* As C.S. Lewis puts it: "Aim at heaven and you will get earth thrown in. Aim at earth and you will get neither." *Matthew 6:33* has been my life verse. And after 45 years, I can tell you God has proven its truth over and over and over again. You cannot go wrong seeking the kingdom of God first. And you don't have to be a rocket scientist to figure out how. You just simply have to want what God wants and then ask him how do I go from here.

Gideon had spectacular answers to his questions about God's will. The answer to his question of what is a fleece was a miracle, it wasn't a coincidence. And why he did it is a measure of what he faced compared to what we typically face. And we'll see next time that Gideon's faith still has a great deal more room to grow. And as to whether or not it was the right thing to do, well if you're in circumstances like he was, then by all means feel free to seek a fleece but if you're not facing certain death and the slaughter of your nation, then *Matthew 6:33* is really all you need to know:

*"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."* Let's pray.

*Father, I just I pray for anyone this morning who is just agonizing over what is God's will for my life, how do I get this right, how do I get to the center of the bulls eye of God's will. Father, I pray that you would give them the sense, the knowledge that what pleases you is to exercise wisdom in the freedom that we have to make choices and make decisions based on what is our place in the kingdom, where we fit in the kingdom, how we can advance the kingdom. Father, for anyone who is wondering and asking those questions this morning, I pray you would give them a sense of assurance, a sense of wonder, a sense of trust that all they need to do is want what you want and that you'll do the rest. And I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*