**WSU Christian Challenge Study Guide**

**Gideon**

**2/27/2020**

Read Judges 6:12-18. In this passage, the angel of the LORD calls Gideon to save Israel. But Gideon is slow to come on board with this plan. He, like so many people we see God call in Scripture, has trouble seeing *how* God is going to do what He’s going to do and *why* God is going to do it that way. Undergirding all of Gideon’s argument is wrong thinking and lack of faith in the LORD.

* What does the angel of the LORD say in this passage?
* What does Gideon say in this passage?
* What do we learn about God and the way He works from this encounter?
* What do we learn about Gideon from this encounter?
* Is Gideon’s request for a sign a good thing or not?

Read Judges 6:33-40. Faced with the concrete reality of the opposing army before him, Gideon asks for, not one, but two more signs from God. K.L. Younger Jr. says, “Contrary to popular interpretation, these fleecings have *nothing* to do with discovering or determining God’s will. The divine will is *perfectly* and *absolutely* clear in Gideon’s own mind…These ‘signs’ reveal his lack of faith.”

* What are we learning about Gideon as the narrative progresses?
* What are we learning about God and the way He works from the way He responds to Gideon’s requests?
* Knowing that the army of the East had 135,000 soldiers and the Israelites army had only 32,000, does it give you some compassion for Gideon? How do you think you would have felt in that situation?

Although Gideon was already outnumbered, God systematically reduced the Israelite army from 32,000 to 300. God’s expressed purpose in doing this was to keep Israel from claiming the victory for themselves. He said, in essence, “If you go in there with 32,000 soldiers and win, you’ll try to give *yourself* credit for the victory; you’ll be tempted to steal my glory.”

* What can we learn from this about God and the way He likes to work?
* How does this change the way you think about how God might want to work in and through your own life?

Read Judges 7:9-23.

* Who won the battle: Israel? Or the LORD?
* What is ironic about the way Israel defeats Midian?

Read Judges 8:22-35. The defining characteristic that emerges in the end of this story is hypocrisy. Gideon says the right thing, but then he does the wrong thing. He gives the humble, religious answer, but it’s not *actually* what he wants or believes or does. Commentator Daniel Block says: “In spite of his pious comment, ‘I will not rule over you’, all of these actions suggest the opposite. He behaves like an oriental king…”

* What was Gideon’s mistake at the end of his life? Was it internal, external, or both?
* Having observed Gideon throughout this narrative, why is Gideon’s mistake ironic?
* What can we learn about Gideon and, more generally, about the condition of the human heart as it relates to God?
* Having observed everything God has done throughout this narrative, what can we learn about Him and the way He relates to broken human beings?
* As followers of Jesus who are seeking to follow Him as He speaks, how is our situation similar to that of Gideon? In what ways is it different?
* Is there anything in your life right now that is causing you fear? Or causing you to doubt God? If so, what is it?
* What would it look like to move out in faith, trusting God, despite your fear?
* If you have had the opportunity to experience God at work in and through your life recently, are you giving Him full credit for that? Or are have you noticed yourself trying to build an ephod for yourself in your heart? How might you move toward truly giving God the glory for your life?