

TEXT Judges 6:11-40

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to explain why it is of utmost importance to base their decisions upon God's Word and His will for them. They will recognize the necessity of allowing God to guide in the decisions affecting their future and their Christian testimony, and will realize that God is willing to reveal His will to those who seek Him.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER Who is on the LORD's side? let him come unto me. — Exodus 32:26

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live. — Deuteronomy 30:19

ANSWER

TITLE:

SEARCH

TITLE:

A Choice for God Decision-Making

REFERENCE INFORMATION

The title of the Book of Judges, from which today's lesson is taken, was derived from special rulers—judges appointed by God to assume governmental control after the death of Joshua. These rulers directed the affairs of state in Israel from the death of Joshua until the crowning of Saul as king.

The authorship of the Book of Judges is unknown. Some scholars suggest that each judge kept a diary or executive log which was later compiled into the form that it now appears in the Bible. According to Clarke's commentary, the dates for the period of the judges was between 1443-1120 B.C.

YOUR OPENER

Decision-Making

TEXT: Judges 6:11-40

KEY VERSE: I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.
— Deuteronomy 30:19

RESPONSES

1. Gideon was faced with deciding whether or not he could do what God commanded him, realizing the many difficulties that confronted him. As do many people, he was thinking only of his own ability, not God's. God had promised to deliver the Midianites into his hand. If Gideon had decided wrongly that he could not fulfill God's command, he would not have gone up against the enemy. What are the consequences if a Christian makes the wrong decision? a right decision? How might family, friends, or associates be affected? How is their testimony affected? The students should realize through this discussion that decisions have a far-reaching effect.

2. Discuss the events surrounding his decision. First, God's will was revealed to him by the angel's appearance and message. Then Gideon asked for and received a sign. Next, God led him to victory over the Baal worshipers. Then came the miracle of the fleece. Point out that Gideon's decision was reinforced by the evidences of God's presence.

3. Yes. Scripture teaches us that God desires to lead man to the knowledge of His will. Some examples: Psalm 40:8; Psalm 143:10; Proverbs 2:3-5; Jeremiah 29:13; Matthew 12:50; James 1:5. Point out that God doesn't intend to conceal, but rather, reveal His will. Stress that He wants to guide in every decision.

Making the right decisions in spiritual matters will add to one's growth in Christian maturity. The most important decisions may not always be the ones made with great deliberation and forethought. They may be the spontaneous ones made every day. How necessary it is to seek God's guidance in decision-making, because each decision, great or small, leads us either closer to or away from Jesus.

1. What was the decision that Gideon was faced with making? Of what consequence was it if he made the wrong decision? See Judges 7:19-23.

2. Name the four happenings upon which Gideon based his decision to do what God commanded him.

3. Can one know God's will in making a decision? Support your answer with Scripture.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

4. What is the spiritual meaning of putting out a fleece? Do you think this is a good way to make a decision? Explain your answer.
5. Why is God concerned with even the lesser decisions we make on a day-to-day basis?
6. What sources are helpful in making good decisions? What sources are harmful in making good decisions? See Psalm 1:1,2.
7. Do you think it is possible to make every decision based upon God's Word? For instance, will God's Word tell a person which school to attend or which friends to associate with or which job to accept? Read Matthew 6:33, and explain your answer.
8. Reflect back over the past year concerning any major decisions you have had to make. What were the processes you went through in order to make those decisions? Were there times when you should have done something differently?

4. First let students give their definitions of putting out a fleece. What is the right way? Can a fleece be moved or changed? (It can be, and sometimes is, but then it is no longer indicative of God's will.) Ask for some examples from the students' lives. Bring out that if they are truly seeking God's will and leave a fleece in His hands, it can be an effective way to make a decision.
5. Allow time for your students to express their thoughts. The conclusion should be reached that sometimes a wrong decision in a small matter could lead to serious problems, and what appeared to be a minor matter could have drastic and far-reaching effects. Ask your students for a Biblical example of this. One possibility might be Ruth's decision to follow Naomi.
6. Stress that the greatest source of guidance is God's Word. God's Word teaches the importance of seeking the advice of godly parents, elders, and pastors. It also warns from making decisions based upon counsel from the ungodly and spiritually lean.
7. Let students explore these questions. Scriptures for discussion could include 1 Corinthians 6:20 and 10:31. The conclusion should be reached that every decision can be based upon God's Word. He will guide them in making the right decision if they really are willing to seek His leading.
8. This question is not necessarily for class discussion, but rather to encourage each individual to take inventory. To wrap up your lesson, help your students see the importance of placing Christ first in every decision.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

What did God call Gideon to do? Why?

Why do you think Gideon sought signs from God?

Why is it so important for us to seek the Lord concerning our future?

What sort of decision-making do you do from day to day?

In order of importance, from the smallest to the largest, name several decisions you may need to make. Is God consulted in even the smallest decisions? Why or why not?

How does one know God's will? How does God show you what He wants you to do?

When should we go to God for guidance?

What are the consequences for trusting or not trusting God with your decisions?

When considering consequences, what is more important, immediate or long range? Why?

In our ANSWER story, what Bible verse helped Randy make his decision? How can that verse help us?

THINGS TO DO

Play "Hide and Seek" with God's Word. Write out several verses which tell us that God will be there when we need Him: "Seek, and ye shall find," "Ask, and it shall be given you," etc. Hide them in your class. (Remember where and how many are hidden!) Remind your students that when decisions need to be made they should seek God's will. Tell them that parts of God's Word are hidden in the class and they should "seek" for them. Give the students a certain time limit and then "reward" them for "seeking and finding" (candy bar, etc.). God's rewards are great when you make the right decisions.

Use two large cotton balls, one wet and one dry, to introduce the lesson on Gideon and the fleece of wool.

Bring some evidence of how the world handles decision-making. These may include clippings on current issues dealing with seemingly difficult decisions (mercy killings, nuclear weapons, abortion, etc.). Why do world leaders find these issues so hard to settle? Encourage class to offer their thoughts. Help them to understand that solutions to problems, small or great, need to be based on God's Word. Few of these leaders depend on God or seek His guidance.

Answers for ANSWER

What's Your Choice?

Decisions, decisions, decisions! What should I do? Where should I go? You'll have many decisions to make during your lifetime and if you let God help you, you'll know you've made a right choice. On the banners below are a challenge and a right decision. To find out what they are, connect the + signs with a pencil but don't cross over any - signs. (The first letter has been done for you.) What will your decision be?

