

Reflection & Application:

4. In what ways are Christians today prone to place their hope and devotion in human leaders above God?

Observation & Interpretation:

Verse 23 is, sadly, the last time Gideon remembers who God is, and who he is. He has said there, "I will not rule over you, because God rules over you. He deserves the honor, the glory and the influence."

5. How do Gideon's actions in verses 24–27 and 29–31 then completely undermine his words?
6. From 8:27, Gideon is taking the honor of a king, but also minimizing the role of a priest. Why do you think Gideon placing the ephod replica in his hometown "became a snare to Gideon and his family"?

God said the ephod-breastplate (8:27) was to be worn by the high priest in the tabernacle, the tent where God dwelled among his people (Exodus 28:29–30). It had two stones, the Urim and Thummim, which were used to ask God for guidance and deliver his decisions. At this time, the tabernacle was in Shiloh (Judges 18:31).

7. How does Gideon's collection of gold to make an ephod echo Aaron's collection of gold to make a golden calf in Exodus 32:1-4? What does this teach us about human nature and the importance of our leaders' motives and actions?

8. From 8:28-35, Israel is now at “peace.” In what sense is it a flawed peace?

Reflection & Application:

Times of success, and times of peace, are dangerous! When we are struggling and weak, we know we need God. When all is well, it is very easy to look to others, and rely on and seek honor for ourselves. Where is there a disconnect between what you know about how he wants you to live, and how you are living? Let’s reflect.

9. Read and reflect on 1 John 1. God desires our freedom as we walk in the light of his truth and ways. He calls us to confess our sins and reminds us he is always faithful to forgive. Thank God in prayer that identifying areas of sin in your life is a practice that ultimately leads you to focus on God’s goodness and not your own failure.
10. Gideon’s life ends on a downward spiral as he prioritizes sex, prosperity, and fame. Consider the areas of your life that may pull you into a downward spiral of sin. What are you watching on TV/social media, what are you listening to, and who are your friends? Ask God to give you wisdom and show you what in your life needs set aside to continue to walk in faithfulness.
11. Oftentimes, old sins creep back up again. Reflect on a stronghold of sin that no longer has a grasp on your life. How does remembering the victory that you have in Jesus in your everyday life propel you to keep going back to Him?

Resources: Timothy Keller, [“Judges,”](#) in *90 Days in Judges, Galatians & Ephesians*, Explore by the Book, 2017.

Fasting Reflection:

RELAX: Take a moment to relax. Close your eyes and breathe deeply - inhaling slowly, then exhaling slowly. Repeat this several times as you imagine yourself coming into God's presence. As you finish and get ready to read, pray something simple like "Lord, speak to me through the words of your gospel. Amen."

READ. Read this story about Jesus two times. Read slowly, pausing at the line breaks:

Matthew 16: 24-26

When Jesus said to his disciples, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me.

If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it.

And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul?

Is anything worth more than your soul? For the Son of Man will come with his angels in the glory of his Father and will judge all people according to their deeds. And I tell you the truth, some standing here right now will not die before they see the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom."

REFLECT. After the reading, take some time to reflect in silence on one or more of the following questions:

- What word or words in this passage caught your attention?
- What in this passage comforted you?
- What in this passage challenged you?
- What is God inviting you into?

RESPOND. Read the scripture passage one more time. Bring to the Lord the praise, petition, questions, or thanksgiving that the Word inspires in you.

REST. Soak in the moment, rest in it, don't rush through it. Do you sense anything that Jesus is inviting you to know, see, believe, or do? Pray: Thank you God for meeting with me in this time. Give me courage and faith to follow you this day.