

Is Your Fleece Wet?

Gideon is one of my favorite Bible characters because I relate to his struggle with inferiority. God pulled this runt of a guy out of a hole in the ground and called him to deliver Israel. Gideon's classic "Who, me?" response reminds me of  conversations I've had with the Lord. None of us feels qualified to do God's work, but we know from Gideon's example that wimps can be transformed into warriors.

I've heard people criticize Gideon because he laid a fleece of wool on the ground and asked the Lord—not once, but twice—to confirm His promise (see Judg. 6:36-40). But the Bible doesn't say God was mad at Gideon for seeking assurance. In fact, God answered Gideon both times with moisture from heaven. The dew was a sign of God's favor and blessing.

You know how the story ended. Gideon's impressive army of 22,000 was downsized to a ragtag band of 300. Through their supernatural victory over Midian, God made it clear that His anointing has nothing to do with human ability.

How many of us have learned Gideon's lesson? Do you trust the Holy Spirit to work in you, or do you lean on the flesh? Do you have the dew of His anointing on your life, or have you manufactured a cheap form of human moisture to do the job?

Many Christians today can't distinguish between sweat and the dew of heaven, but there's a big difference. As I have prayed for more anointing in my life, I've realized that we often mistake fake anointing for the real thing. Here's what I've learned so far:

The anointing isn't in numbers. We place so much importance on church size today, yet God isn't impressed by crowds. I have nothing against megachurches as long as they preach the gospel—and many of them do a better job of it than small churches. But seating capacity alone does not indicate God's

approval.

The anointing isn't in eloquence. Some people have an uncanny way with words (including non-Christian motivational speakers), but persuasive skill isn't the same as spiritual anointing. The holy dew of heaven brings conviction and repentance—not self-awareness and an ego boost. And true preaching does not exalt the preacher—it crucifies him and focuses all the attention on the Son of God.

The anointing isn't in looks. Rock star pastors today are expected to be sexy, and everyone in the praise team needs cool clothes. There's nothing wrong with dressing to reach your audience, but I hope we don't think the Spirit is impressed with hipness.

The anointing isn't in technology. I love to use digital graphics when preaching. But some of my most anointed meetings have been in Third World countries where we didn't even have reliable electricity, much less computers and projectors.

The anointing isn't in emotionalism. When lack of anointing creates a vacuum, some of us fill it with screaming, swooning and other forms of religious theater. As long as the preacher punctuates his sermon with enough volume and the people shout back, we think we “had church.” (One preacher I know had everyone hollering while she quoted lines from a Beyoncé song!) Remember: Backslidden Israel shouted so loud the earth quaked, but by the end of the day the Philistines had plundered them (see 1 Sam. 4:5-11).

The anointing isn't in contrived manifestations. I love it when the Holy Spirit does miracles. But when people fake the supernatural (by jerking, slurring words or sprinkling glitter on themselves), I run for the door. If we had the fear of God, we would never pretend.

Charles Spurgeon referred to the Holy Spirit's anointing as “unction,” and he said of it: “Unction is a thing which you

cannot manufacture, and its counterfeits are worse than worthless." Let's reject every form of false anointing and ask the God who answered Gideon to soak us with His heavenly power.

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