



solutions that transform

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Gleanings

The Fleece and Faith



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Decisions, decision, decisions—life is a daily process of making decisions. There are personal decisions, family decisions, workplace decisions, church decisions, and public policy decisions.

A common tool for making decisions is known as “best practices,” which generally refers to techniques pragmatically discovered using heuristic and empirical methods.

While “best practices” has value, the superior method for making decisions is to discern the will of God. If God is sovereignly in control of His universe and executing His plan, then He will bless decisions that are consistent with His will. Decisions inconsistent with His plan and purpose will not be blessed.

At some point, all of us struggle with discerning the will of God. Hearing God is not easy. Perhaps this is one reason that Jesus would spend hours praying—something that few of us do.

We do have the promise from God that His sheep will hear His voice (John 10:27), but the specifics of how we hear His voice are more challenging. The technique of best practices can help us hear God and therefore discern His will.

An example of best practices is the proverbial fleece. In Judges 6:36–40, the story is told of Gideon’s attempt to validate a promise from God. As is so typical of the way God works, Gideon was given a seemingly impossible task and didn’t appear to have the resources. Hence, he resorted to the fleece in an attempt to discern whether or not he had indeed heard the Lord accurately. God graciously accommodated Gideon’s test. Today, many of us seek to hear from God by using the modern-day equivalent to Gideon’s fleece.

For example, consider the story of Jane and Gerrit Bezooyen of Alberta, Canada, who, about a year ago, listened to the audio from my Strategic Life Alignment Seminar. They heard the teaching about human aptitudes. In this seminar, I urge people to get their aptitudes tested at the Johnson O’Connor Research Foundation or an equivalent research institution. However, the testing costs time and money. And, as for many people, the cost of doing this presented an obstacle for them. So they put out a fleece, but didn’t really expect God to respond—this, too, is typical. Read on and enjoy their story in Jane’s own words.

In the spring of 2009, my husband and I had the opportunity to listen to an audio series by Dr. Gerald Chester, called Strategic Life Alignment. In the series, he spoke about the principle, “If God orders it—He’ll pay for it.” My husband and I had been talking about taking an aptitude test at the Johnson O’Connor Research Foundation, together with our two oldest children, ages 16 and 18. The problem was, it would cost us \$600 per person to get tested, plus the traveling and hotel costs. We just didn’t have accessible cash at that time.

“Well,” we reasoned, “if God ordered it, He’ll pay for it!” The obvious query then was, How do we know if this is what God ordered? We decided to put out the fleece. “If a check comes in the mail,” I said, “a check that we aren’t expecting, a check ‘out of the blue,’ then we’ll know that God ordered it.” What a crazy, almost flippant statement!

We had officially stopped farming approximately three years earlier. During the years of farming we would get checks “out of the blue” from various government programs designed to aid farmers during meager times. We currently were building custom homes and hadn’t received a check like that for some time. We were really playing it safe putting out the fleece. If we received a check, we would know what it was meant for!



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The following week we received a notice in the mail from the government of Alberta regarding a fund from the Agri-invest Program of 2005. We could now fill out our application form for the \$1200 entitled to us. Curious and somewhat skeptical, we filled out the necessary form and faxed it off. Soon we received a check in the mail for \$1200! We were totally amazed! The date of that check was May 5, 2009. A week went by, and we received a mysterious check from the Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC) dated May 4, 2009, for \$926! Two days later we received another check in the mail, again from AFSC, dated May 6, 2009, for \$3528. Talk about a green light from God! Then, to top it all off, the next week we received another check from AFSC, dated May 5, 2009, for \$762.91. A total of \$6416.91 within two weeks of making that audacious statement! All these checks were printed right around the time that we put out the fleece.

We should have had complete confidence to immediately make the necessary arrangements to go, but our irrational, skeptical selves spoke up. "Is this really the best use of this money? What if God wants us to use it for some other purpose? Should we really take all that time, leave our younger children behind, and pursue this? Etc., etc. . ."

In response to our skepticism, our twelve-year-old daughter asked if we were going to Seattle (to get our aptitudes tested). We replied that we didn't know for sure. She said, "I thought you said that if God ordered it, He would pay for it? God paid for it, didn't He? I think you should go!" We were shocked out of our lethargy, and replied, "You know, you're right! We need to go!" Out of the mouths of babes . . .

It has been six months since we went to the Johnson O'Connor Research Foundation. I believe that we are only beginning to realize the benefits of taking these tests. We all need an understanding of our God-given skills, and we have found the aptitude testing to be an effective tool that continues to facilitate and assist us on our journey called Life.

What a great story. I want to thank Jane for sharing it with me and giving me permission to share it with you.

There are a number of important lessons to glean from Jane and Gerrit's experience. Consider the following.

1. God does respond to our seeking Him. Even when we resort to the technique of the fleece, He, many times, will respond.
2. God pays for what he orders. If God is in charge of His universe and is executing His plan, then nothing can thwart His will; furthermore, He has all the requisite resources at His disposal to fund His will. If God wants something done, it will be done regardless of what the natural circumstances look like. Note for example, God's provision of food for the Israelites for forty years while they were in the desert (Deuteronomy 8:3—4).
3. When God provides for something, don't second-guess it. It is easy to take on a mentality that we don't have enough. This is a poverty mentality. If God, the source of all resources, is personal, intentional, and strategic, then you have what you need to do His will.
4. Listen to the voice of God not only through the fleece but also through children. Most of us don't have the faith of little children. Little children just believe—they don't second-guess. They take God at His word. They don't get distracted with the circumstances. They simply believe that God will do what He says He will do. Until we learn to have the faith of children, we need to listen to them.

In making decisions, the question is always, Can you discern the will of God? When God sends provision, can you discern His purpose for that provision? Are you willing to set aside your doubt, fear, and unbelief to embrace the faith of a little child? If you can honestly answer yes to these questions, then you will discern the will of God and make better decisions in every area of life. May the Lord strengthen you and enable you to do this well.

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