

ATTITUDE AND GOD'S GRACE

(Judges 13:1-25)

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Attitude Check. This passage calls us to an attitude check. Have we grown apathetic in our Christianity? Are we sensitive to God's calling in our lives? Has compromise with the world caused us to be unresponsive to God's Word, to his standards of morality, to his promises and expectations for our lives? Have we become dull, not being able to discern his voice? Do we demand personal verification, unwilling to trust his self-revelation in his Word?

A cynical and unbelieving attitude (as in the case of Manoah) results in a desire for personal verification at every turn. Our society demands verification, evidence, or proof. In many settings, especially in religious ones, this must be personal evidence or proof. The very notion of objective truth is insufficient in our postmodern culture. Unless we can personally touch, feel, see (i.e. "know" through our senses), we do not want to believe. Yet even the subjective aspect of Christianity, the internal witness of the Holy Spirit, is deemed insufficient evidence to a demanding, self-consumed, modern world. Today's culture has desensitized men and women to spiritual matters, and the church itself has not escaped from being influenced in this desensitizing process.

No doubt spiritual apathy to God and his church contributes also to this self-verification mentality. Disinterest in God's Word, fostered to some degree by lifeless, uncreative teaching and preaching, is reflected in various aspects of church life from giving to participation in service. Many pastors and churches are more interested in numeric growth and success as the world judges it than in a depth of commitment to God, generated through the renewal of the mind by the Word of God. When pastors and churches succumb to administering God's people as if it were just one more multinational corporation in the modern world, there should be no surprise when there is so little interest in the Bible and biblical theology.

Gods grace. Fortunately, as in the days of Manoah and the Israelites of the Philistine oppression, God will not leave people in this state. In this passage, the Lord demonstrates his incredible grace by saving the Israelites when they least deserve it. He will, as before, continue to evince [reveal] to human beings his marvelous grace in spite of their lack of commitment to him, even if this means stirring up opposition to his people.

No other deliverer in the book of Judges matches Samson's potential. Yet in spite of all these advantages and special attention, he accomplishes less on behalf of his people than any of his predecessor deliverers. We live in an exciting time in that there are so many opportunities for the spread of the gospel. The potential with the many resources at the disposal of Christians— spiritual and otherwise—is immense. Yet, tragically much of these resources are being squandered in self-interested waste. We too need to have an attitude check and to look to God's amazing grace.

