**What About Circumstances?**

Often, people will look to circumstances to determine if God is speaking to them or if they are in God's will. But circumstances do not communicate God's will to us. God has given us His word so that we may know His will.

When we read the history of Israel, circumstances were an indication of whether or not Israel was in obedience to God's revealed will. However, those circumstance only confirmed to Israel what God has already said. Here is an example:

(Deuteronomy 11:16-17 KJV)  Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them; {17} And then the LORD'S wrath be kindled against you, and he shut up the heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit; and lest ye perish quickly from off the good land which the LORD giveth you.

When Israel saw certain things happening they could understand that it meant something. But it was God's word to them that let them know what that circumstance meant. The circumstances were only what God had already told them would happen. In this particular instance, it was that if they disobeyed there would be no rain.

The events did not communicate God's message, God's word had already communicated what those circumstances meant. Israel was told: "If you do... then you will receive the blessing" and "if you do not... then you will receive a curse." The circumstances only confirmed God's word to Israel.

(Deuteronomy 13:1-4 KJV)  If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, {2} And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; {3} Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. {4} Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him.

The Word of God was what Israel went by, not the circumstance. If a prophet arose and gave Israel a sign or a wonder but the words he spoke were contrary to what God had said then they would know that he was a false prophet.

Circumstances are not what we should use to guide our way.  The word of God is how we are to get our guidance.

Many times we look to circumstances to see if we are in [God's Will](http://www.bereanworkman.com/grace/alternative/will.htm). Often we think that if something happens in a particular way that it is God speaking to us telling us whether or not we should do a particular thing. We get this idea from a man named Gideon.

(Judges 6:36-40 KJV)  And Gideon said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said, {37} Behold, I will put a fleece of wool in the floor; and if the dew be on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth beside, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said. {38} And it was so: for he rose up early on the morrow, and thrust the fleece together, and wringed the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water. {39} And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once: let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew. {40} And God did so that night: for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground.

This is the passage where we get the phrase "putting on the fleece", which means to allow the circumstances to make the decision for us. When people put on the fleece they attempt to determine God's will by reading circumstances. What is often overlooked in this passage is that Gideon was not allowing the circumstances to determine what he was going to do but rather he wanted a sign to confirm what God has already told him.

(Judges 6:36 KJV) And Gideon said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, **as thou hast said,**

In this passage, Gideon already knew what God had said was seeking a confirmation of God's will. He wanted something more than God's word. God gave him a sign to prove what His will was. Gideon doubted and he looked for God to give him a miraculous demonstration.

Having the will of God made known through His word and then demanding a sign is called putting out the fleece.

Why do people do put on the fleece:

1. To prove God is doing something for them that He is not doing for others. This is a denial of God's grace.
2. To use it because you do not understand how God works, how He leads, how He reveals His will.

If you try to read circumstances to find God's will then you do not understand your sonship; it is spiritual immaturity.

Reference used:
My notes from teaching by Richard Jordan
From tape series:Understanding the Grace Alternative
Understanding God's Will