Introduction to Walking Out Your Faith

Life Lessons from the Book of Joshua

Joshua is a book of hope. It’s a book of second chances. The Israelites had failed to enter the land God had promised to give them. They’d followed Moses to the border of the Promised Land, but then refused to enter. They’d heard there were giants in the land and they were full of fear. Instead of choosing to walk in faith in Almighty God who had miraculously delivered them from slavery in Egypt, they retreated. They were defeated in their minds by an enemy who never mounted a campaign against them and never fired a single shot.

Because they chose to live in fear instead of faith, God allowed them to wander in the wilderness for 40 years, until that entire faithless generation passed away. hen God gave the Israelites a second chance.

Having learned their lesson, the results were different the second time around. Under Joshua’s leadership, with God’s help, they mounted a military campaign against a formidable foe and conquered and possessed the land God had promised to give them.

Although this page in Israel’s history took place around 1390 BC, the story of Joshua and the Israelites entering and conquering the Promised Land is full of life lessons for us today. It instructs us about God – His purposes, His words, His grace, and how He works in human lives. It illustrates how God has power over all kinds of circumstances that seem impossible. It challenges us to put our faith into action, to recognize God in our circumstances, and to obey Him and cooperate with Him in bringing His great plans and purposes to fruition.

I pray that this study will cause us to grow in our faith, to trust Him with every fiber of our beings instead of trying to figure everything out for ourselves, and to walk out our faith day by day.

With Aloha,

Susie Lam

Walking Out Your Faith

Life Lessons from the Book of Joshua

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**The Culture of “Women in the Word”**

We come together for the purpose of studying the Word of God and growing in Christ together. We believe that every woman is valuable to God and we intentionally choose to establish a culture where:

**Women are loved and respected.**

We avoid cliques, welcome new ladies to our groups, and treat each other with honor, respect and courtesy.

**Relationships are very important**. Since we come from a broad range of backgrounds, and are at various stages of spiritual development, we make room for new opinions and points of view, and don’t criticize other people’s opinions or their churches. We do not give advice unless it is asked for.

**Each woman is encouraged to share, and her input is considered valuable.** Please monitor yourself, as to how much or how little you are sharing, so you do not monopolize the conversation at your table, but you do contribute something to the discussion. The vitality of the group depends on each member participating and contributing her thoughts and insights.

**Prayer for each other and the study of God’s Word are taken seriously**. We do our homework and come prepared. In case you did not get your homework done, come anyway and enjoy learning from others, but please don’t “wing it”. Just answer questions for which you prepared in advance. Please try to stay on target in your discussion of the homework. Also, please remember to pray for the other members of your small group throughout the week.

**Accountability is important.** Please make attending Women in the Word and your small group’s social gatherings a priority. Please call or text your small group shepherd to let her know if you are going to be late, or must be absent, or drop out of the group.

**Healthy boundaries are maintained**. Please come on time, keep confidences, and do not gossip or criticize others. Anything of a personal nature that is shared in your small group is to remain strictly confidential. Please help with responsibilities, such as putting away tables and chairs when necessary, or helping bring food, if your small group decides to have a meal or snacks.

Jesus is glorified when love, appreciation, affection, praise and encouragement are openly and generously expressed. Thank you for expressing your love and encouragement to the other ladies in your group and to all the volunteers who make Women in the Word possible.

Mahalo!

**Bible Study & Journaling Instructions**

This Bible study is suitable for those who have never studied the Bible before as well as those who have been studying God’s Word for years. The method of study is simple:

Begin by praying that God will speak to your heart as you get into His Word, and read the passage. Be open to encouragement, direction or correction from the Lord as you read. Underline key phrases or make notations in the margins of your Bible as the Lord brings to mind people or situations you should pray for, promises to stand upon, or lessons you need to apply to your life.

After reading the passage, answer the questions.

Then select a verse or paragraph that particularly spoke to you or caught your attention. If nothing “jumps off the page”, select a sentence or two that you think might have some spiritual significance to your life.

Copy that verse or passage word for word. Writing out the verse or verses will help you remember what God is saying to you.

Then, in your own words, write what you observed in that verse or paragraph. (Consider: What is the context? What or who is it about? How would I have felt or reacted had I been there? What is really being said? What does it mean? Why is it important?)

Next, and most importantly, write out how this passage applies to your life. Is there something you need to change? A promise to stand on? An order to follow? Write out how you will be different because of what you have just read.

Finally, write a brief prayer to God, based on this passage. Thank Him for speaking to you. Tell Him what’s on your heart. Ask Him to help you change based on what you have just read.

A simple acrostic to help you remember these steps is **“SOAP”**

**S = Scripture**

**O = Observation**

**A = Application**

**P = Prayer**

Example:

**S**: Joshua 1:8 “Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.”

**O**: God has given us His Word to guide us and help us live lives that are pleasing to Him. He’s our creator and knows what we need to be prosperous and successful, and He says we need to meditate day and night on His Word. We must spend time in the Bible, meditating on the scriptures, so that His thoughts become our thoughts, and His ways become our ways. Then He will bless us and our lives will be fruitful and successful and He promises to prosper us.

**A**: I’m so grateful that God has given us His word, so we know how to live to please and glorify Him! I need to be in the Word every day.

**P**: Dear Lord – I love your Word! Help me love and value it even more! Thank you for this promise, that if I’m meditating on your law day and night, you will prosper me and I’ll be successful in what I do. I want Your word to dwell richly in my heart, so I will not sin against You, and my life will be fruitful and pleasing to You! I love you! In Jesus Name,

Amen.

Joshua

**Lesson 1 – Moving Forward in Faith**

Joshua 1

When circumstances are challenging, we can give up and hope things change or we can face and conquer the challenges, with God’s help.

1. Describe a time in your life when you faced a challenging circumstance and were afraid. Did you act in faith or in fear? How did you get through that time? (Remember anything of a personal nature that’s shared in our small groups is strictly confidential. No gossip please!)

***Joshua 1:1-6****: After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses’ aide:****2****“Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites.****3****I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses.****4****Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Mediterranean Sea in the west. 5No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. 6Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them.*

2. Put yourself in Joshua’s shoes, and write in the first person, as if writing in your diary, what you were thinking and feeling after Moses died and God called you to lead that huge hoard of Israelites into the Promised Land.

3. Jot down the promises God gave Joshua in the first 6 verses of chapter 1. Then jot down the commands He gave Joshua.

Promises:

Commands:

4. How does knowing God is present, and He is with you, change the way you view your circumstances?

5. In verse 6 God clearly tells Joshua that He wants him to lead His people. How would this help Joshua find the strength to do that?

6. How do you know when you are in God’s will? Does knowing you are in God’s will give you courage? Give an example from your life of a time you knew you were in God’s will. What happened.

***Joshua 1:7-9******7****“Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go.****8****Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.****9****Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”*

***Psalm 1*** *1Blessed is the one  
    who does not walk in step with the wicked  
or stand in the way that sinners take  
    or sit in the company of mockers,  
2but whose delight is in the law of the Lord,  
    and who meditates on his law day and night.  
3That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,  
    which yields its fruit in season  
and whose leaf does not wither—  
    whatever they do prospers.*

***4****Not so the wicked!  
    They are like chaff  
    that the wind blows away.****5****Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,  
    nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.*

***6****For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous,  
    but the way of the wicked leads to destruction.*

7. Jot down the promises of Psalm 1:3 and Joshua 1:8. How does meditating on God’s law and being careful to obey it, help you prosper and be successful?

*Psalm 1:3*

*Joshua 1:8*

8. Jot down a promise God has given you from His word. Have you seen that promise fulfilled? Explain.

***Joshua 1:10-18*** *10So Joshua ordered the officers of the people: 11“Go through the camp and tell the people, ‘Get your provisions ready. Three days from now you will cross the Jordan here to go in and take possession of the land the Lord your God is giving you for your own.’”*

*12But to the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh, Joshua said, 13“Remember the command that Moses the servant of the Lord gave you after he said, ‘The Lord your God will give you rest by giving you this land.’ 14Your wives, your children and your livestock may stay in the land that Moses gave you east of the Jordan, but all your fighting men, ready for battle, must cross over ahead of your fellow Israelites. You are to help them 15until the Lord gives them rest, as he has done for you, and until they too have taken possession of the land the Lord your God is giving them. After that, you may go back and occupy your own land, which Moses the servant of the Lord gave you east of the Jordan toward the sunrise.”*

*16Then they answered Joshua, “Whatever you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. 17Just as we fully obeyed Moses, so we will obey you. Only may the Lord your God be with you as he was with Moses.18Whoever rebels against your word and does not obey it, whatever you may command them, will be put to death. Only be strong and courageous!”*

9. Inadequate as Joshua may have felt, he took action. He told the officers of the people to get ready to cross the Jordan, and reminded those who’d already claimed lands, of their promise to help the other tribes conquer their lands on the other side of the Jordan. In spite of potential dangers, Joshua walked in faith and the Israelites followed him and received the blessings God had promised them. What did the Israelite officers say to Joshua in verses 16-18? Is there an area where God is leading you to take action? Explain. (Improving your marriage? Healing a broken relationship? Witnessing to a neighbor? Overcoming a bad habit? Giving a substantial gift? etc.) What is your response to Him?

10. Journal this chapter SOAP style.

Joshua

**Lesson 2 - A Flawed Woman Saves a Nation**

Joshua 2

Everyone is flawed and wounded. We’ve all known desperation and defeat. Some of us feel trapped by bad choices we made in the past. Thankfully God is full of grace and loving kindness, and He forgives our sins when we humbly ask Him to. God delights in using weak, flawed people to accomplish His purposes.

1. What limitations, weaknesses or past failures do you have that you feel might prevent God from using you? Explain. Would you like prayer about this? (Remember anything of a personal nature that’s shared in our small groups is strictly confidential. No gossip please!)

***Joshua 2:1-7****. Then Joshua son of Nun secretly sent two spies from Shittim. “Go, look over the land,” he said, “especially Jericho.” So they went and entered the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there.*

***2****The king of Jericho was told, “Look, some of the Israelites have come here tonight to spy out the land.”****3****So the king of Jericho sent this message to Rahab: “Bring out the men who came to you and entered your house, because they have come to spy out the whole land.”*

***4****But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. She said, “Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they had come from.****5****At dusk, when it was time to close the city gate, they left. I don’t know which way they went. Go after them quickly. You may catch up with them.”****6****(But she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them under the stalks of flax she had laid out on the roof.)****7****So the men set out in pursuit of the spies on the road that leads to the fords of the Jordan, and as soon as the pursuers had gone out, the gate was shut.*

2. Despite Rahab’s sins and character flaws, God loved her and used her to save the Israelite spies, and accomplish His purposes. Write in the first person, as if you were Rahab writing in her diary, how she felt when the Hebrew spies came to her door, and why she hid them.

***Joshua 2:8-13******8****Before the spies lay down for the night, she went up on the roof****9****and said to them, “I know that the Lord has given you this land and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you.****10****We have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed****11****When we heard of it, our hearts melted in fear and everyone’s courage failed because of you, for the Lord your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below.*

3. What statement of faith does Rahab make in verses 9-11? Why is this remarkable? Why would this statement be pleasing to God?

***Joshua 2:12-13****“Now then, please swear to me by the Lord that you will show kindness to my family, because I have shown kindness to you. Give me a sure sign****13****that you will spare the lives of my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them—and that you will save us from death.”*

4. According to verses 12-13, Rahab believed completely that the God of the Israelites was the true God of heaven and earth. She believed it so much that she hid the spies and negotiated with them to save her family when Jericho was destroyed. She trusted God with her family. What or who specifically do you need to trust God with? (Remember, anything of a personal nature that’s shared in your group is to remain completely confidential.)

***Joshua 2:14-24******14****“Our lives for your lives!” the men assured her. “If you don’t tell what we are doing, we will treat you kindly and faithfully when the Lord gives us the land.”*

***15****So she let them down by a rope through the window, for the house she lived in was part of the city wall.****16****She said to them, “Go to the hills so the pursuers will not find you. Hide yourselves there three days until they return, and then go on your way.”*

***17****Now the men had said to her, “This oath you made us swear will not be binding on us****18****unless, when we enter the land, you have tied this scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you have brought your father and mother, your brothers and all your family into your house.****19****If any of them go outside your house into the street, their blood will be on their own heads; we will not be responsible. As for those who are in the house with you, their blood will be on our head if a hand is laid on them.****20****But if you tell what we are doing, we will be released from the oath you made us swear.”*

***21****“Agreed,” she replied. “Let it be as you say.”*

*So she sent them away, and they departed. And she tied the scarlet cord in the window.*

***22****When they left, they went into the hills and stayed there three days, until the pursuers had searched all along the road and returned without finding them.****23****Then the two men started back. They went down out of the hills, forded the river and came to Joshua son of Nun and told him everything that had happened to them.****24****They said to Joshua, “The Lord has surely given the whole land into our hands; all the people are melting in fear because of us.”*

5. How did Rahab’s words and actions affect Israel’s future? Be specific.

6. What was Rahab’s request of the spies? What further conditions to her request did she and the spies agree upon?

7. Think about Jesus and all He’s done for you. What do you think the scarlet cord in this true story represents?

8. When has God looked past your flaws because He loved you, and used you as part of His unfolding plan? Explain. (Remember that anything of a personal nature that’s shared in our small groups is to remain strictly confidential. No gossip please!)

9. Rahab is listed in the Bible’s “great hall of faith” in Hebrews 11:31. How do you feel about Rahab joining the Israelites after the fall of Jericho, and becoming an ancestor of Jesus Christ?

10. Journal this passage SOAP style.

Joshua

**Lesson 3 - Crossing the Jordon**

Joshua 3

God loves it when we exercise all-out faith in Him, like Joshua did when preparing to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land. One big obstacle stood in the way – the Jordan River which was at flood stage. It had taken 40 years to get there, and then they waited three more days to cross the river.

***Joshua 3:1-4****Early in the morning Joshua and all the Israelites set out from Shittim and went to the Jordan, where they camped before crossing over.****2****After three days the officers went throughout the camp,****3****giving orders to the people: “When you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the Levitical priests carrying it, you are to move out from your positions and follow it.****4****Then you will know which way to go, since you have never been this way before. But keep a distance of about two thousand cubitsbetween you and the ark; do not go near it.”*

1. What does waiting accomplish in us? How does waiting on God display our trust in Him?

2. Give an example of how God has used waiting in your life. How would your experience have been different if you had not waited?

***Joshua 3:5*** *Joshua told the people, “Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do amazing things among you.”*

3. Then and now God calls His people to holiness, purity and separation. The promise that God would work miraculously the next day hinged on the people’s willingness to consecrate themselves today. Look up the definition of **consecration** and write it down. Then jot down some ways we may consecrate our lives to God.

*Consecration means:*

***Joshua 3:6-17*** *Joshua said to the priests, “Take up the ark of the covenant and pass on ahead of the people.” So they took it up and went ahead of them.* ***7****And the Lord said to Joshua, “Today I will begin to exalt you in the eyes of all Israel, so they may know that I am with you as I was with Moses.****8****Tell the priests who carry the ark of the covenant: ‘When you reach the edge of the Jordan’s waters, go and stand in the river.’”*

***9****Joshua said to the Israelites, “Come here and listen to the words of the Lord your God.****10****This is how you will know that the living God is among you and that he will certainly drive out before you the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites and Jebusites.****11****See, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth will go into the Jordan ahead of you.****12****Now then, choose twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one from each tribe.****13****And as soon as the priests who carry the ark of the Lord—the Lord of all the earth—set foot in the Jordan, its waters flowing downstream will be cut off and stand up in a heap.”*

***14****So when the people broke camp to cross the Jordan, the priests carrying the ark of the covenant went ahead of them.****15****Now the Jordan is at flood stage all during harvest. Yet as soon as the priests who carried the ark reached the Jordan and their feet touched the water’s edge,****16****the water from upstream stopped flowing. It piled up in a heap a great distance away, at a town called Adam in the vicinity of Zarethan, while the water flowing down to the Sea of the Arabah (that is, the Dead Sea) was completely cut off. So the people crossed over opposite Jericho.****17****The priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord stopped in the middle of the Jordan and stood on dry ground, while all Israel passed by until the whole nation had completed the crossing on dry ground.*

4. What other scriptural event does this crossing remind you of? Before God parted the waters of the Jordan, what did the priests carrying the ark of the covenant have to do?

5. List some reasons why stepping into the Jordan took faith. What happened when the priests stepped into the water?

6. Why does our faith matter to God? How is our faith boosted?

Hints: Hebrews 11:6, Romans 10:17)

7. In verse 9 Joshua says *“Come here and listen to the words of the Lord your God.”* Why is listening to God’s word a vital part of walking by faith?

8. Is there an area in your life where you need to be patient and wait for God? Is there anything the Lord wants you to do while you’re waiting? Explain.

9. Are there some ways in which you need to get your feet wet? Is there anything God has asked you to do that you have not acted on yet?

10. Journal this chapter SOAP style.

Joshua

**Lesson 4 - Distinctly Different**

Joshua 5:1-9

God has always desired that His people be set apart and distinct from the world. God marked the Israelites through circumcision. Circumcision was a physical act that marked their identity as the people of God.

1. Distinct means “separate, not the same, out of the ordinary, unusual.” According to that definition, how should Christ followers be distinct – not the same, out of the ordinary, or unusual? Explain.

***Joshua 5:1-9****. 1Now when all the Amorite kings west of the Jordan and all the Canaanite kings along the coast heard how the Lord had dried up the Jordan before the Israelites until they had crossed over, their hearts melted in fear and they no longer had the courage to face the Israelites.*

***2****At that time the Lord said to Joshua, “Make flint knives and circumcise the Israelites again.”****3****So Joshua made flint knives and circumcised the Israelites at Gibeath Haaraloth.*

***4****Now this is why he did so: All those who came out of Egypt—all the men of military age—died in the wilderness on the way after leaving Egypt.****5****All the people that came out had been circumcised, but all the people born in the wilderness during the journey from Egypt had not.****6****The Israelites had moved about in the wilderness forty years until all the men who were of military age when they left Egypt had died, since they had not obeyed the Lord. For the Lord had sworn to them that they would not see the land he had solemnly promised their ancestors to give us, a land flowing with milk and honey.****7****So he raised up their sons in their place, and these were the ones Joshua circumcised. They were still uncircumcised because they had not been circumcised on the way.****8****And after the whole nation had been circumcised, they remained where they were in camp until they were healed.*

***9****Then the Lord said to Joshua, “Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.” So the place has been called Gilgalto this day.*

***Jeremiah 4:4****Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, circumcise your hearts, you people of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, or my wrath will flare up and burn like fire because of the evil you have done - burn with no one to quench it.*

2. Throughout scripture circumcision is a metaphor for holiness. In Jeremiah 4:4, Jeremiah issued a call to the men of Judah “Circumcise your hearts” It was a call to be submissive and obedient to God and walk in holiness. What distinguishing marks, if any, should Christians have today? How can we make sure we have circumcised hearts?

3. What does it mean to be holy? How can believers in Jesus Christ live holy lives in today’s culture?

4. In verse 9 God told Joshua *“Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.”* What does the reproach of Egypt imply? What “rolled it away” from Israel?

5. Give one or two examples of how you’ve grown in holiness since becoming a Christian and had the reproach of your former life rolled away.

***Romans 12:2*** *“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

6. How are our minds renewed?

7. Have you let the world squeeze you into its’ mold in any area? Explain. Would you like prayer for this?

8. Jot down an example of how your mind has been renewed since coming to Jesus. How are you thinking and acting differently now? (Remember that anything of a personal nature that’s shared in our groups is to remain strictly confidential. No gossip please!)

***1Peter 1:17*** ***“****Since you call on a Father who judges each person’s work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear.”*

9. What does it mean to live as foreigners here? What does reverent fear towards God look like?

10. Journal one of these passages SOAP style.

Joshua

**Lesson 5 - When God Interrupts Your Plans**

Joshua 5:13 – 6:5

The night before a decisive battle is never easy. Joshua knew the tactical and moral importance of winning the battle of Jericho. In the middle of the night, he was confronted by a solitary figure with a drawn sword. God revealed Himself in human flesh to arrest Joshua’s attention and deliver an important message. This lesson will help us learn what Joshua was learning – that when we say Yes to God, He has the right to interrupt our lives.

***Joshua 5:13-15******13****Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, “Are you for us or for our enemies?”*

***14****“Neither,” he replied, “but as commander of the army of the Lord I have now come.” Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked him, “What message does my Lord have for his servant?”*

***15****The commander of the Lord’s army replied, “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy.” And Joshua did so.*

1. Who do you think was the commander of the Lord’s army. What did Joshua ask him? What did the commander tell him?

2. Describe a time in your life when, like Joshua, you lost sleep over a dilemma. Did God help you get over your fears and anxiety? If so, how? Explain. (Remember, anything of a personal nature that’s shared in our small groups is to remain strictly confidential. No gossip please!)

***Joshua 6:1-2*** *Now the gates of Jericho were securely barred because of the Israelites. No one went out and no one came in.* ***2****Then the Lord said to Joshua, “See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men.”*

3. What did God promise Joshua before the battle ever started? How do you think this promise affected Joshua?

4. How does knowing that God has already written the end of the story give you confidence? Jot down any promises from God’s word that give you confidence that you’re going to be okay.

***Joshua 6:3-5******3****March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days.****4****Have seven priests carry trumpets of rams’ horns in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets.****5****When you hear them sound a long blast on the trumpets, have the whole army give a loud shout; then the wall of the city will collapse and the army will go up, everyone straight in.”*

5. God’s plan for taking the city of Jericho was very unconventional. It certainly wasn’t the way Joshua had been planning to take the city. What do you think Joshua was thinking and feeling when the Lord gave him these instructions? Write in the first person, as if you were Joshua writing in his diary, describing his reaction to the Lord’s instructions.

6. How do you make plans? Discuss the pros and cons? Pray and ask God for wisdom? Read the Bible and then do what seems best? Discuss my plans with people I trust? I act on my “gut instincts”. “I blunder ahead on my own, thinking it’s easier to ask forgiveness than permission.”, etc. Explain.

7. Can you remember a time when God changed your plans and things worked out better than you expected? Explain.

***Joshua 5:13-15******13****Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, “Are you for us or for our enemies?”*

***14****“Neither,” he replied, “but as commander of the army of the Lord I have now come.” Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked him, “What message does my Lord have for his servant?”*

***15****The commander of the Lord’s army replied, “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy.” And Joshua did so.*

8. Re-read Joshua 5:13-15 above. What did the commander of the Lord’s army say when Joshua asked him whose side he was on? What did he mean by this?

9. Are there any areas in your life where you’ve been asking God to take your side, when you simply need to surrender to Him and allow Him to take control? Explain.

10. Journal this passage SOAP style.

Joshua

**Lesson 6 - Be Sure Your Sin Will Find You Out**

Joshua 7

If you ever think that sin isn’t serious, read the sobering story of Achan and the defeat of the Israelite army at the battle of Ai.

***Joshua 7****1But the Israelites were unfaithful in regard to the devoted things; Achan son of Karmi, the son of Zimri, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of them. So the Lord’s anger burned against Israel.*

***2****Now Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is near Beth Aven to the east of Bethel, and told them, “Go up and spy out the region.” So the men went up and spied out Ai.*

***3****When they returned to Joshua, they said, “Not all the army will have to go up against Ai. Send two or three thousand men to take it and do not weary the whole army, for only a few people live there.”****4****So about three thousand went up; but they were routed by the men of Ai,****5****who killed about thirty-six of them. They chased the Israelites from the city gate as far as the stone quarries and struck them down on the slopes. At this the hearts of the people melted in fear and became like water.*

***6****Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell facedown to the ground before the ark of the Lord, remaining there till evening. The elders of Israel did the same, and sprinkled dust on their heads.****7****And Joshua said, “Alas, Sovereign Lord, why did you ever bring this people across the Jordan to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us? If only we had been content to stay on the other side of the Jordan!****8****Pardon your servant, Lord. What can I say, now that Israel has been routed by its enemies?****9****The Canaanites and the other people of the country will hear about this and they will surround us and wipe out our name from the earth. What then will you do for your own great name?”*

***10****The Lord said to Joshua, “Stand up! What are you doing down on your face?****11****Israel has sinned; they have violated my covenant, which I commanded them to keep. They have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen, they have lied,they have put them with their own possessions.****12****That is why the Israelites cannot stand against their enemies; they turn their backs and run because they have been made liable to destruction. I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy whatever among you is devoted to destruction.*

***13****“Go, consecrate the people. Tell them, ‘Consecrate yourselves in preparation for tomorrow; for this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: There are devoted things among you, Israel. You cannot stand against your enemies until you remove them.*

***14****“‘In the morning, present yourselves tribe by tribe. The tribe the Lord chooses shall come forward clan by clan; the clan the Lord chooses shall come forward family by family; and the family the Lord chooses shall come forward man by man.****15****Whoever is caught with the devoted things shall be destroyed by fire, along with all that belongs to him. He has violated the covenant of the Lord and has done an outrageous thing in Israel!’”*

***16****Early the next morning Joshua had Israel come forward by tribes, and Judah was chosen.****17****The clans of Judah came forward, and the Zerahites were chosen. He had the clan of the Zerahites come forward by families, and Zimri was chosen.****18****Joshua had his family come forward man by man, and Achan son of Karmi, the son of Zimri, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was chosen.*

***19****Then Joshua said to Achan, “My son, give glory to the Lord, the God of Israel, and honor him. Tell me what you have done; do not hide it from me.”*

***20****Achan replied, “It is true! I have sinned against the Lord, the God of Israel. This is what I have done:****21****When I saw in the plunder a beautiful robe from Babylonia, two hundred shekels of silver and a bar of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. They are hidden in the ground inside my tent, with the silver underneath.”*

***22****So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent, and there it was, hidden in his tent, with the silver underneath.****23****They took the things from the tent, brought them to Joshua and all the Israelites and spread them out before the Lord.*

***24****Then Joshua, together with all Israel, took Achan son of Zerah, the silver, the robe, the gold bar, his sons and daughters, his cattle, donkeys and sheep, his tent and all that he had, to the Valley of Achor.****25****Joshua said, “Why have you brought this trouble on us? The Lord will bring trouble on you today.”*

*Then all Israel stoned him, and after they had stoned the rest, they burned them.****26****Over Achan they heaped up a large pile of rocks, which remains to this day. Then the Lord turned from his fierce anger. Therefore that place has been called the Valley of Achor ever since.*

1. The battle of Jericho was a miraculous victory, whereas the Israelites lost the battle of Ai, a much smaller town, and 36 of their men died. Who did Joshua consult before attacking Ai? What does this remind you of? Do you see any problem with this?

*Instead of consulting the Lord, Joshua sent spies into Ai and took the word of the spies and sent in a small army.*

*Someone (Achan) violated the ban regarding the spoils of battle that were to be devoted to the Lord. This was a sin against the Lord and God took it seriously.*

2. How did Joshua find out who’d violated the ban regarding the spoils of battle, and what happened to Achan and his family, as a result?

3. Why do you think God dealt so harshly with Achan? Why was Achan’s sin so repugnant to God?

4. Why does God hate sin so much? What are we saying about God when we sin?

5. Sin starts with disobedience. Re-read Joshua 7:11. How is sin more like the act of a traitor than that of a criminal? (Hint: A criminal violates the law. A traitor violates his citizenship.)

6. Do we take sin too lightly today? What should be our attitude towards sin?

***1 John 1:9****. “If we confess our sins,*He is faithful and just*to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

7. What does 1 John 1:9 tell us we should do when we sin?

***Matthew 5:29-30******29****If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.****30****And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.*

8. What is the Lord trying to tell us in this passage?

9. What do you learn from this story about the far-reaching consequences of sin? Who else is affected by our sins?

10. Journal one of these passages SOAP style.

Joshua

**Lesson 7 - Faith Leads To Victory**

Joshua 8:1-28

Battles in life are inevitable. They can come without warning, seemingly from nowhere. In Joshua 8 we find a good plan for winning life’s battles. God can turn tragedy into triumph and defeat into victory.

***Joshua 8:1-28*** *1Then the Lord said to Joshua, “Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Take the whole army with you, and go up and attack Ai. For I have delivered into your hands the king of Ai, his people, his city and his land.****2****You shall do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king, except that you may carry off their plunder and livestock for yourselves. Set an ambush behind the city.”*

***3****So Joshua and the whole army moved out to attack Ai. He chose thirty thousand of his best fighting men and sent them out at night****4****with these orders: “Listen carefully. You are to set an ambush behind the city. Don’t go very far from it. All of you be on the alert.****5****I and all those with me will advance on the city, and when the men come out against us, as they did before, we will flee from them.****6****They will pursue us until we have lured them away from the city, for they will say, ‘They are running away from us as they did before.’ So when we flee from them,****7****you are to rise up from ambush and take the city. The Lord your God will give it into your hand.****8****When you have taken the city, set it on fire. Do what the Lord has commanded. See to it; you have my orders.”*

***9****Then Joshua sent them off, and they went to the place of ambush and lay in wait between Bethel and Ai, to the west of Ai—but Joshua spent that night with the people.*

***10****Early the next morning Joshua mustered his army, and he and the leaders of Israel marched before them to Ai.****11****The entire force that was with him marched up and approached the city and arrived in front of it. They set up camp north of Ai, with the valley between them and the city.****12****Joshua had taken about five thousand men and set them in ambush between Bethel and Ai, to the west of the city.****13****So the soldiers took up their positions—with the main camp to the north of the city and the ambush to the west of it. That night Joshua went into the valley.*

***14****When the king of Ai saw this, he and all the men of the city hurried out early in the morning to meet Israel in battle at a certain place overlooking the Arabah. But he did not know that an ambush had been set against him behind the city.****15****Joshua and all Israel let themselves be driven back before them, and they fled toward the wilderness.****16****All the men of Ai were called to pursue them, and they pursued Joshua and were lured away from the city.****17****Not a man remained in Ai or Bethel who did not go after Israel. They left the city open and went in pursuit of Israel.*

***18****Then the Lord said to Joshua, “Hold out toward Ai the javelin that is in your hand, for into your hand I will deliver the city.” So Joshua held out toward the city the javelin that was in his hand.****19****As soon as he did this, the men in the ambush rose quickly from their position and rushed forward. They entered the city and captured it and quickly set it on fire.*

***20****The men of Ai looked back and saw the smoke of the city rising up into the sky, but they had no chance to escape in any direction; the Israelites who had been fleeing toward the wilderness had turned back against their pursuers.****21****For when Joshua and all Israel saw that the ambush had taken the city and that smoke was going up from it, they turned around and attacked the men of Ai.****22****Those in the ambush also came out of the city against them, so that they were caught in the middle, with Israelites on both sides. Israel cut them down, leaving them neither survivors nor fugitives.****23****But they took the king of Ai alive and brought him to Joshua.*

***24****When Israel had finished killing all the men of Ai in the fields and in the wilderness where they had chased them, and when every one of them had been put to the sword, all the Israelites returned to Ai and killed those who were in it.****25****Twelve thousand men and women fell that day—all the people of Ai.****26****For Joshua did not draw back the hand that held out his javelin until he had destroyed all who lived in Ai.****27****But Israel did carry off for themselves the livestock and plunder of this city, as the Lord had instructed Joshua.*

***28****So Joshua burned Ai and made it a permanent heap of ruins, a desolate place to this day.*

1. Name a few of the battles you are facing or have faced in life. Who do you consult when facing your battles? (Parents, friends, spouse etc.). Explain.

2. Describe how you think Joshua and the Israelites felt after being soundly defeated and losing 36 men in the first battle of Ai (chapter 7). Who did Joshua consult before that first battle? Who did he consult before the second battle of Ai (chapter 8)? How do you think He and his army felt after the second battle?

3. As Christians, living in a fallen world dominated by “the prince of the power of the air”, we must expect attacks and be in a state of readiness at all times, because we never know when a battle will erupt. Read the following verses and jot down after each one, what they tell you about who your real enemy is, and who your helper is.

***Ephesians 6:10-12******10****Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.****11****Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.****12****For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.*

***Psalm 24:6-8*** *Lift up your heads, you gates; be lifted up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.* ***8****Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.*

***Romans 8:37-39 37****No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.****38****For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers,****39****neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

***2 Chronicles 20:15******15****He said: “Listen, King Jehoshaphat and all who live in Judah and Jerusalem! This is what the Lord says to you: ‘Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God’s.*

***2 Chronicles 10:15******15****So the king did not listen to the people, for this turn of events was from God, to fulfill the word the Lord had spoken to Jeroboam son of Nebat through Ahijah the Shilonite.*

4. What command did God give to Joshua before the second battle of Ai, that he also gave to King Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 20:15? According to 2 Chronicles 10:15, who does the battle belong to? What does it mean that the battle is the Lord’s? Explain.

Faith is the key to victory in life’s battles. Faith comes before victory.

***Romans 10:17*** *“Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.”*

***Joshua 8:1*** *1Then the Lord said to Joshua, “Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Take the whole army with you, and go up and attack Ai. For I have delivered into your hands the king of Ai, his people, his city and his land.*

5. Reread Joshua 8:1 and explain what role God’s word played in building the faith of Joshua and the Israelites, and what role their faith played in the outcome of the 2nd battle of Ai.

6. Recall a time when God gave you a word that built your faith regarding a battle you were facing. How did that battle go? Explain.

Although the Israelites had been promised victory, they still had to go

through the battle. The ultimate test of their faith was facing the enemy and winning. Never are believers instructed to retreat from life’s battles. God has provided believers with protective armor for facing life’s battles, and interestingly enough, he made no provisions for their backs.

***Ephesians 6:13-17******13****Therefore take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand on the evil day and, having prevailed against everything, to stand firm.****14****Stand, therefore, and belt your waist with truth and put on the breastplate of righteousness****15****and lace up your sandals in preparation for the gospel of peace.****16****With all of these,[*[*a*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+6%3A13-17&version=NRSVUE#fen-NRSVUE-29337a)*] take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one.****17****Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*

7. List the various pieces of armor mentioned in this passage, and jot down what each one represents. What piece of armor do you most need right now?

8. These pieces of armor, are to be worn daily. Which, if any, are you lacking? How can you put on and wear that piece of armor?

9. Write down a battle that you or a loved one is facing. Take it to the Lord in prayer, give the battle to God, and ask for His wisdom and guidance. If you are comfortable doing so, share your battle with your small group and ask them to pray for courage and wisdom for you. (Remember, anything of a personal nature that’s shared in our small groups is to remain strictly confidential. No gossip please!)

10. Journal any of these passages SOAP style.

Joshua

Lesson 8 - Walking With the God of Miracles

Joshua 10:1-15

One of the most amazing miracles recorded in scripture is in Joshua 10, when Joshua prayed that the sun would stand still. It was assumed in ancient times that the sun revolved around the earth, and from the perspective of someone standing on the earth, it does appear that the sun moves. We ourselves commonly speak of “sunrise” and “sunset”; it is the way we express ourselves. We now understand that the sun was already standing still – it was the earth that was moving. Although we don’t know exactly how this miracle occurred, one likely explanation is that God, the creator of the universe, with whom nothing is impossible, may have slowed the rotation of the earth that day, prolonging the daylight, without affecting the sun or the rest of the solar system. But this chapter brings up the question, do you believe in miracles, and in the inerrancy of scripture?

***Joshua 10:1-15*** *Now Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem heard that Joshua had taken Ai and totally destroyed it, doing to Ai and its king as he had done to Jericho and its king, and that the people of Gibeon had made a treaty of peace with Israel and had become their allies.****2****He and his people were very much alarmed at this, because Gibeon was an important city, like one of the royal cities; it was larger than Ai, and all its men were good fighters.****3****So Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem appealed to Hoham king of Hebron, Piram king of Jarmuth, Japhia king of Lachish and Debir king of Eglon.****4****“Come up and help me attack Gibeon,” he said, “because it has made peace with Joshua and the Israelites.”*

***5****Then the five kings of the Amorites—the kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish and Eglon—joined forces. They moved up with all their troops and took up positions against Gibeon and attacked it.*

***6****The Gibeonites then sent word to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal: “Do not abandon your servants. Come up to us quickly and save us! Help us, because all the Amorite kings from the hill country have joined forces against us.”*

***7****So Joshua marched up from Gilgal with his entire army, including all the best fighting men.****8****The Lord said to Joshua, “Do not be afraid of them; I have given them into your hand. Not one of them will be able to withstand you.”*

***9****After an all-night march from Gilgal, Joshua took them by surprise.****10****The Lord threw them into confusion before Israel, so Joshua and the Israelites defeated them completely at Gibeon. Israel pursued them along the road going up to Beth Horon and cut them down all the way to Azekah and Makkedah.****11****As they fled before Israel on the road down from Beth Horon to Azekah, the Lord hurled large hailstones down on them, and more of them died from the hail than were killed by the swords of the Israelites.*

***12****On the day the Lord gave the Amorites over to Israel, Joshua said to the Lord in the presence of Israel:*

*“Sun, stand still over Gibeon,  
    and you, moon, over the Valley of Aijalon.”****13****So the sun stood still,  
    and the moon stopped,  
    till the nation avenged itself on[*[*b*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Joshua+10%3A1-15&version=NIV#fen-NIV-6078b)*] its enemies,*

*as it is written in the Book of Jashar.*

*The sun stopped in the middle of the sky and delayed going down about a full day.****14****There has never been a day like it before or since, a day when the Lord listened to a human being. Surely the Lord was fighting for Israel!*

***15****Then Joshua returned with all Israel to the camp at Gilgal.*

1. What three miracles happened in this passage, that enabled the Israelites to defeat the 5 kings of the Amorites and their forces?

1.

2.

3.

2. A Newsweek poll said 84 percent of adult Americans say they believe in miracles, and 48 percent say they’ve experienced or witnessed one. Do you believe in miracles? Have you experienced or witnessed one? Explain.

3. How have you or someone you know handled it when God didn’t perform the miracle you/they prayed for? Did this lessen your/their faith in God?

4. What did the Lord tell Joshua in verse 8? What effect do you think this had on Joshua and on the outcome of the battle?

5. Who was responsible for Israel’s victory? Does this encourage you personally, regarding the battles you are facing?

***Joshua 10:12****On the day the Lord gave the Amorites over to Israel, Joshua said to the Lord in the presence of Israel:*

*“Sun, stand still over Gibeon, and you, moon, over the Valley of Aijalon.”*

***Joshua 10:14****There has never been a day like it before or since, a day when the Lord listened to a human being. Surely the Lord was fighting for Israel!*

6. Read Joshua 10:12 and 14. What initiated the amazing miracle of the sun standing still? Explain.

***James 4:2-3*** *“You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.”*

***Jeremiah 33:3*** *“Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.”*

***Mark 11:22-25*** *22“Have faith in God,” Jesus answered.****23****“TrulyI tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them.****24****Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.****25****And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.”*

7. What do the verses above say we should do when we need a miracle? What hinders or prevents miracles?

When the sun stood still it was to further advance God’s purpose in having the Hebrews possess the land He’d promised them. Although we don’t always understand His purposes at the time, God always has a purpose in what He does. When miracles happen in your life, look for God’s purpose behind them. He is up to something great, and He wants you to join Him in His work.

8. Think of 2 or 3 other miracles in the Bible and jot down what you think was the purpose of those miracles.

9. Thinking back over this study of life lessons from Joshua, what one lesson has most impacted you? How do you think your life, going forward, will be different because of what you have learned? Explain

10. Journal one of these passages SOAP style.