

# COURAGE OVER FEAR

T H E B O O K O F J O S H U A

# HOW TO USE OUR MINISTRY PASS SERMON SERIES GUIDES

## WHAT THIS GUIDE IS NOT

- > This guide isn't a set of sermon manuscripts. While sermon manuscripts can be both useful and a powerful training tool, our sermon series guides are different. Rather than tell you what to say, our aim is for this material to spark your imagination, assist you in planning your sermon, and offer a boost to your study time.
- > This guide isn't ironclad. While we hope you use our material, the pieces of this document are designed to be moved, tweaked, and altered. As you study the suggested passages, and pray through your message, this guide will hopefully be a launching pad, rather than a landing net.

## WHAT THIS GUIDE IS

Included in each guide is:

- > A sermon series outline that breaks up the teaching set into a specific number of weeks.
- > A "big idea" of the series.
- > A passage, "big idea" of the sermon, topic list, and a number of illustrations and talking point ideas are included in each weekly section. The "Sermon Ideas and Talking Points" area is filled with observations about the text, relevant applications, creative ideas, and illustrations.
- > A small group discussion sheet (located in a separate document in this bundle).

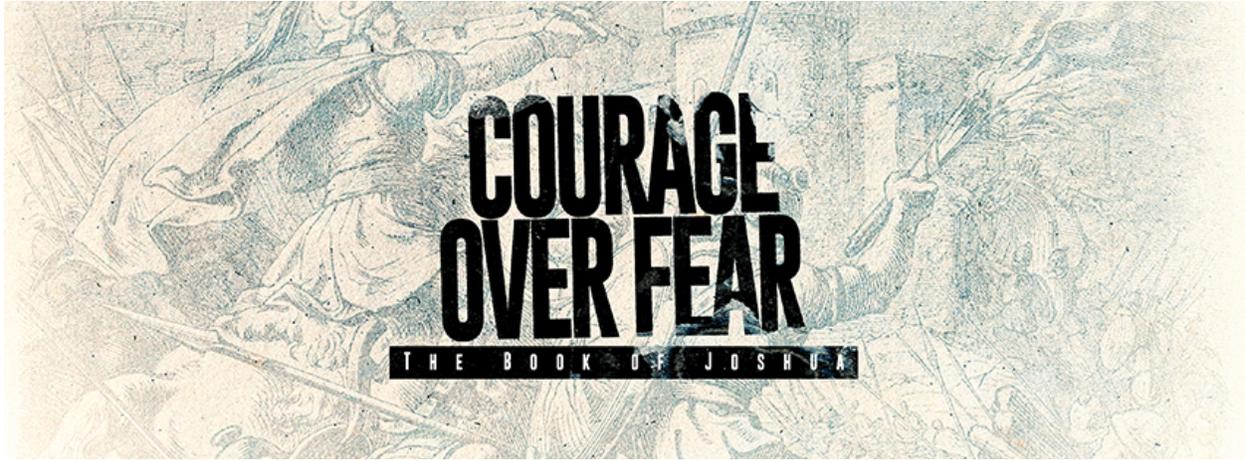
## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

- > Plan ahead. Our guides are best utilized in advance versus the day or night before. Read over the ideas and illustrations provided, thinking through how you can possibly utilize them in your message. We've purposely kept our guides simple so as to give you the best opportunity to create your own, unique message.
- > While we give you a passage and "big idea" of the message, take time to study the text.
- > Utilize the media contained in this bundle to promote and communicate your series message.

*Note: Although we've worked hard to verify the accuracy of the material in this guide, we encourage all pastors to carefully review the information before sharing it with their congregation.*



**MINISTRY PASS**



## Courage Over Fear: The Book of Joshua

**Big Idea of the Series:** This seven-week series covers several chapters in the book of Joshua and examines a time of transition within the nation of Israel. It depicts our seasons of uncertainty, obedience, and victory, as well as the freedom we have in Christ. This series will instruct believers in how to react to life transitions and encourage us to have courage and not fear.

### Week 1

**Text:** Joshua 1:1–6

**Topic(s):** Transition, Change, Obedience, Leadership

**Big Idea of the Message:** Transition and change aren't always easy, but God is trying to prepare you and call you to fulfill a specific task.

**Application Point:** While God desires to do great work in our lives, we must be in the habit of obedience so we will be ready to answer God's call.

### Sermon Ideas and Talking Points:

1. Transitions in a person's life can be a pretty big deal, especially when they're unexpected. Some take transitions well, while others find them challenging and repulsive. Transitions involve change. It's in our nature to find an established rhythm and stick to it. If it's thrown off, it rocks our world. I think we'd all agree that there are good changes. Good changes are things like, "You received the promotion you've been wanting." We could all handle that. Or how about when you get a raise in pay. Or when you find out you're expecting a baby after several years of infertility. We can handle these. Then there is the not-so-good-change category. These are things like losing your job, find out your child is very ill, when the doctor tells you that you have an unusual illness, when you find out you lost the baby, when you don't get the job you had set your heart on. These are tough! These are all unexpected life changes and they're not always easy to handle.
2. The book of Joshua is a fast-paced book that tells a story of real people who were faced with constant change. At the beginning of the book, the nation's beloved leader, Moses, has just passed on to eternal life (Joshua 1:1). What

does God do? He appoints Joshua (hence, the name of the book) as their *new* leader. Joshua wasn't given this position because God ran out of choices. God deliberately chose Joshua for this task. This was a huge responsibility. God gets right to the point and moves on with the nation's new leader, giving him immediate instruction and encouragement (Joshua 1:2–6). The nation was expected to follow their new man. Can you imagine being Joshua? I would feel incredibly insecure—especially following a man like Moses.

3. A fascinating aspect of Joshua's newfound leadership is that it *wasn't* newly found. It appears as if he comes out of nowhere. We want to ask, "Where did God find this guy?" or "How did he get picked?" But Joshua started his leadership training early on in his life. You see, Joshua was born during Israel's Egyptian bondage (Joshua 24:29). It was during this time that he undoubtedly learned some very valuable lessons under the harsh taskmasters of Egypt. He probably learned submission, obedience, and hard work. These lessons would follow him everywhere he went. We're told in Exodus 24:13 and 32:17 that Joshua was right by Moses's side as his minister—serving in the shadows but fulfilling his life's calling at that stage in his life. Joshua was always undergoing training, because God knew he would need Joshua for this moment in time. The important lesson here is that Joshua did not become a great leader overnight. It took years of serving, obeying, honoring, and laboring in the tasks that were before him at those moments. It wasn't always glamorous, but it was his calling. Before any of us can be a leader, we must learn to be a follower. We're not the only one with great ideas. We need to learn to work with others, obey, serve, and honor those who we are under. If we feel like we're always right and never wrong, we're not ready for leadership.
4. Isn't it incredible to think that, in our day, we have access to just about anything and can get just about anything we want in a relatively short time? There are companies like Amazon Prime that spoil us with their two-day shipping. However, that inadvertently trains our mind, to where we think we can get anything we want at a quick rate, with minimal effort. Someone says, "Here, watch this workout video, and you can lose twenty pounds in two days!" and we think, "Yes! That's what I need." Or we see an ad that says, "Get your bachelor's degree in ten months!" or "Take this five-minute survey and win \$10,000 cash." What's the saying? "If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is." We want great achievement and accomplishment with minimal effort. Joshua did not become a great leader overnight. Neither will you. It's not a matter of serendipity that you are going through what you're going through in your life. God is deeply interested in making you into the person you're meant to be. It's possible that he is molding and shaping you. Learn to submit to life's lessons as they come. We do not become who God wants us to be overnight or by taking some miracle pill.
5. Joshua's obedience would come in handy, as he would now have to completely obey and trust God to lead a very difficult group of people. God told Joshua that he would lead the people to cross the river (Joshua 1:2–4), overcome their enemy (v. 5), and divvy out the land (v. 6). What's interesting is that God didn't give any details as to *how* Joshua would do this. God knew Joshua would obey

and trust because Joshua was already in the habit of doing that. Could God make the same assumption about us?

6. How many of you have kids who got in trouble when they didn't obey the first time? As parents, we do this because we hate our kids and want to make their life miserable right? NO! We do it because we love them. It could save their life. Can you imagine constantly telling your kids something before they obeyed you? What if your child was about to cross the street, not knowing there was a car coming, and we shouted, "Stop!" because we saw it. Would our kid stop or keep going? As serious as that could be, we as Christian parents have a deeper intention, because the consequences are far greater. Imagine God calling our children to do something and trying to get their attention, but they're accustomed to "doing them" and not listening to anybody. The consequences of not obeying the Creator of the universe are far more severe than being hit by a car. As Christian parents, we teach our kids to obey the first time because we want to train them to hear and obey the voice of God the first time. Can I flip this? The question for us as adults is, are we listening as well? Are we doing our own thing? Are we scared of change, so we'd rather pretend we're not listening?

## **Week 2**

**Text:** Joshua 1:7–9

**Topic(s):** Fear, Worry, Encouragement, Meditation

**Big Idea of the Message:** By meditating on God's Word, we can turn our thinking from self-focused to God-focused.

**Application Point:** God is understanding and patient with us when we doubt and feel overwhelmed.

### **Sermon Ideas and Talking Points:**

1. Have you ever been fearful to complete a newly assigned task? Maybe your boss reassigned you within the company. Maybe your spouse's job offered them a position that required starting an advanced degree soon. Whatever the situation, most of us have been in a situation where we're forced to learn or adapt, and we're expected to do so quickly. This can certainly lead to fear. This is exactly where Joshua finds himself. Moses has led the nation and has led it well. Now, God is calling Joshua to lead the nation of Israel. Moses would lead his people out of Egypt, and Joshua would lead his people to new land. What a task!
2. It's an overwhelming thing to think about that God takes our fears and doubts into consideration and is willing to take the time to encourage us. God tells Joshua, in both Joshua 1:7 and 9, a form of "Only be strong and very courageous." He tells him in verse 9, "For the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." God, knowing Joshua's insecurities, doesn't scold or chastise him for being human and feeling overwhelmed and fearful. Instead, God encourages Joshua. Many of you are dealing with your own insecurities. Maybe God is calling you to something different. It's okay to be fearful. But ultimately and eventually, we must come to realize that God is behind us and is there to encourage us in what he has called us to. One Bible student said, "Fear is the parent of every kind of vice;

fear of conflict, fear of shame, fear of failure, fear that God will leave fidelity unrewarded and prayer unanswered” (H. D. M. Spence-Jones, ed., *Joshua*, The Pulpit Commentary [London: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909], 13). While our minds and feelings tell us one thing, we must rely on the fact that God has called us to this new change; therefore, we must trust that he’ll empower us to fulfill it.

3. Joshua was not only able to be the recipient of encouragement, but he was also able to be the giver of encouragement. In Joshua 1:10–18, Joshua is able to encourage his leaders and commanders, who would, in turn, encourage the rest of the people. At this time, I’m sure Joshua still had questions, but he put those aside, trusted the Lord, and was willing to think of others and encourage them. Oftentimes, we can become so problem- and anxiety-centric that we don’t look beyond ourselves. Our problems and doubts are real and genuine, but we should actively look to encourage others in their own struggles. Joshua probably remembered when Moses had doubts and unanswered questions, yet Moses was encouraged by the Lord and decided to encourage his people as well (Deuteronomy 31:6–7).
4. It’s interesting how God shifts the focus off Joshua and his doubts and places it on his Word. Joshua 1:8 is probably one of the most quoted and memorized passages of Scripture, next to John 3:16. Joshua’s success in life is determined by the emphasis that he places on the Word of God. God commands him to mediate on it. Meditation on the Word of God takes a cognitive and spiritual focus that is purposed. Meditation is when you think long and hard on something.
5. Think of the process of preparing tea. You fill a cup with boiling hot water, then put the tea bag of your choosing in there. Minutes later, the tea is ready. This has been used as an example of meditation for years. Here’s why it’s so good: the tea is only drinkable because the hot water takes time to sit there and the tea infuses it. The tea would not be drinkable without time to sit. We’re the cup of hot water. The Word of God is the tea bag. The best way to meditate is to allow our mind to sit and soak up what we just read or heard from the Word of God.
6. When Joshua meditates on God’s Word, his focus would not be on his doubts and questions. Perhaps a consideration in our problems is that we focus on the wrong thing. We focus on our doubts, our needs, our troubles. However, when we focus on the eternal words of God and think on them, we will spend less time worrying about our troubles. This also takes the focus off of Joshua’s abilities. Though Joshua has been trained and has military experience, God reminds him that he will not be successful because of his might, mind, and materials. God was about to do a work in his life and in the nation’s life through him, but it would have to take Joshua realizing that this could only occur through God. The same is true of us and our abilities, or lack thereof. God deserves all glory and praise; thus, the battle and the victory are his.

### Week 3

**Text:** Joshua 3:12–16; Galatians 5:1, 16

**Topic(s):** Victory, Miracle, Freedom, Walking in the Spirit

**Big Idea of the Message:** It's not that God was a God of miracles; he *still* is and wants to make himself known and real in our lives. God can set you free from your bondage today.

**Application Point:** Just as God desired to give the nation of Israel victory, he desires to give us victory over sin in our lives.

### Sermon Ideas and Talking Points:

1. The nation of Israel had experienced a great deliverance under the leadership of Moses when God parted the Red Sea so they could cross and escape the angry Egyptian army. That was something the nation looked back on with great fondness. Now, God is about to perform a similar miracle in the life of the nation of Israel—except, this time, he is going to use Joshua.
2. Put yourself in Joshua's shoes. You're the new leader. You're trusting the Lord, but there's still undoubtedly some deep insecurities. You've already told the nation (Joshua 1:6) that God is leading them to conquer a new land and that the way you're going to get over to that region is by going over the Jordan River (1:2). Easy enough. Or was it? Now that it's time to cross the river, Joshua is telling them how they're going to cross (3:13). The Bible doesn't mention that people doubted Joshua's leadership or questioned his directions that were supposedly coming from God, but it's only human to assume that not everyone was on board with this plan. Surely, people there must have suggested or murmured that there was a better, more logical way to do this. After all, Joshua was new, and he might be getting God's message mixed up. Can't we be like that too? We question God's direct plan for our lives because it doesn't make human sense. Joshua obeyed this radical plan that God had, the people followed (3:14), and God parted the waters (3:16). Notice what Joshua told the nation in his briefing speech: "And Joshua said, 'Here is how you shall know that the living God is among you and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Hivites, the Perizzites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, and the Jebusites'" (3:10). The Lord wanted to do a miracle for the nation, and he still desires to do miracles in our lives today.
3. Just as God desired to show himself strong to the nation of Israel, he also wants to show himself strong in our lives. Are you a captive to your past? Are you a slave to your sin? Are you in bondage to your thought life? Galatians 5:1 says, "For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery." Our freedom is not found in trying to figure it out ourselves, but it's found in Christ, who already set you free from the chains that held you. The problem is that we try to overcome our flesh *with* our flesh. The flesh can only be overcome by the supernatural. Galatians 5:16 says, "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh."
4. Have you ever been on a roller coaster and wondered who was in control? The answer is always the same—not you! There's something terrifying about not

having control. What about the control of our life? In one sense, we have no control over the temptations that suddenly appear or the troubles that unexpectedly come our way. In another sense, we do have control of the fact that we can avoid what we know what might trip us up, and we also have the power of the Holy Spirit living in us. Our spiritual life doesn't have to be a roller coaster. We can experience victory in our life.

5. God desired for the nation of Israel to enter Canaan land and conquer their enemies. God desires victory in your life as well. You're not meant to live a defeated life, a slave to what you were. Instead, rather, God desires that you experience the liberty and freedom that only comes when we submit ourselves to him and his leading.
6. Warren Wiersbe said of this passage, "The crossing of the Jordan River is not a picture of the Christian dying and going to heaven, contrary to what is said in some songs. The crossing of the Red Sea pictures the believer being delivered from the bondage of sin, and the crossing of the Jordan River pictures the believer claiming the inheritance in Jesus Christ. Joshua is a type of Jesus Christ our Conqueror who leads us from day to day into the inheritance He has planned for us" (Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Strong*, "Be" Commentary Series [Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996], 51–52). Where do you need a miracle today? God desires to free you today.
7. Imagine going to the tech store and inquiring about the latest smartphone. The tech guy begins to explain all of its many features, and that gets you excited. You then ask him to turn it on and show you how it works. Now imagine the tech guy saying, "Well, it's not meant to work. It was made to be admired." How pointless would that be? Sometimes we treat the Christian life that way. We are thankful the Lord has given us the tools and the resources to overcome sin and live in victory (2 Peter 1:3), yet many times we don't use it.

## Week 4

**Text:** Joshua 6:1–15

**Topic(s):** Obedience, March, Deliverance

**Big Idea of the Message:** Because God is all-wise, he will often choose to work in ways we would have never thought of.

**Application Point:** When we heed God's Word instead of our own intellect, we're able to see victories and success.

### Sermon Ideas and Talking Points:

1. The nation of Israel has already been through a lot. They've had quite the time overcoming self, others, and incredible circumstances. One would think, "surely, they're done right? They've been through enough." They have been through a lot, but only God knows when it's enough. The entire book of Joshua, while historically accurate, can certainly be viewed as a picture of the Christian life full of obstacles, battles, victories, and failures. The nation would face a new challenge. A challenge that would test their faith once again. They would now face Jericho. While the city and army was great, God was not interested in testing their battle finesse. Instead, God was about to test their courage to obey, even when it didn't make sense to obey.
2. Bible scholars believe that Jericho covered about eight or nine acres (Donald K. Campbell, "Joshua," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 [Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985], 341). God commanded Joshua to lead his men into a march-to-victory crusade (Joshua 6:3). That's right. A march. Not a fight. Not a battle. Not through hand to hand combat. Through a march. When we face our battles and we ask God to help us, let us not be surprised when he uses tactics that are outside our understanding or reasoning (Isaiah 55:8–9). God could have used Joshua and his great savvy mind to conquer the land, but then they would have been tempted to steal credit from the true deliverer. God's desire is not to only help in time of need, but he is a jealous God and his glory will not be shared (Isaiah 42:8).
3. For six days, they marched around the wall of Jericho as commanded by God (Joshua 6:3, 10–11). Have you ever felt you were walking around aimlessly? Perhaps you have been in an unknown area of the world and took a metro to get from point A to point B, just hoping you're following the map correctly. There's an anxious uncertainty; a nervous fear of the unknown. It's new territory and you're hoping the mode of transportation gets you where you need to go. That must have been the way Joshua and the children of Israel felt. There should have been a better way to conquer these people than just walking around a wall; but, if God says to do this, we must be obedient.
4. This blogger helps us to see how in every situation in Jericho, whether it be through the annihilation of the city, rescuing Rahab, or working through the nation and Joshua, God's name gets the glory  
(<https://alexamenosfidelis1.blogspot.com/2019/10/the-glory-of-god-in-destruction->

[of.html?fbclid=IwAR0R0pEuw\\_jERhDla66Ns9XEtkg6UAh3TS-hqeZug81MXhtwMxBJhTtu9mA](https://www.facebook.com/lwAR0R0pEuw_jERhDla66Ns9XEtkg6UAh3TS-hqeZug81MXhtwMxBJhTtu9mA)).

5. Compared to God, we are much like children. Often times, parents will tell their young ones to not eat a snack or candy before dinner. The child doesn't understand, and thus will often times scoff at this idea. In fact, many times, children feel in their heart that their parents are just trying to keep them from enjoying life and their little snack. The truth is, parents know what's best for them and ultimately want them to enjoy their dinner to its fullest. While this may be a silly illustration, we act that way with God. God knows what's best and has a specific plan in mind that he wants us to enjoy, but we often will scoff because it appears to not make sense. God always knows what's best. Just as Joshua obeyed and trusted God to ultimately overcome Jericho, so we must trust and obey God to overcome the obstacles in our life.

## **Week 5**

**Text:** Joshua 7:2–11; Ezekiel 1:15–23

**Topic(s):** Hidden Sin, Omnipresence, Eyes, Forgiveness

**Big Idea of the Message:** God's all-seeing eye does not allow us to sin and get away with it.

**Application Point:** When we sin, God's desire for us is to make it right with him, move forward, and continue to victory for him.

### **Sermon Ideas and Talking Points:**

1. Have you ever witnessed your favorite sports team lose to a team they should have clearly beaten with their hands tied behind their own backs? It's shocking. It's frustrating. That's exactly what the nation of Israel goes through in our story today. They got beaten badly by Ai, after upsetting the land of Jericho. Joshua sent spies to search the land of Ai (Joshua 7:2), and everything on the briefing report indicated that they should have been able to manhandle them with minimal effort (v. 3). The results? Joshua lost thirty-six men, and his soldiers had to retreat (vv. 4–5). The nation was in shock. Joshua was in great distress (Joshua v. 6). Wouldn't you be? What could have caused this?
2. Remember when your mom or your teacher would tell you that they had eyes on the back of their heads? Now as the parent, you know that they never did have eyes on the back of their heads. They just had enough life experience to predict something. God, however, does have an all-seeing eye. The prophet Ezekiel captures this attribute of God perfectly. In an unusual vision, Ezekiel sees a supernatural chariot (Ezekiel 1:15–25). The prophet is doing his best to explain what he's seeing with his limited understanding and human language. He sees a wheel within a wheel on this chariot. This depicts the great omnipresence (God is everywhere present, and there is no limit to his where he can be) of our God. There are two wheels that are set perpendicular to each other. The picture is that you can go any direction you please without effort or turning. Imagine having these kinds of wheels on your car! Then Ezekiel describes eyes that are all around. This is Ezekiel trying to describe God's all-seeing, all-intelligent eye.

Nothing can be hidden from God, and nothing can escape him. This can be an encouragement, or it can be dreadful—depending on where you are in life. Why bring this up? Because God sees everything we do, even when we're doing it in the dark or in secret.

3. Were you the kid who ate chocolate when you weren't supposed to, thinking you'd get away with it? What ended up giving it away? Probably the chocolate on your face. You've grown wiser since your toddler days, but don't be fooled. As easy as it was for your parents to spot the chocolate on your face when you were a young child, God sees everything that you feel confident you're hiding very well. Our covering-up antics are no match for the all-seeing eye of God.
4. The reason the nation lost this *easy* battle was because God knew that Achan (Joshua 7:20) had grabbed some forbidden items when they fought Jericho (v. 11). Because of this, God punished the nation. Have you heard the expression, "sin in the camp"? This is where it is derived—straight from this biblical text—a true story that we still speak of today. What had happened is that God withheld his blessing from his people because of one man's hidden sin. Achan thought he could get away with it, but the all-seeing eye of God saw it—and because he is just and always does what is right, there were tragic consequences. Is there hidden sin your life today? Is there something you've been sneaking around doing and you think no one knows about it? I can assure you that God knows about it, and you will not receive God's full blessing while there is sin in your life. It's not true that every tragedy, sickness, or hospitalization happens because of sin in someone's life. It is true, however, that your life isn't all that it can be today because of hidden sin in your life.
5. Notice what tripped up Achan. It's no different from what trips us up today in the twenty-first century. Achan said that it started with seeing what he wanted but knew he shouldn't have, then he coveted, then he took (7:21). Sin is all around us. It's not a matter of *if* we'll see it as much as it is *when* we see it. It'll come looking for us—especially in our digital age. What ruined it for Achan is what ruins it for us. It's when we look, stare, and then it controls our thinking and desires to where we *must* have it. That's coveting, in a nutshell. The next natural action for us is the same as Achan's—take it. Take it for ourselves when we know, good and well, we shouldn't have anything to do with it. What is it that you have coveted after and taken? Achan was under a very specific different set of civil laws that we're not under, and those laws demanded his death. The sad part is that his family ended up dying with him, via stoning and burning. Why such a cruel punishment? It was all because of his sin. Please understand that your sin doesn't only impact you—it impacts those around you and those you care about.
6. We have civil laws that we're under today. If you go to the store, steal something, and get caught, God can forgive you, but the law demands you be placed in jail or pay a fine. You don't want to go to jail? Don't steal. Pretty simple, right? Spiritually speaking, you may be at a place where you've messed up. You've blown it, and you know it. In fact, there are probably others in this room that know things about you you'd be ashamed of others finding out. Whether anyone knows or not, rest assured that God knows, and that's all that matters. The point is that you can find forgiveness and restoration in Christ Jesus today (1 John 1:9). How

can God forgive you? Remember when Jesus died on the cross? It was then that he took your sin and shame and put it on himself. Christ would then do the incredible; he would then take his righteousness and place that on you (1 John 2:2). Now, when God looks at you he sees the righteousness of his Son instead of your sin (2 Corinthians 5:21). There may be natural consequences that result from your decisions, but don't let it be consequences that come from God because you refuse to get it right with him. The Lord is not done with you yet. Once the nation purged the sin from their camp, they were able to move on and win more battles and had many more victories (Joshua 8:1). You can do the same today.

## **Week 6**

**Text:** Joshua 9:1–14

**Topic(s):** Counsel, Deceit, Investigation,

**Big Idea of the Message:** When we become confident in our experience and knowledge, we can often make decisions without consulting God.

**Application Point:** When we choose to act without searching a matter out, we can be left feeling embarrassed or defeated.

### **Sermon Ideas and Talking Points:**

1. Have you ever made a big decision without consulting appropriate people? Maybe you've done this within your business or your own home. As people, we can very quick to make decisions and assume we know all the facts, only later to find out, you did not know the full story and you have therefore made a big mistake. Joshua has done this very thing with the people of Gibeon. This has caused, therefore, an unnecessary amount of trouble and fear in the hearts of the nation of Israel.
2. Gibeon was "located in the hill country only six miles northwest of Jerusalem and about the same distance southwest of Ai, Gibeon was known as 'an important city' (10:2) and was head of a small confederation including three neighboring towns (cf. 9:17)" (Donald K. Campbell, "Joshua," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 [Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985], 348).
3. These men put on quite the dramatic production in order to deceive Joshua and the nation of Israel. They made themselves to appear like they've been traveling from a far country and even stressed that idea to Joshua. Being that they were from a far country, as opposed to a near country, Israel was supposed to seek peace. However, Israel was not supposed to seek peace with the seven nearing nations (Deut. 20:10–18; 7:1–2). A peace agreement with a nearing nation meant disobedience on the part of Israel, whether it was intentional or not.
4. Something that is important to note is that this passage clearly states in verse 14 that they "did not as counsel from the LORD." How many times do we go throughout our day without seeking counsel from the Lord? Should we make that phone call? Should we send that text? How is our tone? Should I have say that? When should I say that? Should I partner with this group? Like Joshua, we judge

from the immediate circumstances, trust our own judgment, and make a call based on experience and empiricism.

5. The story is told about a businessman who started his fourth successful business. He was pretty proud of the fact that his track record proved he knew a few things. Because of his success, he slowly began to dismiss advice and comments from helpful individuals. Then the 2009 recession hit and it hit his business hard. Eventually the chairman of the board of his brand new company pulled him aside and told him that the problem was with his attitude and how his ego has gotten the best of him. This businessman noted, "I was forced to grasp that I didn't know all the answers... in fact, I had to face the fact that I was pretty lousy at some things... Humbled, I started to change my mindset. I became a student and a sponge" (James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, *The Leadership Challenge* [San Francisco: The Leadership Challenge, 2012] 341). Joshua had a great mentor of meekness in Moses. Moses was a man who would often go straight to the Lord and seek his counsel. Joshua had several victories under his belt and perhaps become comfortable and confident in his dealings with men. A few more questions of investigation and/or counsel from others may have saved Joshua the heartache of having to make the people of Gibeon his slaves.

## **Week 7**

**Text:** Joshua 10: 1–14

**Topic(s):** Confidence, Weary, Battles, Miracles

**Big Idea of the Message:** In our moments of fear and doubt, God is able to do what we can't.

**Application Point:** When we pray and ask God for his help, God desires to help his own children.

## **Sermon Ideas and Talking Points:**

1. Have you ever faced a situation that was so overwhelming that it caused you physical distress? It's always interesting to observe a new president from the time he first candidates for the highest office in America to the end of his term(s). His physical appearance will often change. He looks wearier, aged in his features, and has more white hair. Why is this? There are speculations, but one can assume that the constant pressure and overwhelming circumstances has an impact on a physical body. It would be interesting to have seen Joshua when he served under Moses and then see him in Joshua 10 after many battles and situations later. I wonder if his appearance changed because of the pressure he was under from within his own people and from his enemies without. Perhaps you've taken on a slightly new appearance over the years due to the pressures in your life. Maybe your health has even taken a turn.
2. After Joshua put himself in an awkward situation in Joshua 9 by trusting in himself and not seeking council, he seems to learn from that in chapter 10. In chapter 10, his integrity is challenged. Gibeon was not supposed to make a treaty with Israel. By doing this, Gibeon could have set a precedent for other nations to do the same, especially because they were a powerful city (10:2). The

King of Jerusalem decided to gather nine other nations and set out to battle Gibeon for this act (10:3–5). Gibeon then went to Israel asking for help since they had a treaty now. Joshua could have said no. he could have let Gibeon have what they deserved for deceiving Israel into a treaty. Instead, Joshua gathered his men and prepared to protect their new ally (10:7). It is important to note that whenever we feel overwhelmed, distressed, or anxious, to always keep our moral compass at the forefront. Often, people will fall into moral sin when they are going through a discouraging time. A couple will experience some tension and one of the spouses may be tempted to flirt with another person other than their spouse that may lead to an extramarital relationship. This can happen when an employee feels they are overworked, so they feel tempted to modify the numbers on their report to help them get that bonus, or steal from the company in another way. Let's keep our moral compass and not compromise our integrity.

3. Once again, God steps in and gives encouragement and comfort to the nation through Joshua. He tells them to worry because he will fight the battle for them (10:8). Have you ever noticed that people have more boldness to do something when someone goes with them? A person is more willing to sign up for that challenge if a friend does it with them. A child is more willing to try the ride if a parent goes with them. An employee is willing to keep company policy on an issue if their employer backs them up. So it is with us and God. We are more willing to fulfill a task as people if we know that God is with us. God told Joshua he'll go with them. God has told us that he'll be with us wherever we go too (Hebrews 13:5).
4. Even in insurmountable circumstances, God is willing to fight for us if we're doing what he's called us to do where he's called us to do it. We don't have to fear. God confused the nations (10:10), he strengthened them to fight after a long journey to fight (10:9), and fought for them by sending rocks from heaven to hit the enemies specifically (10:11) and by stopping the sun (10:12–14) so that they had more daylight to fight. What an incredible story line. God heeds the voice of man when man is willing to ask and when it aligns with God's will.
5. How does one handle the wording in verse 13, "and the sun stood still, and the moon stopped"? Bible skeptics are quick to point out that this is further evidence that the Bible is not true because it contradicts science in basic ways. After all, we now know (in the 21<sup>st</sup> century) that it's the earth that rotates, not the sun and the moon. To the modern reader, the Bible reads ignorantly. We must keep in mind, however, that the Bible is an ancient source, and Joshua was describing what he knew to be true based on sight. It would have been impossible with the little technology they had to have known that the earth rotates. As one author writes, "Since all truth is God's truth, we have nothing to fear from scientific investigation and discovery" (David Jackman, *Joshua: People and God's Purpose* [Wheaton: Crossway, 2014] 118). The main point is the sovereignty of God in the life of his creation. The creator of the universe is willing to interact with and help his own during their moments of need. Verse 14 states, "there has been no day like it before or since." In all moments, whether God stops the sun or not, we can be confident that we can rest and sleep at night because he never rests.

He is able to fight battles for us in five minutes (if he desires) while we've just spent weeks worrying about something.

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