

VICTORY!

WEEK 6

A STUDY OF JOSHUA

WAX ON, WAX OFF

Have you ever done a drill in practice that you think, "How will this help me to win?" Nothing pictures this better than the 80's classic, *The Karate Kid*. Mr. Miyagi agrees to train Daniel in karate, but instead, he has him do a bunch of chores.

Mr. Miyagi shows Daniel different ways of doing each chore—"Wax on, Wax off," "Paint the fence," etc. Eventually, Daniel gets fed up with the chores only to discover (spoiler alert) that Miyagi had been teaching him the whole time. Suddenly, painting and waxing meant something greater. Miyagi's instructions were always *clear*, but Daniel couldn't *understand* why.

Have you noticed a pattern in our study of Joshua yet? God says, "Go do this thing and I'll do my thing." God's instructions were always *clear*, but sometimes hard to *understand*. Today's instructions were clear, but they were just plain crazy. No longer was Israel *entering* the Land, now they were to set about *conquering* it. However, instead of a siege, God commanded a stroll.

JOSHUA 6:15–21, 27

¹⁵ On the seventh day they rose early, at the dawn of day, and marched around the city in the same manner seven times. It was only on that day that they marched around the city seven times. ¹⁶ And at the seventh time, when the priests had blown the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, "Shout, for the Lord has given you the city. ¹⁷ And the city and all that is within it shall be devoted to the Lord for destruction. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent. ¹⁸ But you, keep yourselves from the things devoted to destruction, lest when you have devoted them you take any of the devoted things and make the camp of Israel a thing for destruction and bring trouble upon it. ¹⁹ But all silver and gold, and every vessel of bronze and iron, are holy to the Lord; they shall go into the treasury of the Lord." ²⁰ So the people shouted, and the trumpets were blown. As soon as the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people shouted a great shout, and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they captured the city. ²¹ Then they devoted all in the city to destruction, both men and women, young and old, oxen, sheep, and donkeys, with the edge of the sword.

²⁷ So the Lord was with Joshua, and his fame was in all the land.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Is God a moral monster? All of Jericho was devoted to destruction—men and women, young and old, etc. The answer is obviously "No." However, a one-page double-sided study guide probably won't give you a complete answer. Neither will an 8-minute video if you scan the QR code. But, it's a start.

God's character was well defined when he sent his Son to die for you and me. Not all parts of the Bible are that easy to understand—but that truth shapes everything else.



DISCUSSION

What has stood out the most from our study so far?
How have you changed as a result of this study?

ICEBREAKER

1. What actions and directions were unique to Day 7? (15-17)

2. What specific prohibition did Joshua give re: Jericho's material items? (18-19)

3. What resulted from this victory? (27)

4. Since the Israelites were never told what God would do in advance, what can we learn about their faith in Joshua and the Lord?

5. Looking back, what options did Jericho's people have re: Joshua and his God?

OBSERVATION

6. What possible consequences exist if you live sold out for Jesus? What about if you don't? (See also Romans 10:14)

APPLICATION

Today's passage begins a war of purification. God takes sin seriously. If you have questions about the cost of sin, or what to do about it, talk to your coach today.

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STUDY NOTES THE RECKONING

In Week 2, we discussed the lesson 440 years in the making. God's fame had spread and stories declaring the power of Israel's Lord had flooded the Land. Jericho and the inhabitants of the Land had been given the opportunity to fear God, humble themselves, and turn to him, like we read of Rahab the prostitute. Instead, Jericho fortified the city and prepared for the coming siege. The reckoning was at hand.

The fighting men of Jericho likely stood on the walls awaiting their enemy. Dust clouds billowed from the marching army heading to their city. They had all heard the rumors—of Pharaoh in Egypt, the Amorite kings, the destruction of Sihon and Og (Joshua 2:10)—but they steadied their nerves as the multitude drew near.

The sound of blowing trumpets grew louder, but these were not the horns of battle. It was the sound of celebration. Not only that, the army did not lay siege to Jericho. Standing on the wall, the men of Jericho stood stunned as Israel spoke no words, shouted no orders, but marched a lap around the city, then went home.

The next day, the fighting men rallied once more to stand guard on the wall. To their astonishment, Israel again marched around the city with trumpets of jubilee and left. By day 6, it's likely the men of Jericho had no fear of the army that didn't fight. We can imagine the shouts and taunts they hurled at Israel as they marched their lap. Instead of steadying their nerves, they're passing the popcorn and watching the show.

VICTORY REQUIRES OBEDIENCE

Despite the mockery, despite the strangeness of the orders, **on the seventh day** [Israel's army] **rose early, at the dawn of day, and marched around the city in the same manner seven times.** With each lap, the men of Jericho probably got more nervous at the unusual change— **it was only on that day that they marched around the city seven times.**

At the seventh time, when the priests had blown the trumpets [just as the Lord had commanded], **Joshua said to the people, "Shout, for the Lord has given you the city."**

The *Israelites* didn't know what the *Lord* would do to the walls, but as Joshua continued, he made very clear what *they* would do with the city. **"All that is within it shall be devoted to the Lord for destruction."**

The only exception to destruction was honoring the promise given to Rahab. **Only**

Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall live, because she hid the messengers.

Joshua, understanding the greedy hearts of men, commanded them, **"But you, keep yourselves from the things devoted to destruction, lest when you have devoted them you take any of the devoted things and make the camp of Israel a thing for destruction and bring trouble upon it."** Another spoiler alert: this command foreshadows the "trouble" we'll study next Week.

Although the men were not allowed to take anything for themselves, the precious items in Jericho— **all silver and gold, and every vessel of bronze and iron**— belonged to the Lord as *holy*.

The moment came and Jericho's fighting men on the wall faced a torrent of sound from the trumpets and a multitude of shouting men. **As soon as the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people shouted a great shout, and the wall fell down flat** [except for Rahab's section], **so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they captured the city.**

OBEDIENCE WILL DRAW US TO GOD

We often think by submitting to authorities, we lose something—freedom, self-expression, opportunities. When God asks for obedience, we may lose those things, but it's only to give a much greater gift than we could achieve on our own.

Faithful obedience God requires trust. When we trust, God is faithful and our trust is rewarded. Then, it becomes easier to trust God and the cycle continues.

The opposite is also true, if I don't trust God, I tend to seek my own outcome. When I fail, I shake my fist at heaven saying, "God, why don't you fix this!" My lack of faithful obedience, and the negative result, pushes me away from God and toward greater self-reliance.

It's only through faithful obedience that we can draw close to God. The importance of this in Joshua's life cannot be overstated. After the victory, when Joshua's great faith and obedience was rewarded, the author concluded, **"So the Lord was with Joshua, and his fame was in all the land."**

It has been said, "A person is either a missionary or a mission field." To put it another way, a person is either on the wall awaiting destruction, or marching around awaiting victory. One position looks smart and one looks stupid. However, God turned the tables and showed that through obedience, even the strongest stone crumbles. Therefore, let us look like fools, marching as God orders, and trusting him with the results.