

Families On Mission Week 7 Devotional Guide

Day 50-- Joshua 5

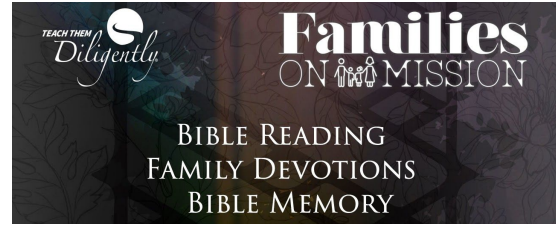
Can you even imagine the scene? The children of Israel had seen God part the raging waters of the Jordan to allow them to cross into the Promised Land, but He had also closed them up again to prevent them from running back in times of hardship or fear.

Things were definitely looking up for the children of Israel. The manna they were so tired of stopped because they would now have access to the fruit of the land. They had been promised victory too, so it was a great time to be a Hebrew.

How did the Canaanites feel, though? We see early in this chapter that their hearts melted because of all they had heard about what God had done for the Hebrews.

Possible meditation, discipleship, and discussion questions:

- *Before Joshua and the children of Israel did a thing in the Promised Land, God had already given the people of the land a glimpse of His power through the ancient rumor mill. That made me wonder how much pressure we put on ourselves regarding things that should be left to God. Would it have been as effective for the people of Israel to tell the Canaanites themselves to fear their God? Of course, not. Yet when God is at work, people cannot help but pay attention-- and often fear.*
- *How significant do you think it was when the manna stopped? Our family has been to the area where they crossed the Jordan. It is dry and barren. Would they have survived long had they not gone into Jericho and beyond to claim their God-given land when the terrain*



where they stood was almost exactly like where they just left?

- *In v. 15, why do you think the ground was referred to as “holy ground?”*

Have you ever seen God “part the waters” for you and your family only to want to run back across? That has honestly been our family’s story several times as we have been serving in Teach Them Diligently. God has clearly opened doors, parted waters, and done miraculous things, but oh, there have been some dark, hard days as well. David and I have talked often together and have shared with our children how good God is to not make a way for us to go back-- truly, the only way for us to go is forward. That recognition has strengthened our faith, for we know that only through God’s continued sustaining power can we go forward, and it’s strengthened our children’s faith as they have been privy to mighty workings of the Lord that they would not have seen had we not been so intentional to share with them and pray with them about. We have great opportunities to share these experiences and lessons with our children, mom and dad. Let’s not let them pass us by!

Day 51- Joshua 6

What a familiar and awesome story to read-- from our side of history anyway. Take a step back, though, as you read this and ask yourself (and your kiddos) had you been alive at that time and you were following a brand new leader, do you think that you would have thought Joshua’s battle plan was a good idea?

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Possible meditation, discipleship, and discussion questions:

- *It is so easy for us to gloss over accounts like this one, because we know the details so well. But, if we stop and imagine that we were there at that moment, after wandering in the wilderness for our entire lives, hearing and participating in grumbling all along the way-- that story may read a little differently to us. We see some really powerful lessons we can all take from it if we look closely enough.*
 - *God's solutions are often different than ours would be. (We would definitely not have come up with the battle plan here.)*
 - *God is our ultimate authority, but He often places others in our lives for us to follow. (He spoke to Joshua, and Joshua led the people.)*
 - *God's promises can be trusted. We see Him make promises to Joshua that all came true.*
 - *We may not like God's plans and His solutions, but they can be trusted!*
- *I love the instructions in verse 10-- No Talking. :) That means, no grumbling, no questioning, and no undermining Joshua's authority. They were instructed to just follow orders, quietly. I wonder how much we could learn from that. It's easy for us to see the grumbling in our children when they don't like the answer they've been given or what they've been told to do-- but are we as aware of it in ourselves, mom and dad?*

Day 52-- Joshua 7

It's so interesting how this chapter starts out--
“The people of Israel broke faith in regards to the devoted things, for Achan... took some of the devoted things. And the anger of the Lord kindled against the people of Israel.”

Many (if not all) of the promises in the Old Testament contains, “I will be with you...” in v. 12, though, the Lord tells Joshua that “I will be with you no more...” Sin always brings separation with God. (Praise the Lord that we know that “He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” if we confess our sins to Him.-- I John 1:9)

Possible meditation, discipleship, and discussion questions:

- *I tried to find out what Achan stole would have been valued at. The shekel's weight seemed to have varied from country to country, so we don't know for sure. But, according to the old Mosaic measurement, the value of what Achan stole was about \$200 in shekels and the gold wedge was likely around \$500.*
- *Because of Achan's sin, Israel lost a battle, 36 warriors lost their lives, and Achan's entire family also paid the ultimate price. Why do you think the punishment was so severe? (Don't think of this question in a vacuum. Encourage your children to think back over all we've discussed and learned about God and His people so far. That is a great exercise as you are teaching them to think Biblically.)*
- *We see in v 9 that Joshua had a very narrow view of what was going on. He thought God had failed them-- they were embarrassed and had to turn back from*

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a people that they only thought would take a few thousand men to defeat. He was probably more susceptible to this despair, because he was new on the job and somewhat unproven-- how would this impact his ability to lead going forward? Had he lost face with his people? In v. 10, God challenges Joshua and tells him to get up. He told him that Israel had sinned and that He (God) wouldn't be with Israel until that sin was taken care of.

- *Is there a difference to God between "little sins" and "big sins"? How about in the ramifications or penalties of them? Again, that's a big question to ponder. Look up Proverbs 6:16-19. Here we see 6 things the Lord hates-- several of them, we don't think much of, yet they are listed in the same verses as murder, feet that rush into evil, etc. How about 2 Timothy 3: 1-7. There we see a terrible list of traits that includes right in the middle "disobedient to parents" and "unthankful." Sin is sin, but the penalty here on earth for murder is clearly higher than the penalty for being unthankful, yet both separate us from a holy God and need to be taken seriously. As your children get older, help them understand this. Not only will it help them have a more sober attitude about their own sin, but it will also give them a more gracious and merciful heart towards those engaged in sins that we deem particularly unseemly. Showing the love of Jesus to them may require that we love them enough to talk to them as fellow sinners, so they can understand the grace, forgiveness, and freedom that comes through faith in Jesus Christ alone.*

Day 53-- Joshua 8

After taking care of the sin that was in the camp, Joshua and the children of Israel put into place a much more strategic battle plan.

The reason this plan succeeded, though, was not due to Joshua's superior plan or increased show of force, but it was due to the fact that God was once again fighting for them.

Possible meditation, discipleship, and discussion questions and ideas:

- *What was Joshua's battle plan and how did it differ from the initial approach at Ai? (Do you think that there could have been a little self-sufficiency involved as they noted that Ai wouldn't take much effort from them?)*
- *After they defeated Ai, the people were given the opportunity to keep every bit of spoil from the town. If Achan had only waited until God gave him permission to take things, his life and that of his family would have been spared. What can we learn from that?*
- *Why do you think Joshua took the time to remind the people of the Covenant Law here?*

Day 54-- Joshua 23

Many years have passed between the final battle at Ai and where we pick up the story of Joshua here. Canaan had been conquered, and the Lord had given the people rest. (v1) Joshua was about to die, so he brought the leaders of the people together much like Moses did. Pay close attention to what he chose to focus on in his farewell address to the Hebrew leadership.

It would be good to remember and to remind your children that Joshua was actually born in Egypt. He was not only one of the two oldest

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people in Israel, but he had seen firsthand all that God had done through the years-- plagues, partings, opening the earth, speaking from the mountain, provision of food and water, etc. He knew well the power, holiness, greatness, and goodness of the Lord, so we should pay close attention to his final words.

Possible meditation, discipleship, and discussion questions and ideas:

- *Look at verses 3-16 and see how many unique points you can find that Joshua reminded the leaders of about God.*
- *Remember when we were reading in Leviticus about the holiness of God and how being separate from other peoples was important to their survival? Do those truths come into play here as the children of Israel are now living in a conquered Canaan?*

Day 55-- Joshua 24

Joshua was 110 years old now, and it must have been clear that his days on earth were drawing to a close. So, like Moses before him, he called all the people together for his final address as leader of that nation.

As you read this chapter, pay close attention to what he wanted the children of Israel to remember in his absence.

He reminded them of their story in the first part of this chapter. Remember way back in Deuteronomy when Moses stressed the importance of telling our story to our children? Keep God's works ever in the forefront of our minds and theirs, always reminding us that God is with us; God has called us; God will lead us, etc.

He reminded the people once again that it was not their own ideas or actions that elevated them

to the privileged place where they lived. (v 12b-13)

The next section is one of action. V 13 includes a call for them to choose who they will serve, and it is followed by his own profession that he and his house will serve the Lord.

Starting in V 19, Joshua tells them the way to ensure that they continue serving the Lord-- put away foreign gods and incline your hearts to the One True God. They confirmed this... but, spoiler alert... these will be the exact words of wisdom that could have saved them in the days to come. Oh, that we would pay attention to what God tells us, so we can avoid making the mistakes that come with discounting His Word.

Possible meditation, discipleship, and discussion questions and ideas:

- *Mom and dad, we are about to start Judges where we find horror stories of what happens when we don't pass on our growing, vibrant, personal faith to our children. We will soon see that it took 1 generation after this affirmation for people to stray completely. What an opportunity and responsibility we have been given.*
- *Where do you stand with the question Joshua asked? This is a great, ongoing conversation to have with your children as they grow older-- are they constantly making the decision that they will serve the Lord?*
- *Notice, Joshua says "As for me and my house..." He was the leader of the family, and he was willing to put his stakes in the ground-- he would serve the Lord. Our children are watching our choices and decisions every day! Have we put the same stakes in the ground?*

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Day 56--Judges 1

Ready or not, here we go straight into the post-Joshua world. Do you remember what we read over the last couple of days that Joshua told the leaders and the people? (See Joshua 23:12-13; 24:19-28) We are sadly about to see the consequences of not taking those things seriously.

Possible meditation, discipleship, and discussion questions:

- *As I read this chapter, I found myself asking again and again, "What were they thinking?" as we see group after group foolishly disobeying God. (See verses 27-36, especially note what is said of the different tribes who are mentioned.)*
- *Do you ever justify stopping short of finishing hard things that God has called you to do when you're bored or tired of it?*

Last May, our family had the incredible privilege to take a trip to Israel. I would have never imagined it would be possible, yet God called us to go-- and miraculously provided the way. That trip changed the lives of every person in our family. We read scripture differently, having walked where the accounts take place. We have more context, understand more culture, and have a deeper understanding of many passages because of it. You could definitely say that "scripture comes alive" after being there.

David and I came back convinced that every family should prayerfully consider taking their teens to Israel, for we believe that could fundamentally change the trajectory of the church-- and most definitely of their individual lives.

After prayerful consideration, we are offering a trip for Teach Them Diligently families to take their families-- or at least their older teens-- to the Holy Land. [Click here to get details about this year's trip.](#) Even if you make it a tradition for dad or mom to take 1 child each when they reach a particular milestone, I encourage you to start making plans and preparations to go. It will be money and time well-spent, I promise.