

.... "And The Walls Came Tumblin' Down"

God's promised land is now only a river away. It stretches out before a homeless people who have wandered for forty years in a desert land. As God's people look across the Jordan River toward a land "flowing with milk and honey," what do they see? What are they thinking? What will happen as they take their first steps into a new land? Let's set the stage. The land has occupants - godless people - armed and ready for battle. Moses, their great leader, has just died and Joshua has been appointed by God to lead them into the land of promise. Jericho is the first city to be conquered. It is surrounded by a great wall, and valiant warriors are positioned inside these walls ready to defend their city from invasion.

1. When you are faced with a big challenge ahead, how do you prepare yourself?

- * Arm yourself with every weapon known to mankind
- * Retreat under the covers with a box of chocolates
- * Fortify your forces with more allies
- * Skirt around the situation so that it won't be necessary to meet the challenge head on
- * Ignore it - in hopes that it will go away
- * Other ways: (identify them here)

Read Joshua 1:1-11 two times.

2. Go back through these verses and comment on what you observe about:

a. God's promises to Joshua.

b. God's instructions.

c. Joshua's response.

3. How do you think Joshua is feeling as he looks across the river toward Jericho?

4. Why could God tell Joshua to be calm and courageous?
5. Write Joshua 1:9 on an index card and place it in a spot where you will see it every day this week. Review it each day until you have it memorized.

Look for an opportunity this week to remember the truth from this verse. How did it encourage you?

Chapter 3 begins with Joshua rallying the people and crossing the Jordan River, lead by priests carrying the ark of the Lord (3:13-17). Standing now on promised ground, Joshua, an experienced military man, considers his campaign against Jericho. His forty thousand men are camped only a few miles away from the city. One can imagine the tension filling the air within the walls of Jericho as we read, "Jericho was tightly shut because of the sons of Israel, no one went out and no one came in." (6:1)

Read Joshua 5:13-6:5.

6. Looking at verses 13-15, we see Joshua near Jericho. What do you think he was doing there?
7. a. Describe his encounter.

b. Read Genesis 17:1, 3; Genesis 18:1-2; and Exodus 3:4-5. Who do you think this warrior was?
8. What attitude does Joshua demonstrate toward God?
9. What seems significant to you here as you think about this encounter?

10. a. Thinking about those times when you are facing a new situation or are needing to make a decision, is it your tendency to be more interested in the guidance or in a right relationship with God - the Guide? Explain.
- b. From this encounter between God and Joshua, what would you like to remember in the future when you find yourself facing uncertainty?

11. As you re-read 6:1-5, does the battle plan which God lays out before Joshua seem reasonable?

Prior to this encounter, what do you think Joshua was planning?

12. Thinking about all that has taken place up to this point, what stands out as significant to you about:
- a. the timing of God's intervention?
- b. Joshua's actions?

Read Joshua 6:6-27 and Hebrews 11:30.

13. Compare what actually took place to the instructions given in the first five verses. What do you see?

14. a. What do you learn about the ark of the Lord from the following verses:
Exodus 25:8-22?

Numbers 7:89?

Numbers 10:35-36?

- b. As you read Joshua 6, who is the major player in the defeat of Jericho?

15. What significance do you think there was in the manner in which the city's defeat took place:
a. for the Israelites?

b. for the Canaanites?

c. for Joshua?

16. What part did Joshua play in the destruction of Jericho? Explain.

NOTE: Joshua's name in Hebrew means "the Lord saves" or "the Lord gives victory." Notice that in Hebrews 11:30 Joshua's name isn't even mentioned!

17. Is God adequate for the "battles" in your life?

a. What is your part? (Read John 15:4-5, Proverbs 3:5-6, Psalms 1:1-2.)

b. What promise does God give? (Remember Joshua 1:9.)

18. Write down what you have seen from Joshua's walk of faith that you would like to remember as you walk with God.