

# Lesson 6

## Fighting For the Promise

Joshua 6-8, Joshua 22

### Praise and Worship

The Israelites waged their first battle at Jericho. God is a God of strategy. He led them first to Jericho because it was located in the center of the Promised Land and was an important fortress for the Canaanites.

Read about the battle of Jericho in Joshua 6.

1. From whom did Joshua receive his battle plan?

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2. What was the plan?

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In the words of the popular children's Sunday School song: "Joshua fit the battle of Jericho and the walls came tumblin' down." It's not exactly the plan we might have devised. We picture arrows and armies; the Lord used trumpets and priests.

3. What does Isaiah 55:9 teach us about God's ideas?

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Hebrews 11:30 says "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days." The Israelites honored God with their faith and obedience.

4. *Can you think of a time when the Lord has asked you to do something that doesn't make sense? What were the results?*

*"I will extol You, my God, O King, and I will bless Your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless You, and I will praise Your name forever and ever."*

*Psalm 145:1-2*



*“Let everything that  
has breath praise the  
LORD. Praise the  
LORD!”*

*Psalm 150:6*

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The battle of Jericho was won by praise and worship. The first weapon of warfare that God showed the Israelites was a seven-day celebration of worship to the Lord. A lot of our churches have relegated “worship” to two or three songs on a Sunday morning. While worship is closely tied to music, it is much more than just going through the motions of singing a song.

5. What is the Father seeking according to John 4:23-24?
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True worship is a heart attitude of love and gratitude to the Lord with a sincere desire to see Him glorified. God intended worship as one of our most powerful weapons against the enemy.

Read Acts 16:23-40 about another time giving praise shifted things in the spiritual atmosphere.

Sometimes praise is the spontaneous reaction to an answered prayer or good report. Praising God in those times is the right thing to do. But sometimes praise is a choice that we must make, even when we don’t feel like it.

Paul and Silas, thrown into prison for proclaiming Jesus’ name, had every earthly reason for despair. They had been severely beaten and found themselves in a vile place. Instead of being totally discouraged, Paul and Silas chose to praise God, singing late into the night. Their praises brought such a spiritual breakthrough that there was a literal earthquake, captives were set free and the jailer and his entire family came to the Lord. Praising God and glorifying Him releases His power in the spiritual realm!

Praising God lifts our eyes off of our circumstances. When we focus on our great, good, majestic Lord in the midst of a difficult situation, we remember that He is in control. He is on His throne, reigning and ruling. We are able to begin to see life from His perspective. What seemed like a huge burden or an insurmountable problem wanes in comparison to His glory. Praise shifts our perspective.

It shifts our perspective in another way as well. So many people spend their whole lives searching for their meaning and purpose.

6. What does 1 Peter 2:9 say is our purpose as believers?
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In the Promised Land, we will live into that purpose. Worship will be our heart's default position. Praise takes practice. Sometimes we have to make the choice to praise, and we must make it a habit and a lifestyle. Let's spend some time this week in individual and corporate praise to God.

7. *This week, make an investment in your praise-life. In our technological world, great praise music is at your fingertips. If you don't already have some music that ushers you into that place of praise, find some. There are so many different types of worship music. Find something that speaks to your spirit and spend some time this week praising God.*

David, a famous songwriter of the Bible, wrote, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name" (Psalm 103:1). In the Land of Milk and Honey, all that is within us will praise His holy name!

## Humility and Honor

8. What else does our praising God do according to Psalm 22:3?

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When we praise God, we enthrone Him! When we put the Lord in His rightful place on the throne of our lives, we can no longer operate out of a place of pride. James 4:6 tells us that God is opposed to the proud. It is a scary thing for God to be our opponent. When we praise God, a shift occurs within us: self is dethroned, and the Lord resumes His rightful place in our hearts.

Read Joshua 7:1-9.

9. Describe the Battle of Ai as recounted in Joshua 7:2-5.

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10. In one word, describe the attitude of the spies as they scouted out Ai.

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Emboldened by their recent victory at Jericho, Joshua and the Israelites charged ahead to enter the next battle confident in their own strength. Sometimes our victories with the Lord tempt us to walk in pride or arrogance. The very events that should serve to strengthen our reliance upon God's faithfulness can sometimes serve instead to strengthen our reliance upon ourselves.

11. What does Proverbs 16:18 promise?

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12. What does Joshua do in Joshua 7:6-9 as a result of the defeat at Ai?

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13. *How does Joshua's model encourage you when your "heart melts and becomes as water" (Joshua 7:5)?*

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14. *What are some practical steps you can take to make sure you are not filled with pride?*

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We all have the tendency to get puffed up with pride. It is part of our fallen human nature. However, we do not have to nurture that attitude. When we sense arrogance in our hearts, it is time to get low before the Lord, repent and ask for His forgiveness. Then we walk forward with an attitude of thanksgiving, recognizing that all we have – especially the thing tempting us toward pride – comes from the hand of the Lord.

15. What does Jesus say in John 5:19?

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Jesus is our model. As we watch Him through the Gospels, He always completely relied upon His heavenly Father. In Matthew 11:29, Jesus revealed His heart attitude: "I am gentle and humble in heart." As we learn from His example, we are to have teachable, correctable spirits that rely upon the Lord and His ways.

In the Land of Milk and Honey we are called to follow the Lord by walking in humility and honor. There are two ditches that we can fall into as we desire to walk in humility. Sometimes in our effort to appear to be humble, we can fall into the ditch of false humility. The goal of this person is not really to be humble but to appear to be humble. How ironic that we can be proud of how humble we are! This person will not want to take any credit but instead will make a show of giving all the credit to the Lord. Walking in humility is not something we do so that others will see, it is a matter of the heart. Humility is having it straight in our hearts that we are lowly and dependent upon the Lord. When the Lord lets you in on His purposes by using your talents or time (that He gave you, by the way), you will be delighted, but you will know that it is all about Him, and you will be

thankful. You can graciously accept a compliment without be filled with pride. After all, you did your part to cooperate with Him. That is walking in honor and humility.

The other ditch is the ditch of the downtrodden. This person is so beaten down by life, by circumstances or relationships gone bad, that they are truly deflated and do not know who they are in Christ. This is not the kind of humility that the Lord calls us to. Just think of the model of Jesus. He had the confidence to carry out the will of the Father. He never shrank back because He was too humble. He spoke and the dead were literally raised. He confidently confronted the religious authorities. He refused to answer Pilate, the most powerful man in the Judean territory. He was humble, but He was no wimp! He also graciously received the praises of the people. On Palm Sunday, when the Pharisees pressured Him to squelch the praise of the people, He refused, saying, "If they are silent, the very rocks will cry out!" (Luke 19:40).



*"God is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble."*

*James 4:6*

16. How should we assess ourselves and others according to Romans 12:3,16?

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17. Who does God say we are in the following verses?

❖ Psalm 139:14: \_\_\_\_\_

❖ 1 Corinthians 3:16: \_\_\_\_\_

❖ Ephesians 2:10: \_\_\_\_\_

18. *Which description from question 17 stands out to you? Do you believe that you are who God says you are?*

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In the Land of Milk and Honey, we are not to walk in pride *or* in false humility. We are called to walk the wonderful road of honor in the truth of who God is and of who we are in Him.

### Secrets and Hidden Sin

Read Joshua 7:10-26.

19. What is the Lord's answer when Joshua asks why the Israelites were defeated at Ai? (Joshua 7:13)

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*"And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."*

*Hebrews 4:13*

The Lord earlier commanded the Israelites not to keep the things of Jericho for themselves, but Achan disobeyed and buried the bounty, thinking no one would know. The other Israelites were unaware of Achan's sin, but when Joshua sought the Lord regarding their defeat at Ai, God revealed the truth about Achan's actions.

Hebrews 4:13 teaches us that "all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."

20. What wonderful promise do we have in 1 John 1:8-9?

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When we confess our sins to the Lord we are completely forgiven without ever telling another human soul. However, sometimes when we keep those sins secret, we still have shame, pain and embarrassment, and although we are forgiven, deep healing in our spirit does not occur.

21. What does James 5:16 promise?

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In the case of Achan, we are talking about a person who sinned: he did something that was expressly forbidden by the Lord. Then he tried to hide it and keep it in darkness. His sin needed to come to light. I believe that this principle of bringing secret things into the light applies both to sins we commit and to sins committed against us, even if we were totally innocent and just don't want anyone to know what happened to us. When we bury the transgression, it has power over us, and we cannot begin to take the steps toward healing and freedom.

The area of secrets is the area of the enemy. He loves to keep things in darkness, where he can sow lies into your soul with no one around to speak the truth into your life. Healing begins when we find someone we trust and bring the event into the light. We don't have to go on the talk show circuit or tell everyone we meet. We can simply confide in confidence to a trusted friend. When we bring those things out of the darkness and into the light of Christ by confiding in godly friends and counsel and receiving healing prayer (which we'll discuss in more detail in chapter 8), the Lord is able to bring real freedom. The power of shame is broken!

Years ago, a close friend shared her story with me. Hers is a testimony of the grip of shame that holds sway over us when things are kept in darkness. It is also a testimony of the freedom that comes from bringing secret things into the light of Christ. As a teenager, she became pregnant. Unsure of how to handle the situation and fearing the response of those around her, she kept the pregnancy a secret from

her boyfriend, her parents and her closest friends. She fell into a deep depression, and during the sixth month of her pregnancy, she attempted suicide. Her mother found her, and, thankfully, doctors were able to save her life. To this day, she doesn't know if she lost the baby or if her parents had the doctors abort it, but when she regained consciousness, her mother told her, "We will never talk about this." For the rest of his life, her father never said a word about the matter. No one, including my friend, ever talked about it. She went on to enter into a brief marriage that ended in a sad divorce. After she married again, she came to the Lord Jesus Christ and received complete forgiveness and a new life from Him. As trust built, she was able to share her story about the Lord's great love and forgiveness. As she received healing prayer, the grip of shame was broken. In the dark, her secret held power over her; in Christ's light, her testimony is one of God's great mercy that glorifies the Lord!

22. *Is there anything in your life that needs to be brought out of secret and into Christ's light with trusted friends? It may be something you have done or something that was done to you that you decided never to tell another soul. There is no reason to let that secret have power over you any longer. Ask the Lord to bring to mind any secret you have buried and to bring a safe and trusted friend you can confide in. He wants to bring His freedom and healing!*

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Read Joshua 8 to see what happened at Ai once Joshua dealt with Achan's sin.

### Resolving Conflicts

In the Land of Milk and Honey, we have a different perspective on all of life: our perspective is from the heart of the Father and His truth. While we are called to battle our enemy in the Promised Land, we are not called to battle against other people! We are walking in forgiveness and humility. We are at peace in our hearts. We approach conflicts differently than before.\*

Last spring Anne and I had a fight, or maybe I should say a conflict. It's a long story, but the bottom line is I hurt her feelings. I didn't mean to, but I did. And then when she let me know what was going on, she hurt my feelings. We were

\*The principles of reconciliation are for conflicts between believers - people who are following the Lord and seeking to please Him. You may be in a conflict with someone who does not want to please the Lord and is not interested in reconciliation in the least. You still need to do your part. Romans 12:8 says, "as far as it depends upon you, be at peace with all men.: You cannot force someone to reconcile with you, but you can do your part.



*You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy." But I say to you, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."*

*Matthew 5:43-44*

both upset and felt misunderstood and could have easily shut down and walked away from our friendship, both feeling justified. It is an understatement to say that it was a painful mess.

In the midst of the heated conflict, all I could do was utter one word in prayer, “Help!” Even that was a struggle, because I wasn’t altogether sure I wanted His help. Within minutes, He began to soften our hearts and to give each of us a glimmer of understanding and finally gave us hearts to forgive each other. This whole episode is not something we relish bringing up, but we are willing to do so in order to illustrate a point. In the Land of Milk and Honey when we have a conflict with another believer, we will not react out of our pain, shut down and write them off (even when we are convinced we are “right”). We will hang in there, honestly share our point of view and listen to theirs. We will call out to the Lord to come into the situation and bring His reconciliation. And Praise God, He does!

Our story is magnified across the body of Christ. I was recently talking with a friend from another city. She is burdened for her city because there are serious problems that can only be solved through the reconciliation of Jesus. But the body of Christ there is so divided that pastors will not meet with other pastors. I don’t think they can even remember what the conflict was over. We have got to start living in the Land of Milk and Honey. Our cities and our nation are at stake!

To further illustrate conflict resolution in the Land of Milk and Honey, we will jump ahead to Joshua 22 for an example of resolving conflicts in the Land of Milk and Honey. At the time of this conflict, the Promised Land had been taken by the Israelites and divided among the tribes.

23. Read Joshua 22. What is the potential conflict between the tribes on the west of the Jordan River and the tribes on the east of it?

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The nine-and-a-half tribes on the west side of the Jordan River initially jumped to the conclusion that their cousins on the other side of the river were committing idolatry. In the wilderness, the Israelites might have immediately declared war when they had a conflict.

24. What do the tribes do to resolve the conflict in the Land of Milk and Honey?

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Although they do begin to mobilize for war, they also take a key step that is evidence of their maturing in their lives in the Promised Land. Instead of



operating out of their initial assumptions, they put together a delegation to find out what was really going on over there on that other bank.

25. What is cited as evidence of the Lord's presence in Joshua 22:31?

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When we are living in the Land of Milk and Honey, we will operate differently, and even *we* will see that we are different!

26. According to 2 Corinthians 5:17-20, what ministry does God give us as believers?

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God loves reconciliation! He loves the reconciliation of men to Himself and the reconciliation among His children.

27. Read Matthew 5:23-24 and 5:38-44, Matthew 18:15-17 and Galatians 6:1-2. What do you learn from these verses about resolving conflicts?

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Following the example of the ancient Israelites, we must learn to settle matters with the truth, keeping an open mind and listening to the other party. Rather than presume to know another's motives, we must reevaluate based on information we receive from them. Finally, in humility, we must rejoice when we are proven wrong so that our testimony may also be, "Today we know that the Lord is in our midst" (Joshua 22:31).

### **Prepare for Life**

In the Promised Land, we will follow the Lord, know His ways and walk in them. We will not make up our own "Godly ways" as we did in the wilderness. We will posture ourselves in a position of worship. We will learn to ask for and to receive His specific strategy in each circumstance. When we fail, as each of us will, we will feel our hearts heavy within us, but rather than hide in our sin, we will fall on our faces before the Lord. We will receive forgiveness, and when we do, we will stand again. We know the truth of who God is and of who we are in Him, so we will not fall into the arrogance of pride or the crippling grip of false humility. We will, as Paul implores us in Ephesians 4:1, "walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which we have been called."

28. *Consider the following scriptures and meditate on them using the prayer exercise that was detailed on page 13.*

❖ **Scriptures: 2 Corinthians 5:19-20**

❖ **Word or Phrase:**

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❖ **Insight:**

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❖ **Invitation:**

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## Lecture Notes: