

# Lesson 3

## Consecrate Yourself

### Joshua 3:1-5

Finally, it seems the Israelites are ready to enter the land promised to them. However, as we open the third chapter of Joshua, we find Joshua and the Israelites *still* waiting on God! Is anyone else growing a little impatient? As we are learning, the Lord we serve is not to be rushed.

*“Consecrate yourselves,  
for tomorrow the  
LORD will do wonders  
among you.”*

Joshua had been waiting for more than forty years to possess this land. He could see it. He knew God was going to give it to him. They were so close, but still God whispered, “Wait.” Joshua did not wait passively. He did not camp out in the wilderness waiting for the light to turn green. He actively participated with the Lord in continuing to ready himself and the Israelites to cross the Jordan into the Promised Land. Like a good waiter at a fine restaurant, Joshua attended the Lord, seeking what He would have him do and living in obedience.

*Joshua 3:5*

### Forgiveness

Read Joshua 3:1-5

1. What does Joshua tell the people to do in Joshua 3:5?

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Consecration is a big, theological word that means getting our lives cleaned up and on God’s path. This is also sometimes referred to as sanctification. It is not a one-time event, but a lifetime process that will continue when we are living in the Land of Milk and Honey.

We receive salvation by faith, and it *is* a one-time event: Ephesians 2:8-9 says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast." We begin our life in Christ with accepting His great gift of salvation. We continue our life in Christ by sanctification – the life-long process of growing to be more like Christ. We do this when we confess and repent of a specific sin and begin to walk in obedience to the Lord in that area.

*To confess:  
“to say the same thing  
as another, to agree  
with”*

2. Read 2 Timothy 2:20-21. How are we active participants in our own sanctification?

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*To repent:  
“to change one’s mind  
and actions”*

3. As believers, what is our part in cleansing ourselves from sin? See Acts 3:19 and 1 John 1:8-9.

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4. What is the means through which we are sanctified according to John 17:17 and Ephesians 5:26?

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The Word of God clearly teaches that there are many things we must forsake if we are going to follow the Lord. The Ten Commandments spell out God’s moral will for us, and we need to ask the Holy Spirit to examine our lives in each one of these areas. There are also other important areas where we may be offending the Holy God.

Sometimes we don't even need the subtle temptations of the enemy to take us away from walking with the Lord. Our own fallen human nature does the job without any outside help!

The Word of God gives us a list of sins of the flesh that we need to consider, asking the Holy Spirit to show us if there is a specific sin that we need to deal with before Him. These lists give us a clear contrast between fulfilling the desire of the old self (the flesh) and walking in the Spirit.

- 5. What are the sins of the flesh and the manifestations of walking in the Spirit mentioned in:

Galatians 5:17-26

Flesh	Spirit

Ephesians 4:22-32

Flesh	Spirit



*“How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered!”*

*Psalm 32:1*

Jesus said in John 14:30, “the ruler of the world [Satan]...has nothing in Me.” Satan had no basis for accusing Christ because Christ had no sin in His life. We cannot be sinless, but we can be blameless in the sight of God. We do this by repenting of all known sin and receiving His forgiveness.

When we go to Jesus in faith and ask Him for forgiveness from our sins, we are cleansed by His blood that was shed upon the cross. We cannot earn righteousness, and we cannot cleanse ourselves. Those are gifts of God. We simply kneel before the throne of grace and receive God’s forgiveness through Jesus’ work of atonement on the cross. In the wilderness, we may grow accustomed to holding onto our sins and allowing them to run us ragged with guilt. In the Land of Milk and Honey, though, we invite the Holy Spirit to convict us of sin. Then we confess that sin, taking it straight to the cross, and we receive immediate and complete forgiveness. The blood of the Lord Jesus Christ is always enough. We also repent: we stop going in the direction we were going on our own and turn to follow the Lord.

Years ago, I learned about my need to let the light of the Spirit of God search out my heart. I asked Him to convict me of any sin. It was during a period of time when I was up in the wee hours of the night with a nursing baby. As I sat in that rocker, I would ask the Lord to bring up any sin that He wanted to deal with. One by one, He ever-so-gently brought up a memory, and I simply repented. I came out of agreement with that action or attitude and confessed it to the Lord, placing it under His blood. This went on for a few weeks until there were no more “issues.” In one sense, all of my sins were dealt with on the cross and Christ’s righteousness was imputed to me on the day that I invited Him into my heart. But in another sense, I needed to get cleaned up by confessing some specific sins.

After that season, the enemy would sometimes remind and accuse me of a sin I had confessed. I would simply answer, “*So what? It’s covered by the blood of Jesus.*” That doesn’t happen very much anymore; the enemy doesn’t like hearing about the blood of Jesus.

Conviction vs.  
Condemnation

The work of the Holy Spirit and the work of the enemy are very different. When the Holy Spirit *convicts* us of sin, He places His finger on one sin at a time. He never overwhelms us. He convinces us of our need for Christ, and it leads to repentance and forgiveness. Once a sin has been placed under the blood of Christ, the Holy Spirit won’t bring it up again. The enemy *condemns* us to produce a sense of shame or guilt. He tries to overwhelm us with how bad we are so that we will give up.

6. *Take some time now and ask the Holy Spirit to search out your heart. Wait on Him. If He brings to mind any specific sin that you have not yet confessed, take it to the cross and place it under the cleansing blood of Christ. Receive His forgiveness.*

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Confessing and repenting of sins is a huge deal to the Lord. The reason Jesus came to the earth as a man and lived a sinless life was to go to the cross as our substitute. He died in our place so that our sins can be forgiven and so that we might be reconciled to God.

**Forgiven... That We May Forgive**

All around us, our culture tells us that we have the right to hold onto injustices done to us. God begs to differ.

7. From 2 Corinthians 2:10-11, what is one of the schemes of the enemy?

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8. What is Jesus' command regarding forgiveness in Mark 11:25?

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*“Then Peter came and said to Him, ‘Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?’*

*Jesus said to him, ‘I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.’”*

*Matthew 18:21-22*

Our culture, peers and even our own hearts provide so many ways to get around forgiving others. But our Lord, who died to forgive us, says, *No, you have to forgive them – every one of every thing* (paraphrase of Matthew 18:22).

We may think that forgiving someone is the same thing as excusing their sin. Several years ago we were praying with a young woman whose father's actions had hurt her. We asked her if she would forgive him. She told us that she had tried but didn't know how. We told her to ask the Lord to show her how to forgive her dad. She prayed silently for a moment and looked back at us, "I think it's okay to tell Him [the Lord] how wrong it was for my dad to do what he did." I watched relief wash over her face. She proceeded to do just that – to tell God how badly her father had hurt her and how wrong he had been. Then she easily continued into a prayer of forgiveness. Once her pain and her sense of justice had been validated, she was able to forgive. God does not call us to make excuses for the behavior of others. He does not call us to justify their behavior. He calls us to forgive them for the wrongs that they have done.

So often our growth in Christ depends upon our willingness to walk in forgiveness. We can know the Bible backwards and forwards, but if we refuse to forgive someone who has hurt us, we are stunted and will not be able to experience the abundant life.

When I first began to grasp this, I gave my Counselor, the Holy Spirit, permission to bring to my mind anyone that I needed to forgive or to ask for forgiveness. We had our “counseling” sessions whenever I had twenty minutes or so to sit and get quiet before the Lord. He was faithful to do the reminding, and, although it was difficult, I did my part to forgive, release and bless the one who had hurt me. Now, my job is to continue walking in forgiveness.

9. *Ask the Holy Spirit to search out your heart. Specifically ask Him to reveal anyone that you might not have forgiven. Are you willing to forgive the ones who have hurt you? If you find this difficult, will you simply ask the Lord to begin to make you willing to forgive? This is very important to the Lord. Take some time to wait on His leading.*
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10. *If you know of someone that you have hurt in some way, I challenge you to take some time this week to write them a note or give them a call and ask them to forgive you. If you cannot get in touch with them, ask the Lord what to do. He just may bring you the information or provide some open door. If that person is no longer alive, thank the Lord for his or her life and ask for the Lord's forgiveness.*
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It is possible to have truly forgiven someone but to still live under the weight of the hurt. How do we find freedom from this pain? The Lord says in Matthew 11:28, “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.” As we have prayed for people, Anne and I have learned that the Lord does not usually take away our pain and disappointment just because we ask Him to. Instead, He waits for us to be active participants in our healing. He invites us to come to Him and release our hurts and disappointments to Him. This requires strength and courage on our part. Remember, the Lord told Joshua four times in chapter one to be strong and courageous!

Once we are certain we have forgiven the one who hurt us, then we can release the remaining pain and disappointment to the Lord. We make a divine exchange. We do this by getting alone and settling down, remembering the betrayal and allowing ourselves to feel the accompanying pain. Then we “gather it up and release it to the Lord. When we give our hurts to Him, He gives us His perfect peace in exchange.

### Forgiving Ourselves

Years ago, when I was really turning back to the Lord, I had a difficult time believing that He could forgive me. It just seemed too easy. How could I walk away from Him, live for myself and then one day just say a prayer and be completely forgiven? It was hard for me to believe that He could really forgive me. I struggled with this for several months. During that season the Lord brought several verses to my mind that slowly convinced me of His complete forgiveness. I wrote out those verses in the back of my Bible so that I could read them at any time.

11. Look up the following verses and write them out as reminders of God’s forgiveness. Write your favorite one under the key in the margin. Knowing you’re forgiven is a principle of living in the Land of Milk and Honey.



- ❖ Psalm 103:10-12: \_\_\_\_\_  
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- ❖ Jeremiah 31:34: \_\_\_\_\_  
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- ❖ Romans 8:1: \_\_\_\_\_  
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- ❖ 1 John 1:9: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Even after the fact that the Lord had forgiven me was settled, I had one more person I needed to forgive – myself. Deep-down, there was a sense of self-condemnation. I couldn’t forgive myself for turning away from the Lord. One evening we were at my parents’ home for dinner. As I finished cleaning up at their kitchen sink, I was lost in my thoughts, struggling with this issue. I knew the Lord had forgiven me for walking away from Him, but I couldn’t forgive myself. Standing there at that sink, I heard some words that may sound sarcastic to you, but I am convinced it was the Lord Himself speaking His words into my spirit. He said, “What do you want, more blood?” These shocking words were just what I needed to bring me to my senses. Jesus paid the full price of my sins on the cross. There is nothing I can add to His payment; it is complete. His precious blood was sufficient. In fact, it is actually arrogant for me to think that even though God may be able to forgive me, I cannot forgive myself. That night the Lord set me free from that self-condemnation, and I forgave myself.

Having struggled with this on a personal level, I can identify with others who feel this same way. Sometimes when Anne and I pray for others who cannot forgive themselves for something they have done, we literally ask them to look at themselves in the mirror and say, “I forgive you.” This may seem silly, but it is actually a powerful action that brings freedom in this area. Refusing to forgive others keeps us in the enemy’s camp, and sometimes the one we need to forgive is looking back at us from the mirror.

12. *I encourage you to take some time now to ask the Holy Spirit if there is any area of your life in which you need to forgive yourself.*

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### A Thankful Heart

Ephesians 5:18-21 elaborates on what our lives will look like when we are filled with the Holy Spirit:



*“...always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father...”*

*Ephesians 5:20*

*And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.*

13. What was the attitude of the Israelites while they were wandering in the wilderness? How did God feel about it? See Numbers 11:1, 14:1-2, 16:41-50.

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When we are living in the Land of Milk and Honey, we will always give thanks for all things! How different from the folks who wandered with Moses in the wilderness.

14. Consider Jesus’ interaction with the ten lepers in Luke 17:11-19 and their response. What do you learn about giving thanks from this passage? Do you think it is enough to just think thankful thoughts, or do we need to loudly proclaim our thanks? Discuss.

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15. How do Psalm 100:4 and Philippians 4:6 instruct us in our prayer life?

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16. Read Romans 1:18-21. In verse 21, what is the specific sin that kindles the wrath of God?

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A few years ago, while on the search to buy a car, I was at a local dealership visiting with a salesman. When he saw me eyeing a certain car, he said, “Mrs. Phillips, you *deserve* that car.” With that one sentence, this salesman became a commentator on our times: we think we are entitled to everything. This thinking has even invaded the Church. As believers, we think we deserve God’s blessings, but we are actually walking in pride. Instead of thinking that we deserve God’s blessings, we need to thank Him for those blessings. Giving thanks puts us in our place and puts God in His place!

17. What does James 1:17 teach us, and what should our response be when we are blessed?

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18. What does Paul teach us by word and example in Philippians 4:11-13?

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19. In Deuteronomy 8:7-18, Moses is preparing the Israelites for life in the Land of Milk and Honey. What does he warn them about?

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*“I will give You thanks with all my heart; I will sing praises to You before the gods. I will bow down toward Your holy temple And give thanks to Your name for Your lovingkindness and Your truth; for You have magnified Your word according to all Your name.”*

*Psalm 138:1-2*

A thankful heart is one of the keys to living in the Land of Milk and Honey. And, yes, the Word of God does say that we need to give thanks for *all* things (Ephesians 5:20). It is not always easy to give thanks to the Lord in all things. The Lord knows this, but He still requires it. He knows that when thankfulness is the default position of our hearts, we are in the right place. When we have a thankful heart, we bless the Lord, but we also receive a blessing. Thankfulness shifts our focus from our circumstances to the exalted Lord. Thankfulness pushes away grumbling and malcontent. We need to practice being thankful in all things!

We also need to practice going to the Lord *first* with our thankful hearts. One of the seven feasts that the Lord prescribed for the Israelites was the Feast of First

Fruits in Leviticus 23:9-14. This was an offering of a sheaf of barley accompanied with a lamb and grain offering with wine. It was an offering made at the beginning of the harvest. This feast reminds us to go to the Lord first, even before we see the full answer to our prayers.

Years ago I was praying about an important family matter that seemed to me to be “impossible.” It was a difficult situation and I knew that I could not change it; it would have to be the Lord. It was a huge burden, and I took it to Him often. I shared my request with trusted friends who I knew would pray with me about it.

At the first sign of a breakthrough, I was overjoyed and wanted to pick up the phone and share the good news with my friends. However, I was learning about the principle of first fruits and wanted to put it into practice. I was actually driving from Austin to Houston, and I knew where the halfway point was. For the first half of the trip, I put on some praise music and had a sweet, tearful time thanking the Lord for His working in this situation. At the halfway mark, I got out my phone and shared the good news with my rejoicing friends. Those nine lepers in Luke 17 may have rejoiced with one another about their healing, but the one the Lord really honored was the one who came to Him with a thankful heart.

**Prepare for Life**

In the Land of Milk and Honey, we will know the Lord who cleanses and forgives through the death of His own Son. We will know the freedom that comes from consecrating ourselves -getting our lives cleaned up - from any attitude or activity that does not please the Lord. We will receive forgiveness and forgive others. In all our circumstances, we will live a life of thankfulness to the Lord. He is the Faithful One who goes before us and makes our paths straight (Proverbs 3:6).

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

❖ Scriptures: ***Colossians 3:12-14***

❖ Word or Phrase:

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❖ Insight:

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❖ Invitation:

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## Lecture Notes: