

Lesson 5

First Steps On the Promised Ground

Joshua 5

Read Joshua 5:1-12.

1. In Joshua 5:1, how do the enemies of the Israelites respond when they hear of the miraculous crossing of the Jordan?

When we lay down our lives and abandon all to God, the enemy is neutralized. The enemy still exists, but he realizes that we will be victorious through Jesus Christ. In the wilderness, conflict with the enemy led to defeat and disappointment, but in the Land of Milk and Honey, our conflicts with the enemy of our souls will end with our assured victory if we rely on the Lord and not on self.

Remember that truth as we prepare to walk through the series of battles, which must take place before we can fully possess the Promised Land and live the life that Christ intends.

Generational Blessings and Curses

2. Discuss the meaning of circumcision from Genesis 17:9-14, Deuteronomy 30:6, and Romans 2:28-29.

Before the Israelites can go one step further into the Promised Land, they have some unfinished business. The entire Joshua generation must be circumcised in accordance with the law.

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect”

Romans 12:2



“He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

2 Corinthians 5:21

3. Whose disobedience caused Joshua’s generation to remain uncircumcised?
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In praying with others, Anne and I have found that our spirits can be greatly affected both positively and negatively by the choices of our parents and ancestors. In a sense, we receive a spiritual genetic code just as we receive a physical genetic code. That spiritual genetic code passes down both spiritual strengths and spiritual weaknesses, just as our physical genetic code determines both physical strengths and physical weaknesses. The Bible calls these God’s blessings and curses.

4. What do Exodus 20:4-6, Numbers 14:18-21 and Deuteronomy 28:45-46 teach?*
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Before we go any further, I want to make sure you notice the incredible mercy of God. His mercy extends exponentially beyond His judgment.

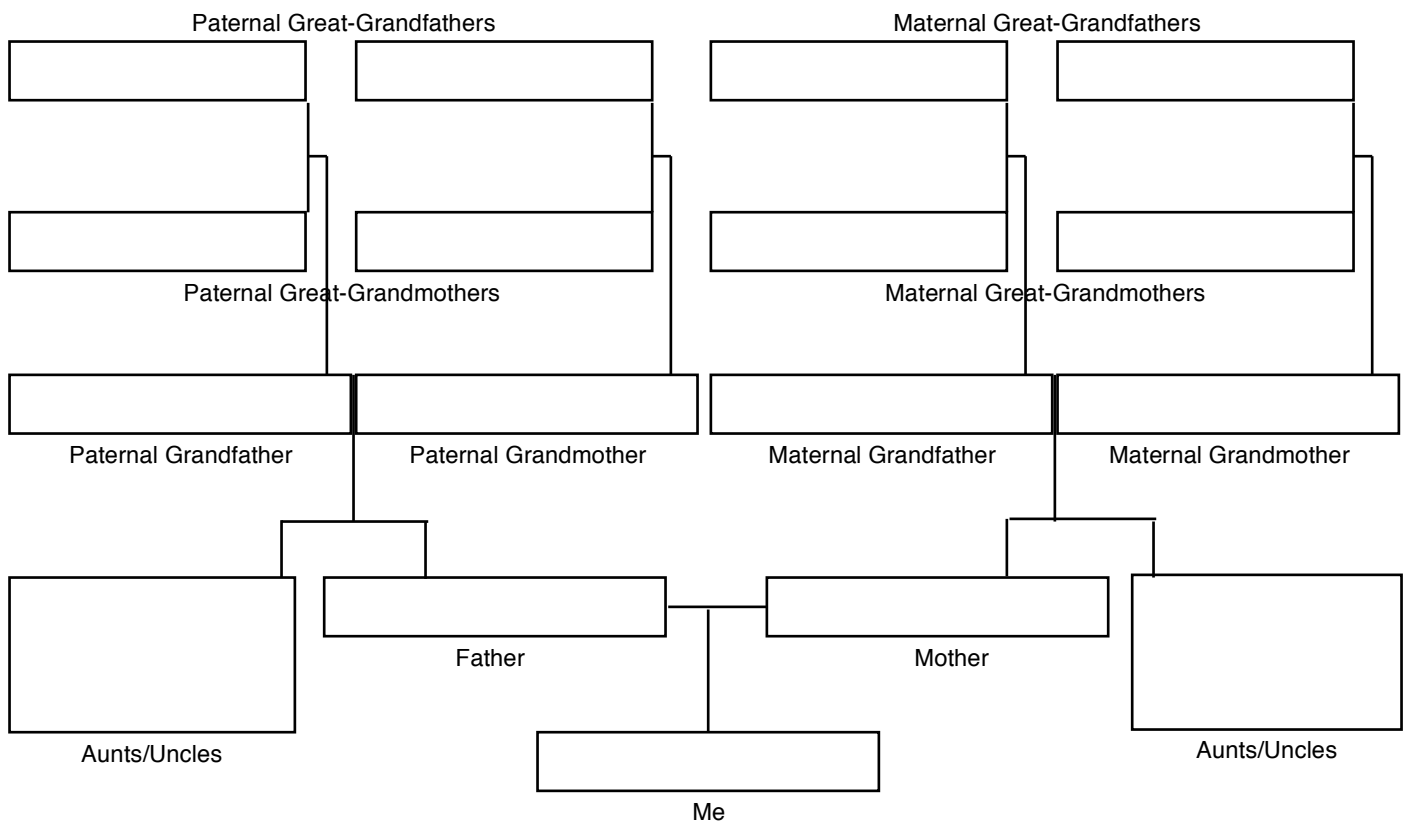
The Hebrew word for iniquity is different from the words for sin, transgression and trespass. The latter speak of missing the mark or falling short. The word iniquity speaks of perverse, crooked ways of life. Apparently iniquity is so heinous that the Lord allows it to affect future generations in the bloodline. These descendants are not held personally accountable for the iniquity, but they will feel the effects of it. This principle was exemplified by the Israelites. It was the fathers who did not have their sons circumcised, but the sons were the ones who ended up living outside of the law.

Thankfully, there is a way to end the cycle of generational iniquity. As we have seen before, in the Land of Milk and Honey, the solution will not be to grin and bear it. Instead, with our cooperation, the Lord Himself will release us from these generational curses that we receive simply by being born into the family that He chose for us. When we humbly repent, by turning from the ways of our fathers and back to the way of the Lord, He will, just as He did for the ancient Israelites, “roll away the reproach of [generations who have gone before]” (Joshua 5:9).

*All of these verses use the Hebrew word that is translated *visiting* in many Bibles. Some translators use the word *punishing* instead of visiting. I think visiting is a better translation because Scripture clearly teaches that God does not punish us for another person’s sins.

- Complete the chart of your parents, grandparents and great-parents names (if you know them). As you consider each name, write down anything you personally remember or know about their spiritual legacy, both positive and negative. Consider the list of occult activities on page 24 of our study and the sins of the flesh in Galatians 5:19-26 and in Ephesians 4:22-32 and 5:8-15 (see page 33). These lists may help you identify the iniquities of your ancestors. You may also want to note anything you know about any of your ancestors that are not on this chart (like siblings of your grandparents or parents) because this may give you insight into the generational curses and blessings. (This chart is just between you and the Lord.)

If you are adopted or do not know much about your ancestors, ask the Lord to bring you any information that you need to know about your biological family. Once you ask Him, simply wait. If there is information the Lord wants you to have, it may come through a dream or some other venue. You will know that it is from Him. It is important not to get caught up in all that we don't know. God knows all, and if you can't get the information yourself, you can simply repent of any sin that God knows of.



When I first learned about these concepts, I had very little information about my ancestors. I had some charts and knew their names and where they lived but that was about it. All of my grandparents died before I could meet them, and I didn't feel that I could ask my elderly parents about "the iniquities of their forefathers." *What exactly would I ask, anyway?* So I simply asked the Lord to show me if there was any iniquity in my bloodlines that needed to be dealt with before Him. I pretty much forgot about my prayer until a few weeks later when I "just so happened" to have dinner with a distant cousin, whom I had not seen since I was a child. He brought up information that I didn't know about my maternal grandfather who had died eighty years earlier. Once I knew, I was able to pray about the matter accordingly. If God wants to bring you information, He will.

6. *Once you have completed your chart, thank the Lord for any spiritual blessings in your bloodline.*

7. What does Leviticus 26:40-42 promise?

8. *If you know of any specific iniquity in your bloodline:*

❖ *Repent and confess it on behalf of your ancestor. * If you have committed the same sin, also repent and confess it for yourself.*

❖ *Forgive your ancestor for passing it on.*

❖ *Ask Jesus to place His blood between you and your ancestor and to cleanse your generation and all future generations of this iniquity.*

*I believe this type of prayer is exemplified in Daniel 9:3-19, where Daniel identified with his people and their sin, praying on their behalf in confession and repentance. See also Jeremiah 14:7 and Nehemiah 9:33 for other examples of this type of prayer.

9. What do you think Joshua 5:9 is referring to?

10. When the Lord rolls away your reproach, what does He replace it with in Isaiah 61:7?

Like the ancient Israelites, we need to own up to the iniquity in our bloodlines. We need to take ownership of and responsibility for the blessings and curses that have been handed down through the generations. Through no real fault of their own, the Joshua generation of the Israelites had never been circumcised, but it was up to them to submit to the Lord and be circumcised in His will. If the Lord wants you to repent of some iniquity in your bloodline, He will bring it to your attention, just as He did with Joshua. The Lord’s desire is to bless His children, so rest assured that when you repent of the sins of past generations, the Lord will honor and bless you in that area of your life.

Celebrating Your Arrival

After their circumcision, the first thing we see the Israelites do is celebrate with a feast – a feast instituted by God Himself. Passover is a family-centered celebration of God’s faithfulness to His people, and God instructed them to observe it. These celebrations are important to God. In fact, one of the tithes commanded by Moses was used to fund special celebrations before the Lord (Deuteronomy 14:24-26). In the Land of Milk and Honey we need to take time to celebrate special occasions.

11. How are you marking out special times to celebrate the Lord and His blessings to you?

12. What do you see as a significant shift in Joshua 5:11-12?

God is no longer only providing for their needs. He is providing in abundance! The monotony of manna is over! The promise of milk and honey is literally



“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!”

Philippians 4:4

fulfilled. God's people are walking in a new level in their relationship with Him. They are in a new place.

13. *Is this true in your walk with the Lord today? Can you see a difference in the way you relate to Him?*

Life in the Land of Milk and Honey is not boring or monotonous the way our walk in the wilderness may have been.

Knowing God's Will for You: God's Way In God's Timing



"Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work.'"

John 4:34

Just before Joshua begins to lead the Israelites in the battles to occupy the Promised Land, he has a supernatural encounter.

Read Joshua 5:13-15.

14. Describe this encounter and what happens to Joshua.

15. Who do you think Joshua encounters? See Exodus 3:1-6 and or Acts 9:1-6 and discuss the similarities in these encounters.

The "man" that Joshua encounters in verses 13-15 clearly displays supernatural majesty. When Joshua glimpses this glory, he falls down in worship. I believe that this encounter was with the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ. In Revelation 19, John falls down in worship of an angel because the angel, having been so near to God, displays some of His splendor.

16. What does the angel say to John when John worships him in Revelation 19:9-10?

An angel would not accept the worship that only God Himself deserves to receive. That is the main reason that I believe this person in the Joshua account is the Lord Jesus Christ. Even the ground Joshua was standing on became holy in the presence of this Majestic One.

17. What does the Lord reveal in Joshua 5:13-14 about whose side He is on?

Before any of the battles begin, God wants to get one thing straight with Joshua and the Israelites. In the Promised Land, God is not here to bless *our* plans. He is here to lead us in *His* plans. Our job is not to give out orders and ask Him to bless them; our job is to follow orders and to join the Lord in what He wants to do.

I hate to admit it, but when I first came to the Lord, I had the idea that I wanted all of the Lord's blessings in my life, but I really wanted to run my own show. I could envision my life and didn't want God upsetting my plans. Back then, when I prayed to know God's will about a matter, I only wanted Him to show me His will so that I could (arrogantly) decide whether I would follow it. I viewed it as an option to consider. This would be funny if it wasn't so sad!

I was trifling with the Lord. To trifle with something is to treat it as if it has no value, no significance. Before we even ask the Lord for His will about a matter, the first thing we must do is determine in our hearts that once we know His will, we will do it. We must not approach the Lord or His will as a mere option. His will is vital; it is imperative; it is weighty. We need to get this straight and approach His throne having settled in our hearts that we will do whatever He says and confirms.

Knowing and doing God's will is paramount to living the abundant life. In the Land of Milk and Honey, we will be joining God in His will, not asking Him to bless our will. It is important that we learn how to discern the will of God in general, but it is especially important when we have a major decision to make.

18. What do the following verses teach about God's will?

❖ Romans 12:2: _____

❖ Philippians 2:13: _____

❖ 1 Thessalonians 4:3:

❖ 1 Thessalonians 5:18: _____

❖ 1 Peter 4:2-3: _____

Several years ago I read *Experiencing God* by Henry T. Blackaby and Claude V. King. It is a wonderful Bible study that I have referenced over the years. I distilled some of its principles and made an outline of how we can know God's will. I started with principles from the book and have added to it over the years.

Here are my tips for discerning God's will:

- ❖ If you're headed nowhere, you're certain to go there!
- ❖ Be single-minded (James 1:5-8 and John 7:17). Settle ahead of time, whatever His will, I will obey.
- ❖ His will often exceeds our expectations.
- ❖ Don't let discouragements knock you off your course.
- ❖ The Lord leads us, He doesn't pressure us.
- ❖ God's will is joining God in what He's doing (John 5:19).
- ❖ Pray. Pour your heart out to the Lord, and ask Him for guidance. Be persistent and specific. (Proverbs 3:5-6)
- ❖ While you wait, be practical. Do what you know to do. Be prepared.
- ❖ And while you wait upon His perfect timing, if you don't know what to do, don't do it!
- ❖ God's timing is perfect. He will get you the information you need in the time you need it.
- ❖ Hearing God's "no" is just as important as hearing His "yes."
- ❖ His timing is perfect. He will get you the information in time for you to do His will.
- ❖ Keep your eyes on the Lord. Psalm 32:8 promises, "I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go. I will counsel you with My eye upon you."
- ❖ When the green light is on, and you know it, go!
- ❖ God is a strategic planner – He is not randomly leading you.

- ❖ His will often includes delightful surprises.
- ❖ Following God’s will does not exempt us from opposition.
- ❖ Praise and pray at all times. Give glory to God for showing you His will!
- ❖ Submit your plan to trusted mentors in the Lord who are further along in their walk with Him in the area that you are seeking guidance. Listen to their counsel.
- ❖ He will lead with three factors. All three should be present.
 1. God’s Word. His will always lines up with the Word of God, both the principles in the Bible, the whole counsel of God and specific verses or passages the Lord has quickened to you (Psalm 119:105).
 2. God will always confirm His will with circumstances if we ask for them. These can be as simple as things like a passing conversation or an article in the newspaper. You will know that it is His confirmation. God is not stingy with confirmation so ask for more to be certain (Judges 6:36-40).
 3. Deep sense of inner peace. Let the peace of God rule in your heart (Colossians 3:15).

If you seek to know God’s will, He will reveal it because it is His will that you know His will!

19. Is there a particular area in your life in which you want to know His will? Consider all of these principles. Pour out your situation to the Lord, seeking His will for your life.

Prepare for Life

Life on the Promised Land side of the Jordan is different. Set free from the sins of the generations gone before us, we are moving into the place of blessing. Yielded to the Lord as the Captain of our lives, we are seeking to and cooperating with His will for our lives, rather than seeking His blessing on our own plans. We are in the position to receive His strategies for our next step. We are boldly taking our first steps in the Land of Milk and Honey, and we are taking time to celebrate our arrival!

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

❖ Scriptures: *Psalm 32:8, 11*

❖ Word or Phrase:

❖ Insight:

❖ Invitation:

Lecture Notes: