

**SESSIONS 4-6**

# **JOSHUA**

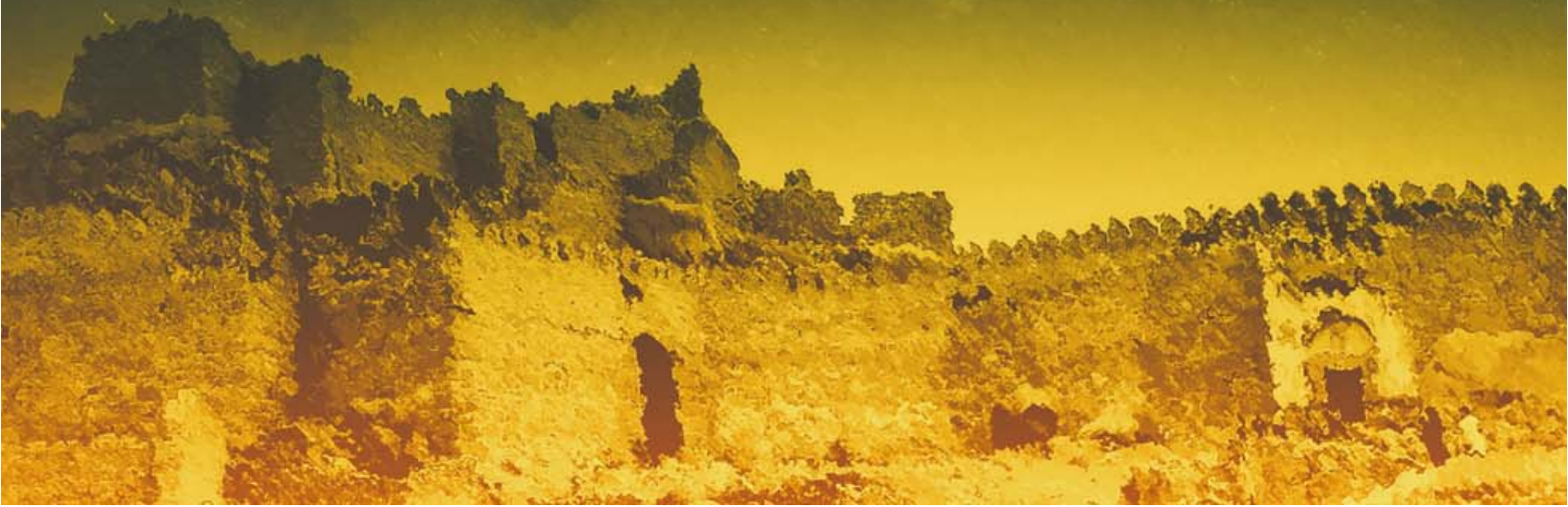
**LIVING A LIFE OF FAITHFULNESS IN HARD TIMES!**



**SESSION 4**

# **JOSHUA**

**LIVING A LIFE OF FAITHFULNESS IN HARD TIMES!**





# JOSHUA

LIVING A LIFE OF FAITHFULNESS IN HARD TIMES!

## SESSION 4

### READ

Take some time in advance to read and consider the Bible study questions and come up with personal examples to encourage discussion.

### WATCH

Make sure everyone can see the screen and the audio is at a comfortable level.

### DISCUSS

We hope those who participate in the study walk away knowing, feeling, and doing differently as a result of amazing discussion.

# JOSHUA

LIVING A LIFE OF FAITHFULNESS IN HARD TIMES!

## SESSION 4

LET THE WALLS FALL DOWN!

### BIG IDEA

The passage from today's study is just one more example of how GOD will confront the enemies of His people. This is how we can respond in faith and know that we have a faithful GOD who fights for us. However, doubt and fear is not the only thing that keeps us from responding in faith. Another very common thing that keeps us from responding with faith is that we are distracted from the truth. There is so much "white noise" that we face and encounter everyday that seeks to drown out the voice of GOD and the influence of the Holy Spirit. Often this can be seeking advice from friends and family, before we seek out GOD through prayer! This leads to us focusing on the wrong things, things of the world and not of GOD. Things like fear, doubt, failure, and defeat...when GOD promises that we have hope and that we will be victorious in Him.

### OPENING

As you open up today, consider this; have you ever had a time in your life when you couldn't see? How did you feel?

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What jumped out at you from the message this week? What led you to really think or even better, to change your actions?

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### WATCH

What jumped out at you from the video?

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### READ

READ 2 Kings 6:8-19

What do we see from v8-10 that starts this whole confrontation?

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We see that Syria and Israel are at war. But there is someone in the Syrian camp that is sending warnings to the king of Israel about Syria's strategy. The king becomes very angry and then asks his servants who is the one that is for the king of Israel. They tell him, "it is Elisha, and he is in Dothan".

*Writer's Note: So, the King of Syria has just discovered a spy operating in his camp. Let's take a moment and examine the King's state of mind.*

JVN

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## SESSION 4

## LET THE WALLS FALL DOWN!

We see from v11 that the King was greatly troubled at this revelation. As a group, discuss other words that you would use to describe the King's possible state of mind or his emotions.

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Angry, betrayed, furious, enraged, confused, etc...

Typically, how does one react when they are feeling the emotions and the state of mind described above?

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Irrationally, vengefully, excessively, etc...

Based on the King's state of mind, we can expect pretty strong action to be taken. What does it imply about the king of Syria when it says that he sent a "great" army with chariots and horses just to capture one man?

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It shows how angry and serious the king was about solving his "Elisha" problem. He was taking

no chances...he sent all he had to capture one man!

Now that we understand that the King of Syria was upset and was taking a very strong stance as he tried to capture and eliminate the spy in his camp, let's look at v15. What is the servant's first response when he sees the enemy?

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He sees the enemy and asks the question, "What shall we do?"

*Writer's Note: LWe can learn alot from this servant's response. Let's take a closer look at what he did, and also what he didn't say. JVN*

How does the response of Elijah's servant indicate that he knows Elijah has been acting as a spy for the King of Israel.

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I can almost see the servant saying, "Ok, we knew this was coming at some point, it is here and we've been caught...what are we going to do?"

How would Elijah's servant have responded to being surrounded by an enemy army if he weren't

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## SESSION 4

## LET THE WALLS FALL DOWN!

Expecting it to happen at some point because he knew that they were acting as spies for Israel.

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If Elijah's servant weren't expecting this to happen at some point, his question would have been more like, "Elijah, what is happening? Why is the entire King's enemy here surrounding us?"

*Writer's Note: I feel strongly that the servant knew a fight was coming at some point, or else, his question to Elijah would have been different. This is important to know because I don't think that the servant was surprised by the army—I think that he just failed to respond in faith. JVN*

Compare the actions of Elijah to his servant, when they found out they were surrounded by an enemy? What is the main difference? What evidence do we have that Elijah's response was more faith-based than his servant's response?

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The main difference is that Elijah's servant sought out human advice first, while Elijah went straight to GOD through prayer.

Why do we tend to seek out human advice before we seek God's counsel through prayer?

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Answers will vary. It is not always the case, but often we seek out human advice because it is immediate and requires no faith or patience.

The servant responded in a way that most of us would...by looking at the circumstances of the problem. As a group, summarize what Elijah tells his servant in v16.

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Elisha reminds his servant who it is that they serve...GOD almighty! That GOD is faithful! He exhorts his servant to look past the problem and focus on the Majesty and Grandeur of the GOD they serve.

Why would the servant have responded like this? What do you think the servant's state of mind and emotions are at this point?

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## SESSION 4

## LET THE WALLS FALL DOWN!

Answers will vary. Anxious, frantic, panicked, etc. This comes from focusing on the problem and not on GOD and His promises!

**Discuss as a group why it is so easy for us to make our issues greater than God and why we usually try to handle them ourselves.**

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Answers will vary.

**Discuss how v14 and v17 work together. Specifically, what picture do they paint for us about our problems -vs- our GOD?**

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It shows that no matter what our enemies throw at us, no matter how angry they are or how determined and strategic they may be; our GOD is more and better. Our GOD transcends the power of our enemy and snatches victory from even the bleakest situation.

**How can we use this passage to equip us as followers of Jesus?**

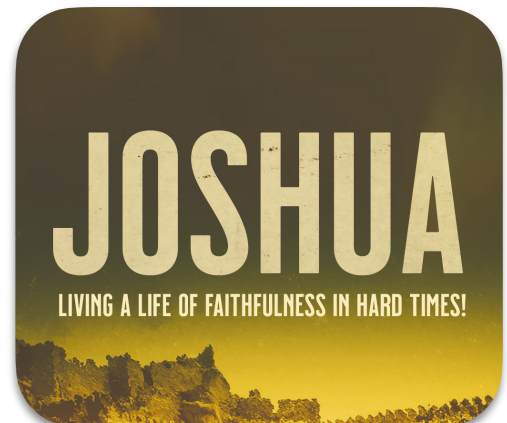
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Answers may vary.

**Closing thought:** This passage is a great example of how we often act when confronted with challenging circumstances. It is also a great example of how we should act in these circumstances. As people of faith, there should not be a difference between how we do act and how we should act--but often there is. We should not be overwhelmed with the scope of our problem. Instead, we should look for God's provision in every difficult situation. God will confront the enemies of His people. Elisha demonstrates for us a faith that dwarfs the issue he is facing. He prays for God to strike the army with blindness and then, without evidence they were actually blind, he walks right up to those sent to capture him and starts a conversation! He had faith that God was greater than the issues that he faced and that God would answer his prayers! This is how we can respond in faith--knowing that we have a faithful God who fights for us.

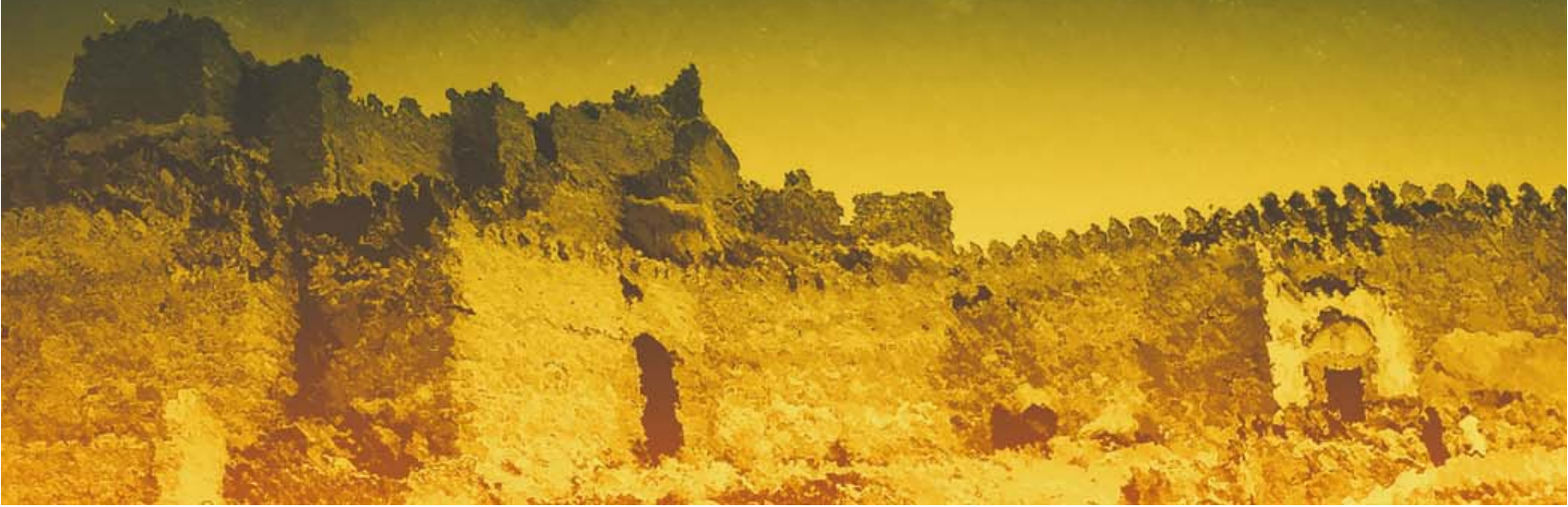




**SESSION 5**

# **JOSHUA**

**LIVING A LIFE OF FAITHFULNESS IN HARD TIMES!**





# JOSHUA

LIVING A LIFE OF FAITHFULNESS IN HARD TIMES!

## SESSION 5

### READ

Take some time in advance to read and consider the Bible study questions and come up with personal examples to encourage discussion.

### WATCH

Make sure everyone can see the screen and the audio is at a comfortable level.

### DISCUSS

We hope those who participate in the study walk away knowing, feeling, and doing differently as a result of amazing discussion.

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LIVING A LIFE OF FAITHFULNESS IN HARD TIMES!

## SESSION 5

## DEALING WITH A DECEPTIVE ENEMY!

### BIG IDEA

The Aramean army that had been ravaging Israel was led into the lion's den: Samaria and the King was excited to exact his revenge on them for their crimes against Israel. But Elisha stops them from killing them all and even feeds them so much food and drink that it is considered a feast! If Elisha had slain all these Aramean men, the war would've only intensified, but This amazing act of clemency ends the war. Don't miss this, you guys; THIS IS THE GOSPEL. In this story, we often want to place ourselves in Elisha's shoes or even the Israelite army, but in reality, we are more like the Aramean army! Before we were believers, we made war with God! We abused His glory and made Him our enemy! By every standard that exists in heaven and earth, we deserved to die, but instead...we were given a feast!

### OPENING

As you open up today, consider this; Have you ever been in a situation where you had the upper hand over someone that you would consider an enemy? What did you wanna do? What did you end up doing?

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### WATCH

What jumped out at you from the message this week? What led you to really think or even better, to change your actions?

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### INTRODUCTION

Last week we saw Elisha's faith during this mighty battle compared to Joshua's faith in the battle of Jericho. In both cases, God came through miraculously in both cases, but the story doesn't end there! What's next?

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Even though God had delivered their enemies into their hands, Elisha still had a choice in how he reacted; would he exact revenge or forgiveness?

### READ

READ 2 Kings 6:19-23

The Israelites won a great victory over the Arameans. How?

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## SESSION 5

## DEALING WITH A DECEPTIVE ENEMY!

Elisha prayed that they would be blinded. A type of blindness fell over them, leading them to a position of complete vulnerability.

**What is the first lesson that we can learn from this passage?**

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The first lesson that we can learn from this passage is not to take our enemy too seriously. We can see how easily God defeats this enemy. And on top of that, we can see that the enemy here is not satan and his angels, just another group of humans that aren't following God.

**It would be easier to live in this sinful world full of sinful people if we could remember what truth?**

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People are not really our enemy! Maybe we see our so-called enemies and give them too much credit, or we don't give God enough credit to deliver us from our enemies, but people are not our enemy!

**What did Jesus tell us about enemies in this world?**

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The truth is God told us that we WILL have enemies in this world, people who cause us grief and oppose us. Even people in our family and church would seek to hurt us.

**What would happen if we could learn to see our enemies the way that Jesus sees them?**

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We would know that they are not indeed our enemy. They are hurting people who hurt people. They are unloved people who don't know how to love. Maybe if we saw them the way Jesus saw them, we could learn to love them anyway.

**What is the second lesson that we can learn from this passage?**

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The second lesson that we can all learn is about spiritual sight. Much has been made about physical blindness in this story, but there is even more to learn about spiritual blindness.

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## SESSION 5

## DEALING WITH A DECEPTIVE ENEMY!

**Picture this: Elisha leads the Aramean army right into the arms of the king of Israel. Then the king asks Elisha if he should put the army to death. How do you respond?**

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Answers will vary but if this was me, I would certainly have because i would've been working in a mindset of fear and anger, but Elisha was neither fearful nor angry.

**Why wasn't Elisha scared when he stood on the mount of Dothan and faced the Aramean army by himself and why wasn't he wasn't angry even as they stood in captivity?**

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Elisha had a spiritual sight that extended beyond what most people could see. Elisha could see the bigger picture, he could see a sovereign God who had all things under His control and because of this, he chose to show grace and mercy.

**Did Elisha's act of mercy work?**

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We see that After Elisha threw a feast and then released the Aramean army, they did not return to raid the Israelites.

**What is interesting about the spiritual blindness in this passage?**

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This same spiritual blindness was present when Jesus came. Everybody had a vision of who the messiah was supposed to be; a ruling, conquering king. So when Jesus came along, washing people's feet and teaching a message of love and forgiveness, so many people missed it

**What is the third lesson that we can learn from this passage?**

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The third lesson we can all learn is about grace.

**What is ironic about Elisha in this passage?**

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The man that the Arameans hated, who was their public enemy number one, actually ended up

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## SESSION 5

## DEALING WITH A DECEPTIVE ENEMY!

being one of their greatest allies. This man who had been the instrument of their downfall would also be the instrument of their salvation.

**When you read this story, whose perspective do we tend to read it from?**

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In this story, we often want to place ourselves in Elisha's shoes or even the Israelite army, but in reality, we are more like the Aramean army!

**How can we use this passage to equip us as followers of Jesus?**

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Answers may vary.

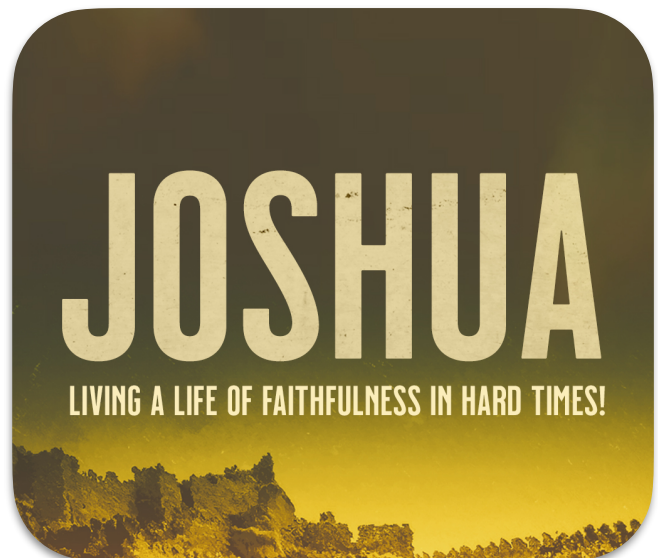
## LET'S PRAY

**Consider the following questions as you pray together as a LifeGroup.**

- How do you treat your enemies?
- Who are some people you know that might even be enemies to you, but you are holding out on forgiveness and grace?
- What do you think they might do if you showed them love and grace?

- What steps are you taking to live in peace with all men?

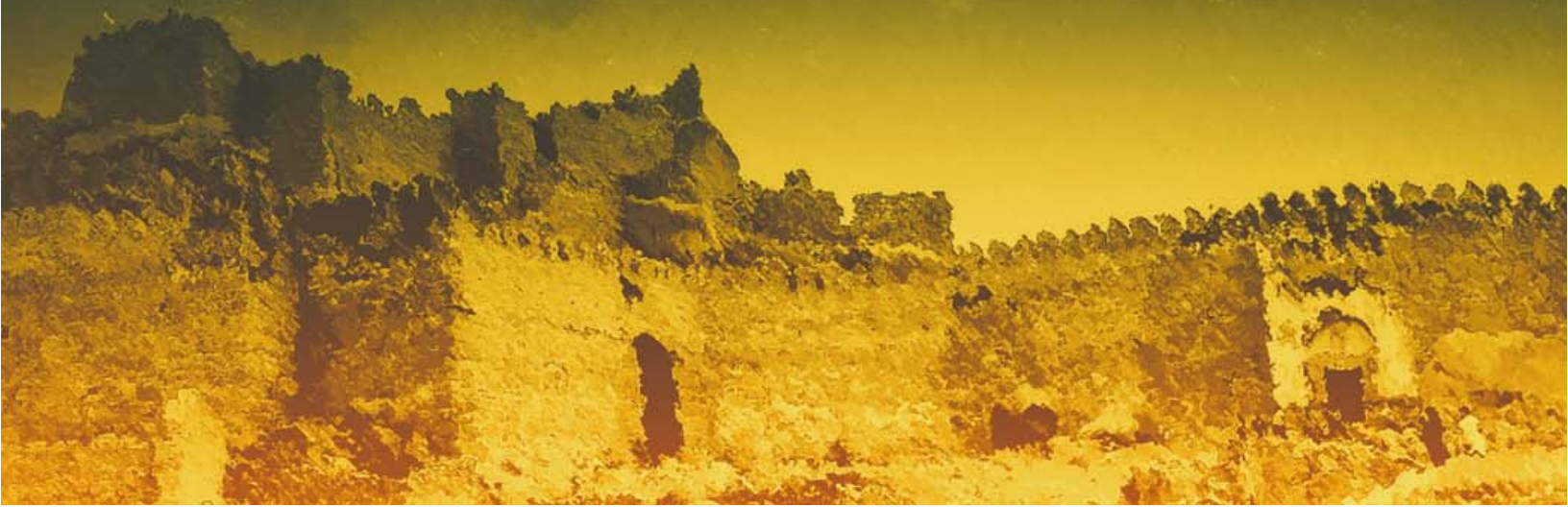
**Closing thought:** Before we were believers, we made war with God! We abused His glory and made Him our enemy! By every standard that exists in heaven and earth, we deserved to die, but instead...we were given a feast! Just like Elisha, Jesus took his enemies and he captured their hearts. Instead of judgment, he gave them grace. Instead of death and destruction, He gave them eternal life in the presence of God! This is amazing grace! And all that the Lord wants in return is for us to offer this same grace to others; this is the ultimate victory! The ultimate victory is not to destroy your enemies but to turn your enemies into friends, and that's what Elisha did with these soldiers and what Jesus did with us.



**SESSION 6**

# **JOSHUA**

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## SESSION 6

### READ

Take some time in advance to read and consider the Bible study questions and come up with personal examples to encourage discussion.

### WATCH

Make sure everyone can see the screen and the audio is at a comfortable level.

### DISCUSS

We hope those who participate in the study walk away knowing, feeling, and doing differently as a result of amazing discussion.

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LIVING A LIFE OF FAITHFULNESS IN HARD TIMES!

## SESSION 6

## A COMMITMENT TO OBEY!

### BIG IDEA

Sunday's sermon, from Joshua 24:14-18 taught us about obedience...specifically, obedience in worship. A verse from Sunday's passage that many of us are familiar with is v15, "choose this day whom you will serve...But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." The message from this verse is what we will continue to examine during today's life group study as we look at Daniel 3. Just like Joshua, Daniel 3 is a story that many of us know and have heard since we were little...the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. This story is a great example of having faith and obedience in our worship.

### OPENING

As you open up today, consider this; What will your actions point others to...Christ and Salvation or to the world do condemnation?

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What jumped out at you from the message this week? What led you to really think or even better, to change your actions?

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What jumped out at you from the video?

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### WATCH

### INTRODUCTION

How does King Nebuchadnezzar initiate this story?

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King Nebuchadnezzar was laying down a law and decree that mandated idolatry. He was essentially setting himself up as a god, and soliciting his own worship. Daniel identifies Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2:38, as being the head of gold. So the King erected a Gold statue of himself and commanded his people, "Worship Me"!

### READ

READ Daniel 3

Why do you think that Nebuchadnezzar have to create laws and mandate that people worship him?

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## A COMMITMENT TO OBEY!

Because unlike GOD...Nebuchadnezzar is not worthy of worship. Therefore he must force people to worship him by making worship of any other god illegal!

**In v14-15, Nebuchadnezzar gives Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego another chance to worship him...a chance to recant and make things "well and good". What is shocking about their response to him in v16?**

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What is shocking is the way that they address the king. They were not talking to a buddy or peer, they were speaking to the sovereign king Babylon. They told the king, not only are you not worthy of worship, you are not even an authority over us... we don't have to answer you in this matter!

**Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego continue with their shocking address of the king in v17. What are they saying here that the king would see as disrespectful?**

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They are answering his question posed at the end of v15..."and who is the god who will deliver you

out of my hands". They answer...our GOD is he who can deliver us.

They are telling the king, "the GOD we worship has greater authority than you...is more powerful and more capable than you". That is not something a king wants to hear from his subordinates.

**V18 may be the most Radical thing that they have said to the king yet...discuss as a group what is being said here in this verse.**

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Shadrach, Meshach, and knew full well the punishment of not bowing to worship the golden image—it was to burn in the furnace. They have also just boldly and with faith said that their GOD is more powerful than the king and that their GOD can save them from that furnace. But in v18 they say, even if our GOD doesn't save us, we choose to BURN! They would rather burn than to deny GOD and commit idolatry. That is obedience in worship!

**Steadfastness in Obedience and Faith often have a way of inciting our opposition. What do you think this conversation did to king Nebuchadnezzar and his emotional state?**

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V19 tells us exactly how the king reacted... “Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with fury, and the expression of his face was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.”

**How can this truth, that our obedience often enrages our opposition, help prepare you to interact in today’s society?**

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Answers will vary.

**Why do you think that the furnace was heated 7 times hotter than normal? What’s the significance?**

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The significance was to demonstrate the true power of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego’s GOD to Nebuchadnezzar. That their GOD really was more powerful and could overcome anything.

**Discuss as a group Nebuchadnezzar’s response in v26 and v28...compared to the end of v15.**

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Answers will vary

**Read all of v28...what was it that stood out to the king? What made him notice the real GOD?**

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The king noticed this: “his servants, who trusted in Him and set aside the king’s command, and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own GOD”!

When all we have to lose is our life, and we willingly put that on the line; people notice the reality of our faith! The result is that GOD is glorified!

**Do you think that because we don’t face death “for having faith in GOD”, that as a culture our faith is often anemic, weak, or puny? Explain why or why not.**

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Answers will vary.

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Do you think that because we don't face death "for having faith in GOD", that as a culture our faith is often anemic, weak, or puny? Explain why or why not.

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Answers will vary.

Do you think that America's "Freedom of Religion" has strengthened or weakened our Faith?

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Answers will vary.

How does this story make you feel about the trivial issues, not life or death issues; that we face, often without faith every day?

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Answers will vary.

How can we use this passage to equip us as followers of Jesus?

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Answers may vary.

*Closing thought: Shadrach Meshach and Abednego trusted in God and set aside the King's Command, and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any God except their own God." The King noticed that three young boys trusted in their God and that made an impact on him. Just a few short verses before, King Nebuchadnezzar is demanding worship of him and his kingdom—now he's praising the one true God because of the committedness and faithfulness of three young boys.*

