

# NOW

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Every lesson has a point—what each participant should walk away knowing, feeling, and doing.

**Main Idea:** Now is the time to take responsibility for our faith and follow God wherever he leads us.

**Head Change:** To *know* we cannot depend on someone else's faith to walk with God.

**Heart Change:** To *feel* confident that God will lead us through any obstacles.

**Life Change:** To *take* our walk of faith seriously and obey God.

## OPEN

**Have you ever been afraid or reluctant to start a new job or embrace a new role (parent, mentor, leadership, etc.)? How did you handle the fear or hesitancy you felt in that situation?**

*This is a New Year!* The beginning of a new journey can feel overwhelming, especially if the journey requires new responsibilities. People can sometimes choose to procrastinate or back out of new opportunities due to fear or laziness. Christians can treat faith the same way. Many of us can become too comfortable with the status quo or doubt God's plan for our lives. We should never allow slothfulness or lack of vision to deter us from our responsibility to grow in Christ.

## NOTES

As you watch the lesson, notice how Pastor Watson answers the following questions.

**How does God's work in the past encourage us to follow him in the present?**

**In what ways is Joshua a good example of how to trust God and take responsibility for our faith?**

**Why do we procrastinate the work God has given us to do?**

## REVIEW

Pastor Watson started the session by highlighting the story of Joshua. After Israel escaped from Egypt and Moses died, Joshua led God's people into the Promised Land. Joshua had to remember to not be afraid because the same God who brought him through many trials on his journey to the Promised Land would still be with him.

**In what ways can you relate to Joshua as he and the Israelites approached the Promised Land?**

**When have you been afraid about starting a new journey? How did you handle those feelings?**

The word "now" can be difficult for us because we often forget what God has done in the past to bring us to that "right now moment." The book of Deuteronomy is filled with evidence that God provided for the Israelites' journey. Pastor Watson said we all have our own Deuteronomy—we can fill a book with the numerous times God has been faithful and brought us through life's challenges. **In what ways can remembering how God helped you in the past comfort you in your present circumstances?**

There are times in our life when we can look back and recognize the "mighty hand of God" was at work in our life story. **What are some examples of when you knew the "mighty right hand of God" was guiding you through trials?**

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Joshua could no longer depend on Moses when it was his turn to lead God's people. It was now time for Joshua to take responsibility for his own relationship with God and embrace the next phase of becoming the leader of Israel. **When have you taken on a mentorship or leadership role? What lessons or challenges did you experience in taking that role?**

Pastor Watson used the example of how he followed his Pastor, Dr. Frederick Sampson at a critical point in his life. Pastor Watson realized that he wouldn't have his own experience with God by depending on his Pastor's faith. **Whose faith have you depended in the past?**

**Why is it vital for you to take responsibility for your faith journey?**

**What is the danger of trying to depend on someone else's experiences with God?**

Pastor Watson ended the lesson by illustrating how his grandson likes to procrastinate by playing before he does his schoolwork. After he gives all his focus and energy to playing, he won't have the will to do the work that matters. **Why do we sometimes treat God's work like Pastor Watson's grandson treats his schoolwork?**

We should be serious about the work God has given us to do. God will one day judge our actions, so we need to prioritize his kingdom work. **What helps you to avoid procrastinating God's work?**

**What has God given you to do now? What steps can you take to obey him today?**

## **SCRIPTURE EXPLORATION**

Pastor Watson used Joshua's life to illustrate the urgency of taking responsibility for your faith and the danger of procrastination. God is watching our lives, and he knows our hearts. One example of this point is Jesus's parable about ten young virgins in Matthew's Gospel.

Read Matthew 25:1–13.

The parable begins with Jesus referencing the kingdom of God. Jesus often taught about the kingdom of God to describe the life God expects his people to live and to expose the hypocrisy of those who thought they already knew what the kingdom was like. **Why do you think Jesus begins by stating that his parable is about the kingdom of God?**

This parable illustrates Jesus's greater point throughout this section of the book: he will one day return to us, and he expects us to be ready. **Whom do the ten virgins represent?**

**Whom does the bridegroom represent in the parable? What did the virgins do while they were waiting?**

**Why did Jesus call five of the virgins foolish and the other five virgins wise? Why do you think the delayed arrival of the bridegroom affected the two sets of virgins differently?**

**In what ways do the five wise virgins illustrate taking responsibility for your faith journey?**

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The bridegroom was always coming, but he did not give a specific time for his arrival. The wise virgins demonstrated their commitment to going with the bridegroom by preparing enough oil to last all night.

However, the foolish virgins had a small amount of oil and were not ready when the bridegroom arrived. Jesus wants his followers to prepare for him, but we often take the same approach as the foolish virgins. **How does the parable of the ten virgins relate to how people approach their walk with God?**

**How does this parable show the danger of procrastinating with God's work?**

**In what ways does the foolish virgins' lack of oil relate to Pastor Watson's point about depending on someone else's faith experiences?**

The parable tells us that the women who were not ready did not make it to the wedding banquet. The five foolish virgins acted like they wanted to be with the bridegroom, but their actions showed they were not as committed to following the bridegroom as they professed.

**What can we learn from the five foolish virgins? In what ways does this parable encourage you to take responsibility for your own faith journey?**

**What could it look like for you to take ownership of your faith this week?**

## **FINAL WORD**

God has you where you are for a reason, and he wants you to trust him. If we trust God, we must be ready to adapt to life's changes and embrace where God wants to take us. We cannot procrastinate and expect God to bless our half-hearted efforts. The time is now to follow God, and if you are afraid, he is right there to hold you up and lead you forward.

Consider these questions this week: What in your life is keeping you from boldly walking in God's purpose for you? Have you taken responsibility for your growth as a Christian? Do you have any fears that God is trying to help you overcome? Is there something or someone distracting you from following God?

## **DEEPER WALK**

**Read:** Reflect on God's purposes and be encouraged to follow him for yourself by reading Joshua 1:1–9 and Deuteronomy 31:1–8.

**Pray:** Pray that God will give you the boldness to take a step of faith and trust him with your life. Pray for the gospel to be central to your understanding of following God—your obedience cannot earn God's love. He already loves you.

**Act:** Trust God's Word and the counsel of his people and do something new to serve God. Consider finding a way to love someone in your church community or local neighborhood. Commit to following God and obeying his Word, wherever he leads you.

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**Listen:** Take the time to listen to trusted voices within and outside your community (church members, pastors, podcast hosts, articles, etc.) that can encourage you to take a step of faith and walk boldly in God's purpose for your life.