

Main Idea: Christ-followers experience victory not by strength or strategy, but by trust-filled obedience to the presence and promises of God.

Previously – The Pentateuch (Creation to the Exodus)

As you recall, the Pentateuch covers creation to the great exodus from Egypt. Following 400 years of bondage, God's fledgling nation is free! We left off in Numbers where Israel has been wandering in circles for 40 years. The Book of Numbers puts human nature on full display. God provides. The people complain. God leads. The people resist.

This Time Will Be Different

Numbers is the book of disobedience and wandering. Joshua is the book of obedience and conquest. This time things will be different. The reason for Israel's success is not generational—it's spiritual. The first generation did not trust God. The second generation did. Before God gave them military victory, He tested their spiritual obedience.

Test #1 – The Jordan River (Joshua 3-4)

The first obstacle and therefore a reason to doubt God was the Jordan River. At this time of year, it was at flood stage (see *Joshua 3:15*). This is a nation-stopping obstacle. Before they face enemies, God shows them His power. The priests step into the water. The river stops flowing. They cross over on dry ground. Sound familiar? God wants them to remember: *The same God who delivered you from Egypt will bring you into the land.*

Test #2 – Circumcision (Joshua 5)

Now comes the most uncomfortable test of all. Before the first battle...Before the first sword is drawn...God says: "Circumcise the Israelites again." Circumcision was an outward sign that went all the way back to Abraham. It marked them as set apart. Circumcision didn't make them God's people. It reminded them whose people they already were.

Test #3 – Jericho (Joshua 6)

Jericho is the ultimate Lower Story obstacle. It's walled, fortified, impenetrable. The plan makes no military sense: March. Be quiet. Blow trumpets. Shout. No ladders. No battering rams. Why? Because God will not share His glory. When the walls fall, no one will confuse obedience with human genius.

Takeaway

The conquest recorded in the book of Joshua is epic! The battles were block-busters but the process is relatively simple. It's all about faith and obedience. Remember, the battles that matter most are won before the fighting begins—when we trust Him enough to obey.

Family Night – Read Joshua 3:1 – 4:7

- **Elementary School:** Ask, "What did God do to help His people cross the Jordan River? Who walked in first? Why did they take 12 stones from the riverbed? What would the stones say to future children?"
- **Middle / High School:** Ask, "How should we respond to God when we face an impossible obstacle? What looks like an impossible obstacle to you right now? Why is simple obedience so important?"

Prayer: "Father, we want to have faith like Joshua. We want to be obedient to You and Your plan for us. Amen"

Velocity (Middle and High School Students)

Velocity: Meet this Wednesday, Jan. 14 at 6:30pm.
Winterblast – January 16-19.

Gravity: Starts back on Jan. 25th.

Today's Songs

Battle Belongs.....Phil Wickham
Hymn of Heaven.....Phil Wickham
How Good It Is.....Chris Tomlin

"The Story" New Series

We start Chapter 7 today. Books are \$5 in the lobby.

Mother/Son Basketball

Mothers and sons are invited to a GSU Basketball game on January 24th. Cost is \$25 per couple or \$35 if you have more than one child. You can sign up online **ONLY** until January 18th.

Father/Daughter Valentine Dance

The dance is February 6th at Pine Needle Plantation. Cost is \$35 per family. Please register online before February 1st so that we can provide an accurate headcount for the caterer.