

JUDGES AND KINGS

CROSSING THE JORDAN RIVER

FALL

Lesson 11

NOVEMBER 16, 2025

LESSON TEXT

Joshua 1–6

FOCUS VERSES

Joshua 1:5–7

⁵There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

⁶Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them.

⁷Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.

TRUTH ABOUT COVENANT

God walks in covenant with those who reverently fear Him.

MY RESPONSE TO COVENANT

I will seek God's mercy for my life.

COVENANT CONTEXT

After our study in the Book of Numbers, we move past Deuteronomy (Moses' final instructions on covenant faithfulness) into the section of the Bible known as the Historical Books. Beginning with the Book of Joshua, they record the children of Israel's continued pursuit of the Promised Land. Today's study of God's mercy to a Gentile named Rahab shows His willingness to extend His covenant beyond the Jews.

TEACHING OUTLINE

Icebreaker: What is a life hack you can share to help others?

Teacher Tip: Connect the group's answers to set up the story of God extending His covenant to someone outside of Israel.

Lesson Connection: Share the Lesson Connection.

I. GOD’S PROMISES TO JOSHUA AND ISRAEL

A. The Covenant to a New Generation (I)

B. Israel’s Agreement

C. I will respond to God’s covenant with a commitment to obey.

DISCUSS: *No matter your spiritual heritage, how can you ensure you pass along God’s principles to the next generation?*

II. RAHAB ENTERS COVENANT

A. Rahab in Jericho

DISCUSS: *When reading this story, how do you feel knowing God wanted to show grace to Rahab?*

B. A Covenant with Rahab

DISCUSS: *How does the color scarlet help foreshadow the new covenant God would one day make with everyone, not just the Jews?*

C. God will extend His covenant to anyone who seeks relationship with Him.

III. MARCHING INTO VICTORY

DISCUSS: *If you were an Israelite soldier, how do you think you would have responded to God’s battle plan against Jericho?*

A. Rededicated to Covenant

B. Jericho’s Walls Fell (V)

C. I will follow God’s battle plan, which may defy human logic and reason.

DISCUSS: *Think of a time when God’s plan did not seem to make sense. How did you respond? How did God come through?*

Internalizing the Message

PRAYER FOCUS

Lead the group in prayer and consider the following topics of focus:

- For God to help us trust in Him even when things do not make sense
- For God to help us to be obedient to Him

LESSON CONNECTION

A man walked into a bookstore and asked the clerk to direct him to the self-help books. The clerk replied, “I could, but that would defeat the purpose, now wouldn’t it?” Many people go to bookstores, search the library, or shop online for self-help books. The genre is as old as ancient Egypt. Throughout time, authors have written self-help books, and these types of documents remain a fixture in the daily lives of many people.

Self-help books can provide advice on weight loss, dating relationships, the path to riches, and numerous other topics. Some series like Chicken Soup for the Soul inspire readers with stories of other people’s successes. These testimonials play on the idea: “If I can do it, anyone can do it.” Despite all the claims, readers may wonder whether self-help authors are bona fide experts or snake oil salesmen whose only true success is convincing a large number

of people to buy their books. Of course, success depends on whether readers follow the advice given.

Statistics may reveal the lack of true help in the self-help genre. Around 80 percent of people who buy self-help books have bought other personal improvement literature, raising the question whether they actually improve or they just want to. Despite their seemingly profound desire to change, many readers may only read the first twenty pages of a book; others may simply leave the manual on the shelf to collect dust. Nevertheless, purchasing one of these books can improve someone's outlook on life. Perhaps self-help books provide a temporary feeling of euphoria while failing to deliver on long-term prosperity. Different self-help books have achieved fame. In 1859, *Samuel Smiles' Self-Help* had the distinction of outselling numerous books, including *Darwin's Origin of the Species*. The only book that outpaced it to claim the top spot was the Bible (publishingperspectives.com).

While self-help books may have some value, the Bible serves as the premiere text for improving an individual's life. The Book of Proverbs offers tried-and-true wisdom to apply in our lives. The narratives of the Bible show us the faithfulness of God and provide both inspiring and cautionary tales of numerous individuals. Love stories like Ruth and Boaz or the Song of Solomon reveal the power of romantic love and the beauty of living in covenant relationship.

The Bible covers all the major subjects present in the self-help section, yet the Bible is so much more than a self-help book. The Bible not only provides a blueprint for this life but also a way to inherit eternal life. Self-help books typically focus on this life only and may lead readers down the wrong path by encouraging them to seek riches when they should be seeking the kingdom of God.

Nevertheless, the Bible and self-help books have something in common: following the plan makes all the difference. Those who fail to obey the truths of the Bible will not improve. However, those who embrace the words of life and truth in the Word of God will find prosperity and success far greater than any self-help book can ever offer.

BIBLE LESSON

I. GOD'S PROMISES TO JOSHUA AND ISRAEL

When the Almighty makes a promise, He extends His blessings to future generations. While some people fearfully state, "We are just one generation away from losing out with God," others boldly proclaim, "May the next generation do even greater things than my generation." One generation should not simply pass the baton to their children; they should give them a running start to maintain momentum and create enthusiasm.

A. The Covenant to a New Generation

Part of God's promise was giving Israel an abundant, beautiful land they could call home. Joshua had observed that land of plenty with his own eyes. While his generation failed to appreciate his vision, the next generation would wholeheartedly buy into the promises of God. By installing Joshua as Moses' successor to lead Israel's new generation, God renewed His covenant promises to the descendants of those who had died in the wilderness, inviting the new generation into the same covenant with all its blessings and curses.

Hebrews 4:12 describes the Word of God as a two-edged sword. This sword could provide immeasurable blessings

if the Israelites allowed the Lord to fight for them. However, defying the Almighty would cause them to reap the edge of the sword in a curse. That is not the result of chance; it is the result of choice. The Word of God provides every generation the opportunity to choose. Although God guarantees He will remain steadfast in His covenant, He also requires obedience. Thankfully, the generation Joshua led had the correct mindset.

B. Israel's Agreement

To inherit the promises, Israel agreed to follow the covenant and their leader Joshua. God once again summed up the immense blessings that awaited the Israelites who obeyed Him: "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success" (Joshua 1:8). This verse hearkens back to Deuteronomy 6:4–9 when God commanded the Israelites to steadfastly keep the Book of the Law in their mouths by repeating the *Shema*: "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD." They were to consistently meditate on the oneness of God and teach this principle to their children.

Understanding the oneness of God would greatly enrich Israel. Joshua 1:8 declares that the obedient Israelites would make their way prosperous and have good success by meditating on the Book of the Law. Although many books promise to improve people's outlooks and increase their financial portfolio, only one book can truly make all the difference and set people's hearts on seeking the right things in life: God's Word.

C. I will respond to God's covenant with a commitment to obey.

Like the Israelites, we must effectively respond to God's covenant. Some of our parents and grandparents may have faithfully followed the plan of salvation, others may have backslid, and still others may have never heeded the gospel. No matter our situation, we must make our own personal commitment to the covenant invitation the Lord extends to us.

We must affirm our obedience to the Word of God—not merely with what we say, but with our hearts and minds fully devoted to the Lord. Obedience preserves the covenant. Without obedience, our relationship with the Lord suffers. Failing to obey will make us more like the faithless generation who died in the wilderness than their faithful offspring who conquered, inherited, and enjoyed the Promised Land.

***DISCUSS:** No matter your spiritual heritage, how can you ensure you pass along God's principles to the next generation?*

II. RAHAB ENTERS COVENANT

Covenants often have an exclusionary nature. Not everyone receives an invitation to a covenant, just like many people may apply for a job, but only a select few will receive and accept an offer. Although many have criticized God's church for not being inclusive, the reality is God has always intended to bring more people into His covenant. These individuals, however, must be willing to follow the guidelines established in the covenant. In the end, people exclude themselves from the plan and purpose of God rather than the Lord denying them access to His blessings.

Rahab seemed to be excluded from this beautiful covenant with God. Her people in Jericho wanted to wait out the

Israelites in the hope they would leave. In contrast, Rahab saw a great opportunity once she met two Israelite spies. As a prostitute, Rahab had met many men in her life. Her relationships with them were often shallow and sinful. But Rahab desired something more than temporary, unfulfilling relationships. Like everyone, Rahab longed to be in relationship with God and God longed to be in relationship with Rahab.

A. Rahab in Jericho

As the two Hebrew spies scoped out the land, they discovered Rahab, who sought a place among God's people. In Jericho, Rahab's reputation was not special. Men made lewd remarks about her. Married women despised her. Even if Rahab changed her life and lifestyle, she could not have easily repaired her reputation.

She seemed doomed. If the Israelites waged war against Jericho and won, she would surely die. If the Israelites left or lost, she would resume her hopeless life. But as grace would have it, Rahab found hope even amid fear. The testimony of the Israelite victory over the Egyptians and a providential meeting with two Israelite spies opened the door for the Lord to extend His covenant invitation to Rahab of Jericho.

***DISCUSS:** When reading this story, how do you feel knowing God wanted to show grace to Rahab?*

B. A Covenant with Rahab

Joshua learned a lesson after ten spies returned with a slanderous recon report the first time they spied out the Promised Land. Perhaps that is why he only commissioned two spies into Jericho. He deliberately chose two who would offer a realistic report motivated by accuracy and faith. They proved themselves to be markedly different from the ten spies in Joshua and Caleb's generation.

At first, Rahab might have assumed they were just like all other men, but they were different. They just needed shelter from the guards in Jericho who were chasing them. She helped them by not selling them out to the king. If the guards discovered she was harboring Hebrew spies, her life may have been in danger. Yet, Rahab refused to be shaken or stirred by the situation, allowing her to create a strong bond—a bond that would save her and her family. Rahab assisted the spies' escape by letting them down via a scarlet rope. She had saved their lives, and they were willing to save hers and her family. They instructed her to let down that same scarlet rope out her window when Israel invaded Jericho. And when the Israelite soldiers saw that scarlet rope, they would make sure no harm came to anyone inside that house.

This scarlet rope represented inclusivity. The spies entered a covenant with Rahab, extending God's mercy outside the Israelite community. The amazing testimony that preceded the Israelites caused Rahab to risk her life to aid the spies. She remembered hearing of God's miracle at the Red Sea even though the previous generation of Israelites had seemingly forgotten it. Rahab sought God's mercy, and her faith wrote her into the story of Jesus' own lineage. Rahab, the harlot of Jericho, created a legacy that exceeded her wildest dreams.

***DISCUSS:** How does the color scarlet help foreshadow the new covenant God would one day make with everyone, not just the Jews?*

C. God will extend His covenant to anyone who seeks relationship with Him.

Perhaps you feel like Rahab, excluded from the plan of God because of sin. Or maybe you don't think you have the right family tree or connections to commune with God. We should replace our excuses with the powerful testimonies of others. If God extended His covenant to them, He will extend the same opportunity to us.

When we enter into a relationship with God, we join a group known as the church that is both exclusive and inclusive. The church is exclusive because God's covenant demands obedience to the plan of salvation in Acts 2:38. The church is inclusive because the promise is to anyone who will follow Jesus and take up the cross (Mark 8:34; Acts 2:39).

III. MARCHING INTO VICTORY

The two spies returned safely to Joshua excited for what they had heard in Jericho. They reported: "And they said unto Joshua, Truly the Lord hath delivered into our hands all the land; for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us" (Joshua 2:24). Despite Jericho's formidable walls, its citizens' hearts were failing them for fear. The Israelites prepared to take Jericho. The Lord had commissioned a specific, albeit unusual, plan for victory. Israel would march around the city in silence for six days. On the last day, the Lord commanded them to march around the city seven times. On the seventh time, they were to shout with a great shout. The war cry would bring victory, God would fell the walls, and they would capture the city.

The strategy must have seemed a bit absurd. Perhaps the Lord commanded His people to stay silent during their march so they did not sow doubt into others' minds. Speaking doubt had failed for Israel over forty years ago. Some people refer to walking the walk and talking the talk. The Israelites walked the walk, but they needed to leave the talking to God until He commanded them to shout for victory.

***DISCUSS:** If you were an Israelite soldier, how do you think you would have responded to God's battle plan against Jericho?*

A. Rededicated to Covenant

Before Israel could wage war with Jericho, they had to cross the flooded Jordan River. The Jordan may have reminded them of the covenant God had made with Moses. Their forefathers stood staring at the Red Sea, but God parted those waters. Much like their forefathers, Joshua and his generation stood staring at the raging Jordan River which had overflowed its banks. But God was about to work a miracle to prove He was with Joshua just as He was with Moses. The Lord parted the waters of the Jordan River, and Israel once again marched through the water on their way toward the Promised Land.

B. Jericho's Walls Fell

After they had marched for six days and seven times on the seventh, the impossible happened: the Lord felled the tall, thick walls of Jericho. Scholars describe the walls as so wide that people in Jericho lived in houses built into the walls. To prevent invaders from breaching, the people of Jericho could place all kinds of items inside the walls. Jericho was prepared, but the Lord thwarted every one of their strategic advantages because the Israelites obeyed.

C. I will follow God's battle plan, which may defy human logic and reason.

On many occasions, God will call on us to follow a specific, divinely orchestrated plan that at first glance may not seem to make much sense. In these instances, we need to rely on God, not on us. He has given us spiritual senses to have our ears open to hear the Word of God. We need to open our eyes and read the promises in Scripture that encourage obedience. We need to touch Heaven with our prayers. We need to be ready to receive the promise so we will taste and see that the Lord is good.

DISCUSS: *Think of a time when God's plan did not seem to make sense. How did you respond? How did God come through?*

Teacher Option: *Tell the story below or share one of your own to illustrate the power of God's great mercy.*

INTERNALIZING THE MESSAGE

We may hear people say, "It's a dirty job, but someone's got to do it." Sewer diving sounds like one of the most horrific jobs in the history of humanity. Some, however, prefer to spend their time, not by jumping into real sewers but by wading through online "sewers." Matt Earle made a great deal of money by fixing the reputations of people on the internet. He started out in marketing working for a bank in Bermuda. Pleased with his abilities, corporations tasked him with improving their reputations online.

These clients not only desired an emphasis on good news, but they also hoped to quell the negative publicity that arises from consumer complaints, harassment cases, and other problems. To take advantage of this emerging field, Matt founded Reputation.ca. When companies make a mistake, Matt provides them with a digital makeover.

Gone are the days when celebrities or companies simply hired a publicist or a good public relations firm to change things because the online world includes news and comments from a variety of sources. Image fixing has turned into a multi-million-dollar industry. With the price tag running from \$10,000 to \$20,000 for a good scrubbing, these fixers are striking it rich. Some of the money goes to paying people to remove negative content.

If Rahab the harlot lived today, she might have wanted to hire someone to fix her image. No matter what she did, the stigma of her profession as a prostitute would seemingly always haunt her. Then one day she met two spies who could introduce her to God who would change her reputation forever. Nothing can change someone's reputation like being in the bloodline of Jesus Christ. Yes the power of the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin, but also think about the power of the bloodline of Jesus that improved Rahab's reputation. The precious blood of Jesus can change anyone's life and reputation for the better.

Many of us might want to change our reputation after committing a sin or making an ill-advised post online. No matter what we have done, we must seek God's mercy for our lives. Some might think it seems absurd that Jesus could change our reputation forever, so we must remember the story of Rahab. And to add something else that sounds irrational to this seemingly absurd idea, we must realize