

CORE COMPETENCIES

Core Beliefs

- Trinity
- Salvation by Grace
- Authority of Bible
- Personal God
- Identity in Christ
- Church
- Humanity
- Compassion
- Eternity
- Stewardship

Core Practices

- Worship
- Prayer
- Bible Study
- Single-Mindedness
- Biblical Community
- Spiritual Gifts
- Giving Away My Time
- Giving Away My Money
- Giving Away My Faith
- Giving Away My Life

Core Virtues

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Patience
- Kindness/Goodness
- Faithfulness

**“I am faithful to fulfill
God’s will for my life.”**

- Gentleness
- Self-Control
- Hope
- Humility

As we look into the movement of God in Joshua 3 this week, we see a couple of things that are really important. One is the need to move forward in obedience—see how that unfolds in the text in very specific ways. And the other is the need for memorials. We often think of them as ways to remember people who have died, but there is much more to them, or can be. There are lots of ways to be reminded of the work of God in our lives—it can be a pile of rocks, a rubber band on our wrists, a plaque on a wall, or any number of things. Let me encourage you this week to let God remind you of His faithfulness and show you how to “memorialize” that. I trust that your faith will continue to be strengthened as you follow Him!

Remembering,

Richard Gotthardt, Pastor of Spiritual Formation

If you are new to using the Engage for our Joshua series...

Included in this week’s *Engage* is an Appendix to our series in Joshua. The Appendix contains three items that have been included in previous lessons, and are necessary for understanding and completing the daily assignments in the *Engage*. The first part is a brief introduction to using the *Engage* study guide and contains some basic instructions, techniques, and suggested tools. Please read through this before beginning your study time! Secondly is a Reading Plan for the entire book of Joshua, since we will only be looking in depth at thirteen of the twenty-four chapters. Lastly is a map entitled “Occupying the Land.”

Review from last week’s study in Joshua 2

Last week we looked in depth at God’s intervention in the life of Rahab. We saw how God used her acts of faith not only to spare her life, and the lives of her family, but to encourage the faithful obedience of the children of Israel. Her words that “the LORD has given this land to you” and “all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you,” were the words of exhortation that the spies related to Joshua upon their return from Jericho.

Reading Plan Assignment for this week: Joshua 4 and 5

Day 1 (Joshua 3 and 4)

As with every day that we go to God’s Word, begin your time in prayer. Ask Him to reveal His truth to your mind and your heart and to transform your life by that truth.

Read through the chapters listed above without doing any marking of your text, simply noting the people and events involved in this passage. Then note your first impressions of the events that are recorded here.

Read once more through the third and fourth chapter of Joshua marking every reference to geographical locations. One easy way to mark these references is simply to underline them with a brown or green colored pencil. Mark the references to the Jordan River in a distinctive way from the other geographic expressions, as this is a key phrase to this section of the book. The geography is an important part of this study; therefore, as you mark the text, consult the map, "Occupying the Land," and locate the various sites referred to.

Various commentaries estimate the number of men, women and children to be approximately 2 million at this time, and the text clearly indicates that the Jordan River is at flood stage. If you were one of the children of Israel experiencing this for yourself, what might you be thinking and feeling during these three days that you are camped by the mighty Jordan River? What might be some of your fears?

Day 2 (Joshua 3 and 4)

Pray first!

Today we will read through our main text several times, marking key words each time. Remember to actually read the text, not just look for certain words! The marking of these words aids your study in at least three ways: 1) it forces you to read the passage multiple times, 2) it slows down your reading so you can more carefully observe the details, and 3) because you have more carefully observed the details, it helps you to more accurately interpret the meaning of the passage within the context. Mark the following key words (including synonyms and pronouns) as you have in the previous lessons and chapters.

- *LORD (God)*
- *Joshua*
- *Command*
- *any expressions of time (including words such as then or after)*

Mark with distinctive colors or symbols the following words in Joshua three and four (these are new key words, so remember to record these on your personal bookmark with the marking of your choice).

- *cross (crossed)*
- *ark (ark of the Covenant)*

The ark of the Covenant (ark of the LORD, ark of the Testimony) plays a central role in these chapters. We need to understand that role fully. Make a list on a separate sheet of paper of the basic things you learned from marking the references to the ark.

In order to appreciate what the ark of the covenant represents, read Exodus 25:10-22 and add to your list what you observe regarding the ark. Be sure to especially note the contents and purpose of the ark (verses 16, 21, and 22.)

Now taking into consideration all that you have learned about the ark, why do you think God instructed that the ark was to lead the people?

Day 3 - (Joshua 3 and 4)

Pray first. Then read through the chapters again.

In Joshua 1:5, God had told Joshua that He would be with him just as He had been with Moses. He promised not to fail or forsake Joshua. He commanded Joshua to be strong and courageous.

When we began our study on the book of Joshua, we also began two lists. The first entitled **God's Character and His Ways** and the second entitled **Joshua**, contains insights about his character and experiences. If this is your first week, you may want to go back and mark and list what you see about Joshua and the LORD from the first two chapters of Joshua, or you may begin your lists with chapters three and four.

Use the marking that you did yesterday to help you to observe the details appropriate to these two lists. On your list about God, be sure to include the ways that He is referred to in these chapters.

Now allow God to apply to your life the truth that He has revealed to you. As you reflect on the truths about God—about what He does, and why—how does that have an effect on you? How does it strengthen your faith and give you courage for walking in obedience to His commands?

From Joshua's example as a leader, what principles can you personally apply to your life?

Day 4 - (Joshua 3 and 4)

Pray first!

In Joshua 3:12, God tells Joshua to choose one man from each of the twelve tribes of Israel, and in chapter four, He reveals what these men are to do and why. Go back and read carefully through chapter four and record as much as you can, regarding this assignment. Use the 5W's and an H to help you glean the details (*who, what, when, where, why, how.*)

As we read through the Word of God, we find God's people setting up various markers which act as memorials of a significant act or work of God. These memorials often act as markers for their lives, their families, future generations and even the entire nation. This is a practice that is possible and profitable in our lives as well.

Ask God to show you what meaningful memorials He would direct you to set up for yourself or your family. Memorials that stand as reminders to times God has gone before you or has acted mightily on your behalf. These things matter...remember them! Reflect and remember ways that God has directed, impacted or blessed you. Allow these to be markers that cause you to reverence the LORD your God. Use the space below to list anything that comes to mind, so that you can begin to mark God's dealings in your life.

Day 5

Pray first!

Read through chapters three and four one more time and record in your Bible how you would title or summarize each chapter from your personal observations this week. This practice can be an invaluable tool for remembering what is contained in the various chapters of the book.

Read the following quotation and reflect on its connection to the truths that God has shown to you this week.

S. I. McMillen, in his book *None of These Diseases*, tells a story of a young woman who wanted to go to college, but her heart sank when she read the question on the application blank that asked, "Are you a leader?" Being both honest and conscientious, she wrote, "No," and returned the application, expecting the worst. To her surprise, she received this letter from the college:

"Dear Applicant: A study of the application forms reveals that this year our college will have 1,452 new leaders. We are accepting you because we feel it is imperative that they have at least one follower."¹

Today we will look at the examples we see regarding the core virtue of **Faithfulness** from this passage of God's Word. Our creed for this virtue states, "*I am faithful to fulfill God's will for my life.*"

As you reflect on the individuals (Joshua, the priests, the men chosen to represent their tribe, all the men, women and children of the nation) who participated in the events of Joshua three and four, each of them individually and collectively were called on to exhibit faithfulness. They each had to step out in faith, to follow the commands and the very presence of the LORD. God had a place He wanted to lead them, a possession He wanted to give them, and in the process to reveal to each of them His character and His ways, to build their faith, and to also reveal Himself to a watching world.

Look carefully at Joshua 3:3-5 and answer these questions for your own life application.

- What are you to be watching and giving your attention to?
- What did the ark represent?
- Where are these things in your life?
- When you see God moving, what are you to do?
- When God leads you in ways that you have never been before, what do you need to do in order to follow?
- If you want God to do amazing things around you, what do you need to do?

The word "consecrate" means to dedicate or set aside as devoted to God's use. What is necessary in your life, for you to "consecrate yourself"?

Allow God the time necessary to speak His truth to your heart and life in these matters. Are there any "rivers at flood stage" in your life, "places" (they don't have to be geographical) that you know God wants to lead you, but you have never been this way before...and are there things you fear and following Him would require resources that you don't have? Are you willing to keep your eyes on His presence and His commands at all times? Will you dedicate yourself, set yourself aside as wholly devoted to His use and His will? Perhaps He would like you to reflect on those "memorials" from the past in order to give you the courage to go forward.

¹Galaxie Software. (2002; 2002). *10,000 Sermon Illustrations*. Biblical Studies Press.

Go now to your Heavenly Father, the One who has promised never to fail or forsake you, the One who has provided everything you need for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:2-12). Lay your fears at His feet and keeping your eyes on the Author and Perfecter of your faith (Hebrews 12:1-3), commit to taking that first step of faith today.

Review the passages you have been committing to memory (Joshua 1:6-11 and Joshua 2:11). Begin today to memorize Joshua 3:3-5. Remember that as we store God's Word in our minds and our hearts, we are doing that which is necessary to be strong and courageous, prosperous, and successful.

Joshua in Context

Joshua 3:1-4:24

- ◆ Now that Joshua has spied out Canaan with the help of Rahab (Chapter 2), the Israelites are ready to move in and take the land. This section (3:1-5:1) is the record of what, in some senses, is the final step in the Exodus. The people of Israel had spent 40 years in the wilderness. This is the long-awaited step into the land God had promised to their forefather Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3).
- ◆ Careful analysis of this passage (3:1-4:24) gives much evidence that the Book of Joshua is a compilation of independent testimonies to the events. Notice how the following events are repeated:
 - The three days' wait of 1:11 occurs twice (2:22; 3:2)
 - Crossing the river (3:16b; 4:10);
 - The priests leaving the river (4:11, 18);
 - The selection of men to carry the stones (3:12; 4:2);
 - The command to teach the children (4:6-7; 4:21-24).²

Such duplications do not necessarily mean that we cannot trust our Bible, or more specifically the book of Joshua. Nor does it mean that these events did not actually take place. What they do tell us is that a compiler of some sort brought together different strands of Israelite history and tradition to compose the book. This does not have to affect or conflict with our view of the infallibility and inerrancy of Scripture.

- ◆ It is interesting to note that this major section of the book, which encompasses all of Chapters 3 and 4, also contains 5:1. Remember that the chapter and verse numbers were later insertions by scribes. With this in mind, see how 3:10 lists the nations that inhabit this land. This list is put in to be impressive as the opposing forces to Israel and her God. But after the event, 5:1 tells about the reaction of some of these kings when they heard of the crossing.
- ◆ This historical moment of the people being led across the Jordan River by the divine presence would be looked back by future generations. It was a key moment in the history of Israel. The people were obedient and God showed favor in leading them across by His presence.
- ◆ The Ark first appears in verse 3. It is referred to in this passage by three names.
 - The first is the "ark of the covenant" (3:3). This is the primary name it is referred to in Deuteronomy. It brings out the fact that God had promised to dwell with Israel as part of a covenant.
 - Second, is the "ark of the testimony" (4:16). This reminds us that the testimony or law was placed in the ark.
 - Finally, the ark is called the "ark of Yahweh" (3:13). This title is found frequently in 1 Samuel 4-6.

²Butler, T. C. (2002). *Vol. 7: Word Biblical Commentary : Joshua*. Word Biblical Commentary (Page 41). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

Teachability

Your desire and commitment to get into the Word of God places you into more **intensive warfare** with the enemy of God. Did you know that every piece of the Christian's armor is related to the Word of God? Not only that, but our only offensive weapon is the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. The enemy desires that our sword be dull and ineffective, so he will no doubt oppose your commitment to and practice of diligent study. So be prepared—expect the enemy to try to frustrate or discourage you.

Each day, before you begin the assignment, it is very important to **begin your time of study with prayer**. As we seek to handle the Word of God accurately, we must recognize that the Bible is divinely inspired. The words we are reading are truth—given to us by God that we might know Him and His ways.

For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him. Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 2:10-11).

So, we go to God first, we ask Him to reveal His truth, and to lead and guide our minds and hearts into all truth. If we ask, we can expect that He will honor our efforts by revealing Himself and by transforming our lives! And our lives will then reflect the truth of 2 Timothy 2 and 3, which command us to diligently study God's Word and to handle it accurately. And we will be "taught, reprov'd, corrected, and trained in righteousness, so that we will be adequate and equipped for every good work." If we are faithful, He will be faithful!

Technique

One of the things I would like to encourage you to do as you read each week is to train yourself to "interrogate the text." By that I mean: Ask yourself the "5 W's and an H": (See below) This will help you to slow down when you read the words on the page in order to observe what is being communicated. Some of the types of questions you might ask include:

1. **What** is the chapter about?
2. **Who** are the main characters?
3. **When** does this event or teaching take place?
4. **Where** does this happen?
5. **Why** is this being done or said?
6. **How** did it happen?

Tools

As we methodically work our way through the entire book of Joshua, there are a few tools to enhance your study time. They're not mandatory, but they will help.

- **A Bible** that you are willing to mark in. Although marking may seem elementary and tedious to some, it is essential to slowing you down in your reading. Our purpose is not to *cover* as many verses as possible, but rather *to study and to understand* the Scripture as fully as possible.
- **Colored fine point pens** to write in your Bible, and **colored pencils** for marking various key words.
- **A loose-leaf notebook** for your *Engage* pages as well as separate paper for your various work and insights as you work through the *Engage* questions.
- **A personal bookmark or note card** that helps you to keep track of the key words, and your choice of colors or symbols for marking these words. This will help you to maintain consistency as you progress through your study of God's Word. A simple 3x5 card can work well for this purpose.

Reading Plan for Joshua

Week	Sermon Date	Study Chapters	Reading Assignment
1	June 26	Joshua 1	Joshua 1
2	July 3	Joshua 2	Joshua 2 and 3
3	July 10	Joshua 3 and 4	Joshua 4 and 5
4	July 17	Joshua 5 and 6	Joshua 6, 7, and 8
5	July 24	Joshua 7 and 8	Joshua 9, 10, 11, and 12
6	July 31	Joshua 10 and 11	Joshua 13, 14, and 15
7	August 7	Joshua 14	Joshua 16, 17, and 18
8	August 14	Joshua 23	Joshua 19, 20, and 21
9	August 21	Joshua 24	Joshua 22, 23, and 24

Occupying the Land

