

# Joshua: How to fight and win in the battles of life

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## The first step to winning the battles of life

- Realize you are in a battle!
- The Bible describes the Christian life in this way:
- *This is no afternoon athletic contest that we'll walk away from and forget about in a couple of hours. This is for keeps, a life-or-death fight to the finish against the Devil and all his angels.* Eph. 6:12(MSG)
- *Take your share of suffering as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, just as I do; and as Christ's soldier, do not let yourself become tied up in worldly affairs, for then you cannot satisfy the one who has enlisted you in his army.* 2 Timothy 2:3-7 Living Bible (TLB)

## Charles Spurgeon, one of the greatest preachers, put it this way in his commentary on Joshua

- A merely nominal profession is easy enough to make and to maintain after the manner of the times; but to be a Christian indeed, through and through, to eat, and drink, and sleep eternal life, to live the life of God on earth — this is the work, this is the difficulty. . . . .
- As soon as you are washed in Christ's blood and clothed in his righteousness, you must begin to hew your way through a lane of enemies, right up to the eternal throne. Every foot of the way will be disputed; not an inch will Satan yield to you. You must continue daily to fight. . . .
- [https://www.preceptaustin.org/spurgeon\\_on\\_joshua](https://www.preceptaustin.org/spurgeon_on_joshua)

## Once we realize we are in a war, we have battles to fight

- Now the question is how to win?
- For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. 2 Corinthians 10:3-5
- Remember in Rom. 15:4 it says  
For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.
- And today we are going to look at the book of Joshua, a book of battles, to see how to fight in the battles of life and win in a way that pleases God.

## The book of Joshua opens

- After 40 years of wandering, Israel finally gets to

enter the Promised Land.

- Moses died in the promised land but passed on leadership to Joshua.
- **God was giving it to them, but they still had to fight for it.**
- **The series of battles took about 7 years**
- We are going to look at how even though we may be doing exactly what God wants us to do, we can still have challenges, but with God's help, not in our own strength, we can overcome them.

## Our plan in this pod

- We will go through a series of Lessons in the book
- And then after each one, some applications.
- We can learn both encouraging, positive applications, but also warnings because we also need to look carefully at the book of Joshua for what happens when we don't completely obey God.
- So, let's get started!

## Lesson 1: God's blessings often include challenges

- One of the most important things to learn in the Christian life, is to never think we've done enough or been through enough a had troubles and challenges enough. we can't ever coast,
- Deliverance from Egypt and Wandered for 40 years
- Even if they hadn't sinned, they still would have had to fight for the land
- 7 years of bloody battles
- In situations like this, we often ask "why?"

## Perfect, God's way

- Two confusing verses:
- (From the Sermon on the Mount) Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. Matt. 5:48
- (From conversation with the Rich Young Ruler) Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. Matt. 19:21
- How to obey?
- My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; (trials of many kinds) Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. James 1:2-4

## Perfect= teleios

- **Strong's Definitions**
- **τέλειος teleios**, tel'-i-os; from [G5056](#); complete (in various applications of labor, growth, mental and moral character, etc.); neuter (as noun, with [G3588](#)) completeness: —of full age, man,

perfect.

- **Outline of Biblical Usage**
- brought to its end, finished
- wanting nothing necessary to completeness
- perfect
- that which is perfect
  - consummate human integrity and virtue
  - of men
    - full grown, adult, of full age, mature

### Reasons why we continue to have battles

Ultimately we must trust our Lord, but some reasons he gives us

We grow in spiritual strength

<sup>5</sup>Happy are those who are strong in the Lord, who want above all else to follow your steps. <sup>6</sup>When they walk through the Valley of Weeping (Baca), it will become a place of springs where pools of blessing and refreshment collect after rains! <sup>7</sup>They will grow constantly in strength, and each of them is invited to meet with the Lord in Zion. Psalm 84:5-7

- So, we can comfort others
- <sup>3</sup>Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, <sup>4</sup>who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. <sup>5</sup>For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too.<sup>[a]</sup> 2 Corinthians 1:3-5

### Review-reasons why trials

- So, we will be mature, complete, all God wants us to be
- Grow in spiritual strength, make difficulties a source of blessing
- So, we can be a comfort to others as God comforted us
- So, let's continue to look at how the book of Joshua tell us to fight successfully

### Lesson 2: Successful Battle Plans must be founded on God's Word

God's commands, God's charge to him

- "Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do

not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:7-9

- We must know God's Word to do what is right when we are confronted with challenges
- There will always be "human" ways to get what we want that will seem easier, more appealing—but that will not result in the spiritual growth or blessing going through the trial will
- Know it so well we don't have to stop or ask...like knowing a counterfeit on sight—studied the genuine at length, so no hesitation

### Lesson 3: Often Great Victories before Great Trials

- God parts the Jordan for the Israelites to cross. —Josh 3
- It was a tremendous day for Joshua! The Lord made him great in the eyes of all the people of Israel, and they revered him as much as they had Moses and respected him deeply all the rest of his life. Josh. 4:4
- As Joshua was sizing up the city of Jericho, a man appeared nearby with a drawn sword. Joshua strode over to him and demanded, "Are you friend or foe?"
- "I am the Commander-in-Chief of the Lord's army," he replied. Joshua fell to the ground before him and worshiped him and said, "Give me your commands." Josh 5:13-14
- An extraordinary miracle and visible encounter with either an angel or the pre-incarnate Christ. Regardless it was an assurance that he would not be fighting alone.
- Application: God can do miracles and is always there, but we still must do the fighting.

### Lesson 4—Trust that God goes before to prepare

- 40 years earlier the spies were afraid of the people in the land, but when they came into the land, the people were afraid of them
- Story of Jericho—Joshua sends spies, Rahab hides them, and before they leave she says:
- Josh. 2: 8-11 Before the spies were down for the night, the woman came up to them on the roof and said, "I know that God has given you the land. We're all afraid. Everyone in the country feels hopeless. We heard how God dried up the waters of the Red Sea before you when you left Egypt, and what he did to the two Amorite kings east of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you put under a holy curse and destroyed. We heard it and our hearts sank. We all had the wind knocked out of us. And all because of you, you and God, your God, God of the heavens above and God of the earth below.

- Application: God often has people who are ready and willing to help when you are fighting God's battles.
- Sometimes unlikely ones that God has put in your path perhaps for you to change their lives—keep your eyes open!
- Rahab, from prostitute to a woman commended for her faith and one who became an ancestor of Jesus

#### **Lesson 5: Make sure of basic obedience**

- After the spies returned after visiting Jericho before they could fight all the males who had grown up since leaving Egypt were circumcised
- The sign given to Abraham that they were God's people
- They also celebrated the Passover—remembering God's deliverance
- Application: Where are you on basic obedience? Have you accepted Jesus as Savior? Been baptized? Part of a body of believers? As obedient as you can be to what you know to do?
- Can't expect God's help if you aren't obedient

#### **Lesson 6: Do things God's Way—no matter what**

- They listened carefully for how to conquer Jericho even though it seemed odd
  - Your entire army is to walk around the city once a day for six days, followed by seven priests walking ahead of the Ark, each carrying a trumpet made from a ram's horn. On the seventh day you are to walk around the city seven times, with the priests blowing their trumpets. <sup>5</sup>Then, when they give one long, loud blast, all the people are to give a mighty shout, and the walls of the city will fall down; then move in upon the city from every direction." Joshua 6:4-5
- But he also said
  - Don't take any loot, for everything is to be destroyed. If it isn't, disaster will fall upon the entire nation of Israel. <sup>19</sup>But all the silver and gold and the utensils of bronze and iron will be dedicated to the Lord and must be brought into his treasury.") Joshua 6:18-19
  - And they did not obey
  - They were defeated in their next battle

#### **Lesson 7 If you mess up/sin—deal with it**

- Joshua cried out to the Lord, "O Jehovah, why have you brought us over the Jordan River if you are going to let the Amorites kill us? Why weren't we content with what we had? Why didn't we stay on the other side? <sup>8</sup>O Lord, what am I to do

now that Israel has fled from her enemies! <sup>9</sup>For when the Canaanites and the other nearby nations hear about it, they will surround us and attack us and wipe us out. And then what will happen to the honor of your great name?" <sup>10-11</sup>But the Lord said to Joshua, "**Get up off your face!** Israel has sinned and disobeyed my commandment and has taken loot when I said it was not to be taken; and they have not only taken it, they have lied about it and have hidden it among their belongings. <sup>12</sup>That is why the people of Israel are being defeated. That is why your men are running from their enemies—for they are cursed. I will not stay with you any longer unless you completely rid yourselves of this sin. Joshua 7:8-12

- When things go badly:
- Pause, pray, ask God if any sin involved—if you honestly don't know
- If there is
- Get up off your face!
- Deal with it, no matter how hard it might be
- We probably won't have to see someone die, but sometimes a relationship dies, or we make somebody angry when we take a stand on things

#### **Lesson 8: Don't trust appearances, always seek God's will and peace**

- Gibeonite deception—Joshua 9
- They didn't ask God
- Were obligated to fight for them, then and punished later when Saul killed some
- Application: ALWAYS take time to seek God's will—no matter what the pressure
- If things don't feel right, you don't have peace, no matter how good something looks, don't act on it until you know what God wants.

#### **Lesson 9: Achieving God's Goals takes strategy and time**

- Divide and conquer c. 13-22
- Took 7 years of battles to conquer most of the land
- Application: Victories are seldom won quickly
- Big goals; small wins
- Focus on Big goals and daily work on steps towards them

#### **Lesson 10 Quitting the battle too soon can have lasting consequences**

- Didn't drive out completely
- *There was none of the Anakims left in the land of the children of Israel: only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod, there remained. Josh. 11:22*
- *Gath (Goliath)*
- A source of sin and misery throughout their

history

- And still are today.....
- Gaza strip a source of continuous conflict

#### **Gaza not the only area**

- The Lord said to him, “and there are still many nations to be conquered. <sup>2</sup>Here is a list of the areas still to be occupied:
- All the land of the Philistines..... “I am ready to drive these people out from before the nation of Israel, so include all this territory when you divide the land among the nine tribes and the half-tribe of Manasseh as I have commanded you.” Joshua 13:2-7
- But what happened....
- But the Israelites did not drive out the people of Geshur and Maakah, so they continue to live among the Israelites to this day. Joshua 13:13
- But the tribe of Judah could not drive out the Jebusites who lived in the city of Jerusalem, so the Jebusites live there among the people of Judah to this day. Joshua 14:63
- But David did later
- They did not dislodge the Canaanites living in Gezer; to this day the Canaanites live among the people of Ephraim but are required to do forced labor. Joshua 16:10
- All these peoples later either oppress Israel or Israel worships their gods

#### **Spurgeon: The Exactness Of Obedience Is The Essence Of Obedience.**

- God’s command to Joshua at the start of the military campaign “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.”
- “We must live, you know,” said a money-loving shopkeeper, as his excuse for doing what he could not otherwise defend.
- “Yes, but we must die,” was the [Christian]reply, “and therefore we must do no such thing.”
- [Spurgeon continues] There is no particular necessity for any of us living. We are probably better dead, if we cannot live without doing wrong.

#### **He goes on**

- **The very essence of obedience, I have said, lies in exactness.**
- Probably your child, if sometimes disobedient, would still, as a general rule, do what you told him. It would be in the little things that thoroughgoing and commendable obedience would appear.
- Let the world judge of this for itself. Here is an

honest man. Do people say of him, “He is such an honest man that he would not steal a horse “? No, that would not prove him to be very honest; but they say, “He would not even take a pin that did not belong to him.” That is the world’s own description of honesty, and surely when it comes to obedience to God it ought to be the same.

- Here is a merchant, and he boasts, “I have a clerk, who is such a good accountant that you would not find a mistake of a single penny in six months’ reckoning.” It would not have meant much if he had said, “You would not find a mistake of ten thousand pounds in six months’ reckoning.”
- And yet if a man stands to little things, and is minute and particular, worldlings charge him with being too stringent, too strict, too straitlaced, and I know not what besides; while all the time, according to their own showing, the essence of honesty and of correctness is exactness in little things.
- ***If I profess to obey the Lord Jesus Christ, the crucial test will not be in great actions, but in little ones. My dear brethren, I wish the Christian church really thought this.***

#### **Application**

- It is often at the end of a big project or difficult trial that we want to quit
- But that is the time to press through, press ahead, do the one more thing that needs to be done
- What if Jesus had lived his perfect life, healed, preached, but then did not go to the cross?
- There is always a temptation to quit too soon, but that is not what we were called to
- In 1968 Olympic marathon Tanzanian runner, Akhwari cramped up due to the high altitude of the Mexico City. He fell badly wounding his knee and dislocated that joint plus his shoulder hit hard against the pavement. He however continued running, finishing last among the competitors who completed the race. The winner of the marathon, Mamo Wolde of Ethiopia, finished in 2:20:26. Akhwari finished in 3:25:27, when there were only a few thousand people left in the stadium, and the sun had set. A television crew was sent out from the medal ceremony when word was received that there was one more runner about to finish.
- As he finally crossed the finish line a cheer came from the small crowd. When interviewed later and asked why he continued running, he said, “My country did not send me 5,000 miles to start the race; they sent me 5,000 miles to finish the

race.

- **We are also called to finish our race**
- Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, <sup>2</sup>fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. <sup>3</sup>Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. Hebrews 12:1-

#### **Lesson 11: We are never too old for God's victories**

- Caleb
- Caleb: "You know what the Lord said to Moses the man of God at Kadesh Barnea about you and me. <sup>7</sup>I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh Barnea to explore the land. And I brought him back a report according to my convictions, <sup>8</sup>but my fellow Israelites who went up with me made the hearts of the people melt in fear. I, however, followed the Lord my God wholeheartedly. <sup>9</sup>So on that day Moses swore to me, 'The land on which your feet have walked will be your inheritance and that of your children forever, because you have followed the Lord my God wholeheartedly.'
- <sup>10</sup>"Now then, just as the Lord promised, he has kept me alive for forty-five years since the time he said this to Moses, while Israel moved about in the wilderness. ***So here I am today, eighty-five years old! <sup>11</sup>I am still as strong today as the day Moses sent me out; I'm just as vigorous to go out to battle now as I was then.<sup>12</sup> Now give me this hill country that the Lord promised me that day. You yourself heard then that the Anakites were there and their cities were large and fortified, but, the Lord helping me, I will drive them out just as he said.***
- <sup>13</sup>Then Joshua blessed Caleb son of Jephunneh and gave him Hebron as his inheritance. <sup>14</sup>So Hebron has belonged to Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite ever since, because he followed the Lord, the God of Israel, wholeheartedly. <sup>15</sup> (Hebron used to be called Kiriath Arba after Arba, who was the greatest man among the Anakites.)
- He went for the city that the biggest and baddest giants lived in at that time—defeated them and changed the name of the city from Kiriath Arba after Arba, who was the greatest man

among the Anakites.) to Hebron a community, an alliance, no deep meaning

- Sacred to both Jews and Muslims as the home and burial place of Abraham and (to Jews) as King David's capital for seven years
- Application: Moses wasn't called until he was 80; when Abraham was 99, God said, "Walk before me and be perfect."
- Age is irrelevant to eternal people called to serve God

#### **Lesson 12: The importance of a clear legacy**

- Joshua's legacy
- End of his life, he delivers a sermon similar to what Moses did only shorter
- The years passed, and the Lord had given the people of Israel rest from all their enemies. Joshua, who was now very old, <sup>2</sup>called together all the elders, leaders, judges, and officers of Israel. He said to them, "I am now a very old man. <sup>3</sup>You have seen everything the Lord your God has done for you during my lifetime. The Lord your God has fought for you against your enemies. <sup>4</sup>I have allotted to you as your homeland all the land of the nations yet unconquered, as well as the land of those we have already conquered—from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea in the west. <sup>5</sup>This land will be yours, for the Lord your God will himself drive out all the people living there now. You will take possession of their land, just as the Lord your God promised you.
- <sup>6</sup>"*So be very careful to follow everything Moses wrote in the Book of Instruction. Do not deviate from it, turning either to the right or to the left. <sup>7</sup>Make sure you do not associate with the other people still remaining in the land. Do not even mention the names of their gods, much less swear by them or serve them or worship them. <sup>8</sup>Rather, cling tightly to the Lord your God as you have done until now.*
- Goes over what God has done, then challenges them, warns them what will happen if disobey
- The people promise to serve God
- Promise of punishment if they don't and serve other gods
- Finally leaves legacy "So fear the Lord and serve him wholeheartedly. Put away forever the idols your ancestors worshiped when they lived beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt. Serve the Lord alone. <sup>15</sup>But if you refuse to serve the Lord, then choose today whom you will serve. Would you prefer the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates? Or will it be the gods of

the Amorites in whose land you now live? But as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord.”

Joshua 24:14

- Application: What words, challenges are you leaving for those who will come after you?

**Some final words of encouragement from Matthew**

**Henry**

- “We only bear the cross for a while, but we shall wear the crown to eternity.
- “We should not pray so much for the removal of an affliction as for wisdom to make a right use of it.”
- One of the most important prayers!
- For our spiritual growth and for all around us and who will come after us.
- May we remember these lessons from the book of Joshua so we might fight the battles the Lord gives us for our good and His glory.