



WEEK

OF PRAYER & FASTING
DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Day One - Prepare for Battle

Read Joshua 1

Key Verses:

Joshua 1:7 - Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go.

Joshua 1:9 - Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

Devotional:

What is your Jericho?

For 40 years, the Israelites, God's people, had been punished for their unbelief when they had the opportunity to take the foreign land God had promised them. They allowed fear to paralyze them, and so they wandered for 40 years as the Lord eliminated a generation of unbelief. Now Moses has died, and they stand again at the brink of success or failure. Looming ahead was the unconquerable city of Jericho. It was “the elephant in the room” that couldn't be avoided. To move forward meant facing this metropolis head on. Would they learn from the previous generation's mistake?

In a sense we all have figurative Jerichos - challenges, addictions, obstacles, etc. that can easily keep us from experiencing the holiness, victory, and effectiveness the Lord desires. And if we live for Jesus for a while, we see there are more than one along the way. But today, as you enter this week of prayer and fasting, what is your current Jericho? What seems insurmountable? What seems too big to defeat?

Before you answer, hear the Lord calling you to battle. He thinks that you and Him together can defeat this foe. Do you? He, like Joshua the new leader of Israel, is calling you to battle. He is urging you to cross into enemy territory. It is time to stop playing defense. It is time to “be strong and courageous.”

Joshua responds by sending word throughout the camp: “Prepare your provisions, for within three days you are to pass over this Jordan to go in to take possession of the land that the Lord your God is giving you to possess.” (Joshua 1:11) This fast is your declaration of battle against this Jericho in your life. Are you ready to see what God has in store?

Questions:

1. What will you be fasting this week?

2. What is your Jericho?

Action Step:

Declare you intentions to the Lord. “Jesus, today I join with you in battle. I am tired of allowing my Jericho to defeat me. Together we can be victorious. May this week start a glorious process of realizing what is possible when I simply believe in You and follow you into battle.”

Day Two - Resist Fear

Read Joshua 2

Key Verses:

Joshua 2:10-11 - For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you devoted to destruction. And as soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no spirit left in any man because of you, for the Lord your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath.

Joshua 2:24 - And they said to Joshua, "Truly the Lord has given all the land into our hands. And also, all the inhabitants of the land melt away because of us."

Devotional:

Looks can often be deceiving.

Before moving on Jericho, Joshua decides to send a couple of spies to see what's actually happening within the city. Outside the city, Jericho looked to be the securest place on earth. But what the spies were about to learn on their reconnaissance mission would be surprising. They encounter Rahab, a prostitute who clearly wanted a new life. She reported how demoralized the entire city was at the idea that the Israelites were on their back doorstep. "Their God" had dried up the Red Sea for them. What would He do to Jericho?

It's amazing how the enemy seems to have a better grasp of God's power and authority than we do. We make it all about us and forget the One who is calling us and empowering us. There is nothing scarier to Satan than a believer in Christ who simply follows the Lord. You have the potential to do great damage to the kingdom of darkness. They certainly try to intimidate and look the part of superiority. They will tempt and attack. They are not powerless. However when we stop believing their illusions, their strongholds crumble.

Rahab tells the spies, "I know that the Lord has given you the land, and that the fear of you has fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you." Remember: whoever lives in fear loses. The Lord wants to deliver you from all your fears as you link arms with Him in this quest. The enemy knows they don't stand a chance if we will only fight.

This battle is winnable in Jesus' name!

Questions:

1. What specific fears do you have right now?
2. When is the last time you realized that the enemy is afraid of the Jesus in you and with you?

Action Step:

Take each specific fear you listed above and bring them before Jesus. Name each of them and ask the Lord to cleanse you of them because "perfect love casts out all fear."

Day Three - Following

Read Joshua 3

Key Verses:

Joshua 3:13 - “And when the soles of the feet of the priests bearing the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off from flowing, and the waters coming down from above shall stand in one heap.”

Joshua 3:17 - Now the priests bearing the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firmly on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan, and all Israel was passing over on dry ground until all the nation finished passing over the Jordan.

Devotional:

The D-Day Invasion is still considered the largest invasion in world history. On June 6, 1944, Allied troops from many nations followed the plan laid out by General Dwight Eisenhower and his team of generals. This wasn't a haphazard attack; it was an orchestrated event with specific divisions and platoons going to specific beaches at specific times in order to overwhelm the Germans. Once the Americans, British, French and others had established a beachhead, it was only a matter of time until the enemy would lose.

Following is a lost art. Everybody wants to be in charge of their own life, but it only works when Jesus is the Leader and we are the follower. We don't have to come up with a plan to defeat Jericho. Our General already has it. Our duty is to follow Him into unfamiliar territory under His guidance. This was the gameplan of the Israelites as they would have to cross the Jordan River at flood stage. This was dangerous and potentially tragic, but the Lord was in full control.

The priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant would go first into the dangerous waters. The Ark represented the awesome Presence of God. No one but these priests were to even go near it. But the Presence of God would lead the way, and because of their faith they got across. Their ancestors would tell their Red Sea stories; now this generation could speak of God's demonstration of power as they crossed the Jordan River and into enemy territory. When we follow, God demonstrates.

Your only job today is to follow the Lord's instructions. Don't leave the Lord at home as you go about your business and work. Take Him with you. Allow the Holy Spirit within you to coach you, lead you, and direct you throughout your day. Maybe He wants you to share a word of life with someone or bless someone you've never met before. Just follow. Yes, all of this is leading to Jericho, but if we can't follow Him here and now, Jericho will likely never happen. Allow Him to take you into the unfamiliar. It's OK. His presence goes before you.

Questions:

1. Who is usually in charge of your life on a day-to-day basis?
2. When was the last time the Lord changed the direction of your day and you followed Him?

Action Steps:

Tell the Lord that you are a follower and He is the Leader of your life. Commit to follow Him wherever He takes you today. Remember all of this is in preparation for Jericho.

Day Four - Thanksgiving

Read Joshua 4

Key Verses:

Joshua 4:5-7 - And Joshua said to them, "Pass on before the ark of the Lord your God into the midst of the Jordan, and take up each of you a stone upon his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the people of Israel, that this may be a sign among you. When your children ask in time to come, 'What do those stones mean to you?' then you shall tell them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord. When it passed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. So these stones shall be to the people of Israel a memorial forever."

Devotional:

We too often remember the wrong things. We remember slights, offenses, and disappointments much easier than victories. The Bible is full of incidents in which God wanted to use visual, concrete reminders in order to remember His track record of faithfulness. The Lord knew we needed remembrances. There's a reason why the monuments in Washington DC are so powerful. They help us remember.

As the people crossed the Jordan, one man from each tribe was to take a stone from the bed of the river, hoist it on his shoulder, and bring it on dry land as a remembrance of what God had done in their lives. It was an occasion for thanksgiving. Thanksgiving isn't a holiday; it's a lifestyle. It is a powerful weapon in our arsenal as believers in Christ. Thanking God cleanses our brain from all the negativity that is so easy to wallow in. It reminds us that the One who came through in the past will come again. The Israelites would need those stones when they approached Jericho and beyond.

Thanking goes against our sinful nature; therefore, it is always opposed by our flesh. Be prepared for this. It's why so many of us struggle in this area.

Thanksgiving fills our heart with gladness and changes our thoughts from dread to anticipation. We will need both as we take on our Jericho.

Perhaps the greatest example of all was Jesus' last supper with his disciples. He gave us the memorial of bread and wine to remember His sacrifice as a remembrance until He returns. Coming to the Lord's table is our way of saying thanks for all He has done.

Questions:

1. What do you have in your life that you can see/touch that serves as a reminder to something God has done?
2. What is something God has done for you in the last 24 hours?

Action Steps:

1. Spend some time specifically thanking the Lord, verbally or in writing. I guarantee you the spiritual opposition you will immediately feel when you start. The enemy despises this. Push through and as you're reminded of specific people and events, let it flow like a river and watch your faith rise.
2. Think of someone in your life that you can SPECIFICALLY thank for something they have done or said and let them know.

Day Five - Consecration

Read Joshua 5:1-12

Key Verse:

Joshua 5:9 - And the Lord said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you." And so the name of that place is called Gilgal to this day.

Devotional:

This story can seem like an interruption in the story, but it is far from it. For reasons unknown to us, the generation of men that were born after the Israelites left Egypt were not circumcised. This was an outward symbol of Israel's devotion to the Lord and His covenant with them. It is what set them apart. Among other things, it signified a cutting away of what God said was unnecessary. Now a generation was ready to fight Jericho, but there was more spiritual business to be done first, and the rite of circumcision was performed on all the males in the city of Gilgal.

Consecration is an old-school word we don't use very often. Some would define it as, "The act of making something sacred." It has a lot to do with holiness, being distinct from the world and its agenda of sin and selfishness. Of course, the act of circumcision meant nothing if their hearts and lives didn't carry out God's instructions. As you go through a time of prayer and fasting, often the Lord will bring something to the surface that needs to be "cut away" from our lives. Maybe it's an unhealthy practice, pattern, or habit. It may not be obviously sinful, but it steals away from our relationship with God. It may not be as life-giving as we think.

Day Six - Submission

Read Joshua 5:13-15 (read twice)

Key Verse:

Joshua 5:14 - And he said, "No; but I am the commander of the army of the Lord. Now I have come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped and said to him, "What does my lord say to his servant?"

Devotional:

There is a story that is often told about Abraham Lincoln. As the Civil War raged on and Americans fought other Americans, both sides felt as if they were fighting with God's approval. Supposedly someone approached the President and asked if he felt like God was on the side of the Union troops. Lincoln reportedly responded, "Sir, my concern is not whether God is on our side; my greatest concern is to be on God's side, for God is always right."

Joshua receives a divine visitor. Many believe it is an Old Testament appearance of Jesus Himself. Joshua wants to know if this Man with a drawn sword is on his side or his enemy's side. The visitor says, "No." In other words, the question isn't whether I'm on your side. The question is whether you're on my side.

Immediately understanding, Joshua falls down on his face and worships. The most powerful military leader in the world lays prostrate and worships the One who gives him his strength.

Day Seven - Obedience/Perseverance

Read Joshua 6:1-21

Key Verses:

Joshua 6:2 - And the Lord said to Joshua, "See, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king and mighty men of valor."

Joshua 6:20 - So the people shouted, and the trumpets were blown. As soon as the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people shouted a great shout, and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they captured the city.

Devotional:

God often has strange battle plans. We see it time and again in scripture. He uses unorthodox methods and weapons to accomplish His goals. It is true here in Jericho. Why does He work this way? Rather than just do a traditional frontal assault with the army, why does God have them walk around the city for six days, then seven times around on the seventh? God is weaving events in such a way that when victory is attained, only He gets the credit for it. We must simply obey.

As you face your Jericho, be ready and open to the Lord asking you to do something difficult. He may ask you to do something no one else is doing. He may ask you to give something up or take something on that is beyond your ability. The possibilities are endless, but we must understand. When our Jericho falls, it is pointless and worthless if we think we made it happen. Just follow His instructions and give him glory for it.

One Bible commentator has written that Jericho had a circumference of 600 meters. On the seventh day, they marched around the city seven times - 4,200 meters - over 42 football fields. Do we have that kind of perseverance? We have spent this time of fasting praying for breakthrough in something. You realize the Lord usually takes longer than seven days, right? Are you willing to stay the course? Are you willing to keep walking in the love of Christ and the truth of the gospel until the walls fall? Will you keep believing? Will you keep obeying?

Even though this week has focused on our Jericho, the real goal of fasting and praying is Jesus. If Jesus is who we seek, we have been successful. Always be more focused on Jesus than Jericho. He will bring you to victory.

Questions:

1. What "hard thing" is the Lord asking you to do right now?
2. When your Jericho falls, what will you do in response?
3. What have you learned from the Lord about yourself this week?

Action Steps:

Are you weary from the journey? As this season of prayer and fasting comes to an end, declare to the Lord that you will persevere. Ask Him to come and strengthen you as only He can.



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