

TRAINING FOR VICTORIOUS FAITH

JANUARY 22, 2023

WORSHIP

We Have Overcome,
In Control, Greater Than,
Never Once, Be Strong
and Take Courage

WELCOME

Do you play sports or have you participated in any kind of competition in the past? What did you do to prepare yourself to put yourself in the best position to win?

WORD

JOSHUA 3:1-8 (READ THE ENTIRE JOSHUA 3 & CHAPTER 4)

Then Joshua rose early in the morning; and he and all the sons of Israel set out from Shittim and came to the Jordan, and they lodged there before they crossed. ² At the end of three days the officers went through the midst of the camp; ³ and they commanded the people, saying, "When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God with the Levitical priests carrying it, then you shall set out from your place and go after it. ⁴ However, there shall be between you and it a distance of about 2,000 [a] cubits by measure. Do not come near it, that you may know the way by which you shall go, for you have not passed this way before." ⁵ Then Joshua said to the people, "Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you." ⁶ And Joshua spoke to the priests, saying, "Take up the ark of the covenant and cross over ahead of the people." So they took up the ark of the covenant and went ahead of the people. ⁷ Now the LORD said to Joshua, "This day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you. ⁸ You shall, moreover, command the priests who are carrying the ark of the covenant, saying, "When you come to the edge of the waters of the Jordan, you shall stand still in the Jordan."

We are going through a series of the book of Joshua – a book about victory. Now, how many of us like discipline and training? To be good in sports, music, or with anything else, we need training. Good golfers, basketball players, and other athletes train so many hours a day to be formidable athletes. Even Christians need certain trainings to form certain habits, and to become good, victorious Christians. FAITH does not grow without stretching. What does it look like to TRAIN FOR VICTORIOUS FAITH?

Hebrews 12:11 speaks of "all discipline" or "all training" as not being easy, but it actually "yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness". Better sweat now than die in the "battlefield" because as Christians, we will face so many battles. We need to train ourselves for these things! **1 Peter 1:6-7** paints that picture of "a little while" of training (**Gk. Peirasmos**) – trials, testing, things we face – it all proves the genuineness of our faith and trust in God. Real Christianity is about faith, and it is the kind of faith that produces results.

How did God train Joshua and the rest of the Israelites? They were going into the enemy's territory, and they have no expert military training. There are three important ideas in Joshua chapters 3 to 4:

1. The Training of the Eyes: LOOK to JESUS

Joshua 3:1-3 describes how Joshua led the people across the Jordan River to proceed to Jericho, and key to this plan is to have the **Ark of the Covenant** – a symbol of the presence of God. It contains the tablets where the Ten Commandments were written – a reminder that we are obligated to know God's holiness and will through His commandments. It also contained some manna, a reminder of God's provision for them. And then it had Aaron's rod that bloomed – Aaron's staff, a symbol of how God is able to bring life from death. The ark was covered by the "mercy seat" – an essential element in the religious practices of the Jewish nation. They needed God's guidance because they are entering a place they have not passed through before. **Verses 5-6** gives the reminder to live a holy life as we expect great things for God. As we fix our eyes on Jesus (not our problems or challenges), we ought to live lives that respect God's presence! The Ark of the Covenant was a key element to this conquering. To be carried by the priests, the ark was a symbol to focus on God. IN the NT, **Hebrews 12:1-2** tells us to lay aside burdens, do away with sins, and persevere as we "**FIX OUR EYES ON JESUS**". Jesus is the author – meaning, He initiated our salvation; He brought us up to this point of decision for us to follow Him. He is also the perfecter – He molds our faith. When you come to Jesus, it is not just sacrifice and suffering – it's going to be worth it, especially when we have eternal perspective! Choose to FOCUS on Jesus!

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2. The Training of the Ears: LISTEN to Obey

Joshua 3:9-11 is where Joshua declares the WORD of the LORD – there was a promise given, but there were also clear instructions for them to do. We listen to God not just for that purpose, but also because what we intend is to obey whatever we hear from the Lord! We may be crossing our own “Jordan Rivers” at this point. When we hear instruction from the Lord, we must do exactly as the Lord has instructed us. **Jeremiah 42:6** is also a reminder for the same thing – consult God, hear and obey whatever He says for us to do! When we don’t like what God is telling us, we avoid the instruction being given to us. **James 1:22-25** commands us to be effectual DOERS, and not just forgetful HEARERS of the Word. The objective is LISTEN TO OBEY.

VOICE OF THE WORLD	VOICE OF GOD THROUGH SCRIPTURE
“EVERY ONE IS DOING IT”	BE HOLY FOR I AM HOLY (1 PETER 1:15-16)
“WHATEVER MAKES YOU HAPPY”	DENY YOUR SELF AND FOLLOW ME (MATTHEW 16:24-26)
“YOU ONLY LIVE ONCE”	THERE IS LIFE AFTER DEATH (HEBREW 9:27)
“FOLLOW YOUR HEART”	THE HEART IS DECITFUL (JEREMIAH 17:9)
“I DONT FEEL LIKE FORGIVING” I WILL BE A HYPOCRITE”	FORGIVE AND LOVE YOUR ENEMIES (LIKE 6:27)

Are we following God’s voice and instructions? If we want our faith to grow and make us victorious, we must learn to listen to God’s Word and choose to OBEY, not turn away from truth (**2 Timothy 4:3-4**)! Know that the weapons of our warfare are given to us – we must destroy every lie with the truth and choose to obey Christ (**2 Corinthians 10:4-5**).

3. LIFE LEGACY

God asked Joshua to take memorial stones and build a monument after the crossing (**Joshua 4 onwards**). It was meant to remind even the generations to come. God has done it with Noah, with the rainbow reminding them of God’s faithfulness. The Passover, a tradition practiced until today, was meant to be a memorial of the faithfulness of God. The Lord’s Supper (communion) is a memorial too. In fact, all of us are to be memorial stones – we will pass something on to our children or our disciples. If your memorial stone does not give glory to God, why will they follow Jesus? Choose to be a memorial stone for the next generations. Let the faithfulness of Jesus be shown and be evident in our lives!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. Self-Check.

What does it mean for you to “look to Jesus”? How can doing that prepare you for victory?

2. Setting It Right.

How do you decide which voice to listen to (God or the world) when you face decision-making?

3. Living It Out.

What do you think you should do to hear God’s voice more and be able to follow Him and not the world?

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Pray for people around you who are facing their own battles, and their “Jordan river” that without God, is impossible to cross. Share the principles for victorious faith that you’ve learned from Joshua so far! Talk to them about Jesus, the “Author and Perfector” of our faith so that they too can put their trust in Him to lead them into victory.

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of public servants; repentance and salvation for government leaders and citizens for a Christ-centered Philippines.
- God’s provision for families deeply affected by inflation.
- War in Ukraine to end, loss of lives prevented; escalating tension in East Asian countries to stop.

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples.
- Elders, pastors, deleaders, and families (holy, humble, harmonious, happy, heart-working).
- Ministries and churches expansion worldwide.

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God.
- Righteous living.
- Salvation of family and friends.

MEMORY VERSE

JOSHUA 3:5

⁵ Then Joshua said to the people, “Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you”.