

It is Important to Wait Until the Lord says GO!

Joshua Chapters 3 and 4 and 5

1. Ask the group to discuss the trials and patience often needed to potty train a child or train a dog. What do we learn from this that gives insight into God's patience with each of us?
2. God often leads in ways we don't understand. Yet, we always need to trust His leading. The Tribes of Israel were ready to begin occupying the Promised Land. But rather than "getting on with the fighting and overcoming", God said "wait" and "remember".
 1. He expects us to remember Him first and foremost and teach our children of him, who he is, and what he does for us. If the Jews had proceeded then, they may well have thought they were in charge and were the reason for the success.
 2. Reminds me a bit of our praying and wanting an answer "now" when God says, "no, you need to wait".
 3. No doubt, the Israelites were thinking: But we have the momentum and the bad guys all know we are here now, so let's get on with it! Yet God said "wait, rest and, oh yeah, one more thing—circumcise the troops!"
 4. Let's set the stage for what is happening. Forty thousand armed and ready-to-fight troops cross the Jordan River, while the Priests stood firm in the middle of the Jordan's river bed, and the waters were miraculously restrained by an act of God. I don't know about you, but as an old Army man, that had to be some kind of an impressive sight to behold for the Israelites and the Canaanites. And for extra measure, imagine the faith of the Priests holding the Ark of the Covenant in the middle of the Jordan River!
 5. God tells Joshua to set up camp, worship, circumcise the forty thousand soldiers, let them recover and wait for Him to tell them when to move.
3. Lessons we learn from this awesome passage:
 1. We serve a mighty God then, now and always!
 2. He wants us to listen to Him, worship Him, Seek His guidance and follow His will. Joshua did just that. So should we!
 3. God is always interested in each of us being in a Godly state of being rather than a personal state of doing. Take a look at Proverbs 3: 5-9.
 4. I believe God wants us to wait on Him so He can determine how genuine our faith is. And in this busy world, waiting is something we may have a problem with.
 5. God was preparing the hearts of the Canaanites. (Joshua 5:1). They were living in a state of uncertainty and fear. Having the Jews pause for a few days only intensified that and made the eventual outcome easier for Israel.
 6. God had them pause for a purpose. We will discover this in the next sections.
4. Discussion Questions:
 1. Why do we find it so hard to wait on God for an answer to our prayers, or wait on anyone, at times?
 2. What do you think God teaches us, by asking us to wait on Him?

5. **Waiting** after the Jordan crossing became a **place of renewal**. Suggest that the group read Joshua 5:1-10.

1. God wanted them to realize that they had taken the big step, one that had been postponed for over 40 years. Waiting allowed Israel to be renewed in God's sight.
2. Waiting allowed fellowship with God to be celebrated.
3. He wanted Israel to realize that **God had honored His promise to Abraham in Genesis 12 and 15**.
4. Restoration with God was essential for celebration. Joshua 5:9-10.
5. Restoration brings us the reality of restored fellowship with God.
6. The knowledge that we're living in a state of fellowship with God provides comfort in facing trials. Daniel 6:22-23; Acts 12:6-11 and Psalms 23:5-6.

6. A Place of Change

1. No more Manna! Joshua 5:12
2. Manna was the sign the Jews had been living in a wilderness state; a sign of disobedience, indecisiveness, and lack of trust in God.
3. God wanted the Jews to know that while he provided for them in time of need and he also provides for our needs but... **we need to work**. I Thes 4:9-12. Note what this insightful passage teaches us:
 1. Working is part of our walking with God.
 2. It is intended to motivate us to grow in Christ, to please him and prosper based on our work habits.
 3. Our working is according to the will of God for us.
 4. It enables us to show kindness toward the needs of others.
4. This passage also implies to me that God does not intend to do for us, that which we can reasonably do for ourselves.
5. Finally, note that God seemed to cease the spectacular miracles for the Jews when they reached the Promised Land. He did many more spectacular things later in the Bible but it appears to me that he wanted them to learn both self reliance, growing in Him by faith and obedience.

7. Discussion Questions:

1. What are the day to day things God expects each child of His to do in order to grow and please him?
2. I remember clearly having two young men help me with a remodeling project years ago. They were clearly contrasts in views and attitudes. One wanted to learn and grow and provide for his family. The other was grudgingly working for a day's wages. The first is now happily married, has a career job, raising his two boys and **growing in Christ**. The other has been the father to three children by three different women, grudgingly worked and complained about the unfairness of most employers. He was proud of the fact that he was approaching 30, didn't need to work and complained he was not getting enough help from the government. Confronted by the I Thes 3:9-10 passage he scoffed and said, "Where does that come from? I don't believe that at all"! **I encourage the group to discuss these two and what we learn to do and not to do from each one.**

3. What do we learn from trials and challenges; From the opinions and views of others? From a deliberate study of scripture?
8. The blessed place of Lord's appearance (Joshua 5:13).
 1. It is very obvious that the personal appearance of the Commander of the Lord's Army to Joshua is a very special moment both for Joshua and all of mankind.
 2. Note that the Lord appeared to Joshua as they approached Jericho.
 3. Joshua fell on his face and worshiped him.
 4. When Joshua asked the Lord what he should do, notice what he said: "Remove your sandals" for the ground you are standing on is holy!
9. Discussion Questions and Closing Comments from this lesson:
 1. What must Christians remove from their lives to worship and serve God acceptably?
 2. Name some gems of encouragement that you can identify from this lesson that can enable you to live the Christian life?
 3. Breaking momentum, circumcision and removing shoes make no tactical sense to an advancing Army. Discuss why it was so critical that Joshua and the Jews do all three.
 4. Living in harmony with God's will is a source of contentment and success in our lives. Discuss what it means to **be contented in God**?