

Foundations Devotional

• FOR THE WEEK OF OCT 25 - OCT 31 •

MONDAY // JOSHUA 5:10-15; 6

After God led the Israelites across the Jordan, they found themselves in a position to claim the promised land through a series of military victories as they conquered Canaan's major cities. The first city to be attacked was Jericho, but before Joshua could formulate a plan, he received a visit from a heavenly messenger who gave him instructions on how to overtake it. Noticeably absent from the plan was military strategy; Jericho would be overtaken by trust and obedience alone. God was clearly in control. Joshua needed to display trust in God's plan by following His instructions. On the seventh day, the people marched around the city seven times, blew trumpets, and shouted. Then God delivered the city into the Israelites' hands, all except for Rahab and her family, whom He had promised to protect because she helped God's people. We must always remember that God keeps His promises. He is who He says He is and does what He says He will do.

TUESDAY // JOSHUA 7-8

One of the instructions God gave His people as they overtook Jericho was not to seize any wealth or treasures of the Canaanites. God orchestrated this conquest, and the goal was to bring glory to His name; a focus on material gain would distract the people from this goal. One man, Achan, violated God's instruction, and his greed had a devastating impact on him, his family, and the community as a whole. After this sin was brought to light and dealt with, Joshua was able to lead the people in a successful conquest of their next city, Ai. Joshua knew this takeover, like Jericho, only happened because God allowed it to, so he responded in worship and a renewal of the covenant with God. The opportunity God gave the Israelites for a second chance to conquer Ai, despite Achan's disobedience, is a reminder for us of God's grace and willingness to restore those He loves. When we address our sins through confession and repentance, God is quick to forgive us and restore us to a right relationship with Him.

WEDNESDAY // JOSHUA 23-24

Chapters 9-22 of Joshua describe the Israelites' conquering the promised land and settling there. The book ends with Joshua's farewell address to the people, in which he reminded them of God's power and faithfulness to His promises and their need to be strong in faith, obedient to the covenant, and loyal to God. Joshua recapped how God had proven Himself faithful to them and His covenant from as far back as the time of Abraham. Joshua's address closed with a challenge to the people to renew their commitment to and worship of God alone, and the people accepted. Like the Israelites, we live in a world with many influences that can distract us from complete devotion to Christ. Joshua's challenge reminds us that if we hope to devote our lives exclusively to the Lord, we must hear and obey the Word of God and renew our commitment to Him every day.

THURSDAY // JUDGES 2-3

The Book of Judges continues the story of Israel's efforts to take control of the promised land following the death of their leader, Joshua. It becomes evident that the nation started to drift astray despite the commitment to God they had made before Joshua's death. Judges 2:10 reveals the shocking truth that a new generation of Israelites arose who did not know God and did not remember His works among their people. This new generation disobeyed God and abandoned the covenant of their fathers. In turn, God's judgment came down on them through military defeats and oppression by other nations. After this oppression had gone on for several years, the people finally called out to God for mercy, and God responded by delivering them through Othniel, the first of His appointed judges—the new form of leadership God put in place. This pattern of sin, oppression, repentance, and deliverance through a new judge continues throughout the book, and it paints a clear picture of humanity's bent toward sin and God's inexhaustible love.

FRIDAY // JUDGES 4

When the Israelites again turned to evil, God allowed them to be oppressed by a Canaanite king for 20 years, at which point they finally cried out for deliverance again. God heard their cries, and He responded by appointing Deborah as their new judge. In addition to being a judge, Deborah was also a prophet who delivered God's messages to the Israelites. She served as God's spiritual spokesperson to Barak, who was Israel's military leader. God used the joint efforts of Deborah and Barak to defeat the Canaanite forces that oppressed His people. Deborah stands out as one of the godly leaders in Israel's history. She listened and obeyed the words of God, had faith in His ability to work through her, and encouraged the ways God was working in other people. Deborah also modeled what Jesus would later confirm—we demonstrate our love for God and obedience to Him through a life of service to others.

WEEKEND // FINISH UP ANY YOU DIDN'T DO