



Week Three – The Fight of Faith

All of us either have been challenged in our walk of faith, are being challenged in our walk, or will be challenged in our walk. Your faith will be tested and maintaining your faith will be a battle. The goal of this discussion is to help us understand that challenges to our faith are a normal part of the Christian life and how to help them discover the benefit of challenges to our faith and how to respond to these challenges.

CONNECT

- What's the hardest thing you've ever had to do to accomplish a task?
- Share one of your more memorable fights growing up.

You might want to take time to set the stage for the following passage of scripture. The Israelites have finished 40 years of wandering in the wilderness. Moses, who God used to deliver the children of Israel from Egypt and through whom God did many amazing miracles like parting the Red Sea, the 10 plagues in Egypt that led to them being set free, bringing manna to eat and water from a rock to drink, giving the 10 commandments, etc., etc., is dead. Now Moses must step into his rather large shoes and lead the children of Israel into the promised land. On the one hand, there is a large leadership vacuum because the whole generation of elders that remembered the slavery of Egypt and saw the goodness of the promised land, have died off. On the other hand, only Joshua and Caleb remained from that generation so it gave them an authority that no one else could claim. But now the nation of Israel was standing on the banks of the Jordan River in flood season, waiting to see how Joshua would lead them and whether or not God would affirm his leadership with signs and wonders like he did with Moses. Joshua may have had some doubts of his own as God felt it necessary to strongly encourage Joshua to be courageous.

Joshua 1:1–2,5-9 (NIV)

"¹After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide: ²"Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites... ⁵No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. ⁶Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them. ⁷"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. ⁸Keep 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. ⁹Have 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.”*

WORD

⁷And the Lord said to Joshua, “Today I will begin to exalt you in the eyes of all Israel, so they may know that I am with you as I was with Moses. ⁸Tell the priests who carry the ark of the covenant: ‘When you reach the edge of the Jordan’s waters, go and stand in the river.’ ” ⁹Joshua said to the Israelites, “Come here and listen to the words of the Lord your God. ¹⁰This is how you will know that the living God is among you and that he will certainly drive out before you the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites and Jebusites. ¹¹See, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth will go into the Jordan ahead of you. ¹²Now then, choose twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one from each tribe. ¹³And as soon as the priests who carry the ark of the Lord—the Lord of all the earth—set foot in the Jordan, its waters flowing downstream will be cut off and stand up in a heap.” ¹⁴So when the people broke camp to cross the Jordan, the priests carrying the ark of the covenant went ahead of them. ¹⁵Now the Jordan is at flood stage all during harvest. Yet as soon as the priests who carried the ark reached the Jordan and their feet touched the water’s edge, ¹⁶the water from upstream stopped flowing. It piled up in a heap a great distance away, at a town called Adam in the vicinity of Zarethan, while the water flowing down to the Sea of the Arabah (that is, the Dead Sea) was completely cut off. So the people crossed over opposite Jericho. ¹⁷The priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord stopped in the middle of the Jordan and stood on dry ground, while all Israel passed by until the whole nation had completed the crossing on dry ground.”

Joshua 3:7–17 (NIV)

THOUGHT

After 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, the Jews were on the verge of entering their promised land. The only problem was that they still had to cross the Jordan River and it was the middle of flood season no less. It often seems like the biggest obstacles to fulfilling our destiny come right before the breakthrough. In today's discussion we'll look at how to battle through barriers in order to see destiny fulfilled in our lives. This is called the fight of faith.

If you feel led, you could throw out a preliminary question – ‘how many of you have faced battles in your walk of faith?’ If non-Christians are present you might ask, ‘how many of you have faced battles in your life journey?’

DISCUSSION

1. How do you think the priests felt as they approached the banks of the flooded Jordan River?

The goal of this question is to get them to put themselves into the scripture story. This is a great way to personalize the Word.

- Excited to be so close to the promised land
- Frustrated by the seemingly impassable barrier of the river
- Fearful of facing the giants on the other side of the river
- Conflicted by all of the above
- Other _____

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2. **Romans 8:28 says, ‘that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.’ How did God intend to use this barrier of the flooded Jordan River for the good of Joshua and the Israelites?**

There is no right or wrong answer here, just open discussion. The goal of this question, again, is to get people to identify with the passage and put themselves into it, make it come alive. Give opportunity for everyone to express an opinion, but no need to force them.

3. **What are some of the ways that God has shown himself faithful in your life or the lives of those around you?**

This is a great opportunity to share testimonies and to share the gospel. You might ask someone who has a great salvation story to share their testimony.

4. **In 1 Timothy 6:12, Paul encourages Timothy to ‘Fight the good fight of faith.’ Faith isn’t needed when everything is looking rosy. Rather, it must be fought for when everything is dark and stormy. Is there an area of your life where you currently need to fight the fight of faith?**
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5. **Hebrews 10:23 tells us to, ‘hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.’ Our faith is not based on our ability to believe but on God’s faithfulness to his promises. What are some reasons we can trust God’s faithfulness to his promises?**

You could refer back to testimonies shared in any of the previous answers or share one of your own. You can also refer to the fact that God promises to be faithful.

6. **As a group, make a list of some of the common ‘Jordan Rivers’ people face in life or perhaps are facing currently in the group. Now make a list of any promises from scripture or aspects of God’s character that can help you fight the fight of faith and cross those rivers.**

Great group activity to get into the Word. Simply make a list of the challenges. Then look up key words related to each challenge. For instance, someone facing an incurable disease might find help through scriptures with words like illness, healing, health, or well, etc. Someone with a financial need might look up verses with words like money, wealth, riches, provide, or provision. There are many great bible programs to help with that like Bible Gateway, FaithLife Study Bible, Biblestudytools.com, or mywsb.com among others.

7. **God used the Jordan River as a way to demonstrate the favor on Joshua’s life and establish Joshua’s leadership before all of Israel. How might God use difficulties and barriers in our lives as a testimony to others?**

Again, no right or wrong answers, just an opportunity to share testimonies and to raise awareness to see challenges as opportunities to share Christ with others and experience His power ourselves.

PERSONAL APPLICATION

This is the most important part of any discussion. We want to raise up doers of the Word and not hearers and discussers only! Jesus said the difference between wisdom and foolishness was not knowledge of the Word but application of it. Our natural tendency is to be discussers rather than doers, share opinions rather than seize opportunities. You, as the leader, may need to sometimes cut discussion short in order to spend time on the application. You might even take time to review the applications from the previous week as a way to encourage your group to live wisely.

- Where in your life are you facing a 'Jordan River' which is keeping you from your destiny or promise. What can you do this week to fight the good fight of faith in regards to that obstacle.
- Make a list of the areas of your life where you need faith. Get together with someone this week and search the bible for promises that relate to those areas
- Are there any Jordan Rivers that you need the faith and courage to rise up and lead people through? What can you do this week to lead others through that barrier?

PRAYER

- Ask God to strengthen your faith so that you'll be able to fight the good fight of faith.
- Ask God for wisdom on how to cross any 'Jordan Rivers' that may be coming between you and your destiny.
- Ask God for the courage of Joshua to hear from God and lead others into their promised land.
- Ask God to reveal more of Himself to you to bolster your faith in Him.

NOTES
