

LESSON 11

THE FALL OF JERICO

BEFORE YOU TEACH

The Collapse of the City Walls

The city of Jericho, built thousands of years before Joshua was born, was one of the oldest cities in the world. In some places, it had fortified walls up to twenty-five feet high and twenty feet thick. Soldiers standing guard on top of the walls could see for miles. Jericho was a symbol of military power and strength—the Canaanites considered it invincible.

Israel would attack this city first, and its destruction would put the fear of Israel into the heart of every person in Canaan. The Canaanites saw Israel's God as a nature god because He parted the Jordan and as a war god because He defeated Sihon and Og. But the Canaanites did not consider Him a fortress god—one who could prevail against a walled city. The defeat of Jericho not only showed that Israel's God was superior to the Canaanite gods, but that He was also invincible.

The capture of Jericho is described more as a military procession than a military operation. Led by the ark of the Lord, the Israelites marched around the city for seven days. On the seventh day, at the appointed hour, the trumpets blasted and the walls fell.

Archeological evidence indicates that the walls did indeed “fall flat.” The double walls were twelve to fifteen feet apart, and they were built on faulty, uneven foundations. The two walls were linked by houses built across the top (as Rahab's house was), which substantially strengthened them. Archeological evidence suggests that the outer wall fell outward and down the hillside, dragging the inner wall and the houses with it.

Complicated Instructions for Battle

Why did God give Joshua all these complicated instructions for the battle? Several answers are possible:

1. God was making it undeniably clear that the battle would depend upon Him and not upon Israel's weapons and expertise. This is why priests, not soldiers, carried the ark and led the Israelites into battle.
2. This strange military maneuver was a test of the Israelites' faith and their willingness to follow God completely. The blowing of the trumpets had a special significance. They had been instructed to blow the same trumpets used in the religious festivals in their battles to remind them that their victory would come from the Lord, not their own military might (Num 10:9).
3. God's method of taking the city emphasized the terror already felt in Jericho (Josh 2:9).

BIBLE TEXT

Joshua 5:13-6:27

BIBLE TRUTH

God is almighty and He has the power to accomplish anything.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. To obey God's command even though we may not understand God's methods.
2. To rely on God's strength when things seem impossible.

MEMORY VERSE

“With God all things are possible.”

(Mark 10:27b)

PRAYER

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we pray. We thank You, Lord, for Your love and protection throughout this past week. You are the almighty God and have the power to do anything. Sometimes, we have problems that we can't solve, or we have jobs that seem impossible to do. Help us believe in You and rely on Your strength. May Your Spirit guide today's class, as we learn how You helped the Israelites do the impossible. Hallelujah! Amen.

Complete Destruction

Why did God demand that the Israelites destroy almost everyone and everything in Jericho? He was carrying out severe judgment against the wickedness of the Canaanites. This punishment usually required that everything be destroyed (Deut 12:2-3; 13:12-18).

Because of their evil practices and intense idolatry, the Canaanites were a stronghold of rebellion against God. This threat to the right kind of living that God required had to be removed. If not, it would affect all Israel like a cancerous growth.

A few people and some items in Jericho were not destroyed, but they were special cases. Rahab and her household were saved because she had faith in God and because she helped the Israelite spies. The silver and gold and vessels of bronze and iron were kept, not to enrich the people, but to beautify the tabernacle and its services.

God's purpose in all this was to keep the people's faith and religion uncontaminated. He did not want the plunder to remind Israel of Canaanite practices. (For more information on how Israel handled its plunder, see Numbers 31:25-30.)

UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS

There may be tasks that your students are facing that seem impossible to accomplish, or there may be things that they would like to do but seem too hard for them.

Children at this age might have an "out-of-sight, out-of-mind" mentality and believe that if they keep avoiding what is bothering them, these problems will eventually disappear. But they are likely to experience even more frustration later when they realize that things have not gotten better, but worse. We can use this story to encourage the students to seek God's help whenever they face difficulties. As indicated in the story, anything is possible with God's help.

Ask your students if they have ever felt troubled when they find things hard to do, like keeping their room clean, listening to their parents, getting good grades in school, loving their sibling, etc. Instead of being daunted by their fears or by the magnitude of the situation, encourage them to turn to the Lord for help.

Psalms 46:1-2 states, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear." When your students begin to rely on the Lord for strength, they will experience on a personal level that "with God all things are possible" (Mt 19:26).

VOCABULARY

commander: somebody in charge of an army or part of an army

ark of the covenant: a special gold-covered chest that held the Ten Commandments

priest: someone who is in charge of worship and offers sacrifices

conquer: to win by fighting

REVIEW

Last week, we learned how God made Joshua the new leader of the Israelites. God told Joshua to be strong and brave, because He would always be with him. Then Joshua sent two spies into the city called Jericho.

Where did the two spies stay when they went into Jericho? (At the house of a woman named Rahab.) What did Rahab do when the king of Jericho found out about the spies? (She hid them on her roof under some flax plants.) What did she make the spies promise her? (She made them promise to save her and her family when the Israelites came to take the land.) What would be the sign of the promise? (She would tie a scarlet cord to her window.)

After the spies returned to the camp and told Joshua all that had happened, he knew that it was about time to get ready for the battle to take over Jericho.

BIBLE STORY

Joshua Meets the Commander of the Lord's Army

Now Joshua was near Jericho. One day, he went out to see the city of Jericho for himself. As he looked at the tall walls that surrounded the city, he might have wondered how his army could ever force its way in. All of a sudden, Joshua saw a Man dressed like a soldier, standing in front of him with a sword in His hand. Joshua went up to Him and asked, "Are You on our side or on the enemy's side?"

The Man replied, "I am on neither side. I am the Commander of the Lord's army."

Then Joshua bowed low with his face to the ground to show his respect. He asked Him, "What message does the Lord have for me?" Joshua was glad in his heart when he knew that God would help him capture the city of Jericho. He believed this Commander of the Lord's army had come to lead the Israelites in their battle against their enemies. So Joshua bowed down to the ground and worshiped.

The Commander of the Lord's army replied, "Take off your sandals, because the place where you are standing is holy." So Joshua quickly took off his sandals, just as Moses had done before the burning bush at Mount Horeb.

The Lord's Instructions to Conquer Jericho

Because the king of Jericho feared the people of Israel, the city of Jericho had been tightly shut so that no one could come in or go out. But the Lord said to Joshua, "I will let you take the city together with its king and all its soldiers." The Lord then gave Joshua these instructions:

1. Each day for six days, the people, the priests, and the soldiers will quietly march once around the city without raising their voices or saying a word.
2. Seven priests will walk in front of the ark of the covenant, carrying trumpets made of rams' horns and blowing them.
3. On the seventh day, the Israelites will march around the city seven times doing exactly the same actions.
4. On the seventh round on the seventh day of circling the walls of Jericho, while the trumpets blast, all the people will shout aloud. The walls will fall down, and everyone will rush in.

The commander of the Lord's army told Joshua how the Israelites should make an attack against Jericho. And he told Joshua how God would give a great victory to the Israelites if they carefully obeyed His orders.

Joshua listened. God's plan for taking the city was going to be unusual (read Josh 6:2-5), but that was all Joshua needed to know. He didn't question God, but simply obeyed His instructions.

We can see that Joshua showed strong faith in obeying God's words. How can we show our faith in our daily lives? [Spend one to two minutes asking students to relate this passage to their lives by coming up with actual

examples of how to show their faith to God in their daily lives.]

The Israelites March Around Jericho

[For the next part of the story, invite all students to come up to the front and act out the story details together. No props are needed. The students can pretend to hold a trumpet or the ark of the covenant in their hands. Have one student be Joshua, 2-3 be priests with trumpets, 2 be priests carrying the ark, 2-3 be soldiers leading the way, and 2-3 following behind the priests. If there are fewer students, pick one person for each prominent role.]

When Joshua returned to the camp at Gilgal, he told the people about his visit with the Commander of the Lord's army. And all the people were ready to obey the orders that this mighty Commander had given.

Then Joshua called the priests together and said, "Take the ark of the covenant and have seven priests march in front of it with trumpets."

He told the people, "A group of soldiers will go ahead of the ark of the covenant and lead you around the city. Now go and follow them!"

After Joshua had given everyone their orders, the seven priests with the trumpets started marching in front of the ark of the covenant. While the priests blew the trumpets, one group of soldiers marched ahead of the priests and another group marched behind the ark. Joshua had also instructed the people, "Do not make a battle cry, shout, or even talk until the day I tell you to. When I say so, let out a big shout!"

And so it happened on the first day, the Israelites obeyed Joshua's orders—carrying the ark once around the city before returning to camp for the night.

Joshua and all the Israelites got up early the next morning. Everyone repeated their duties as Joshua had instructed on the first day. The priests carried the ark of the covenant behind the seven priests who blew the trumpets. One group of soldiers led the way while another group followed.

The Israelites kept this up for six days. [Have students march around the classroom six times. Remind students to stay patient, quiet, and focused, as the priests and soldiers were. Before the students reenact the march for the seventh day of battle, have them sit together on the floor while you share the following thoughts with them. Ask students how they feel after circling the classroom six times.]

If you happened to be one of the marching priests or soldiers, how would you feel? [Encourage students to respond.] Well, they needed to be patient, for the Lord had commanded them to go out every day for one whole week to march around the city.

What about the reactions of the people living in Jericho? They were probably quite anxious as they

watched the Israelites march around their city every day for six days. They were probably thinking, "Those Israelites are so odd. They do not fight like other men." After six days of the same actions, maybe the people of Jericho thought the Israelites were bluffing and just trying to intimidate them.

But Rahab believed the Israelites were carrying out God's mission to capture Jericho. She had called her father, mother, brothers, and sisters into her home, and together they looked out of the window where the scarlet cord hung, watching the strange actions of the people who worshiped the God of Israel.

The Fall of Jericho

Now, students, are you ready to march again? [Have students stand up and remain silent as you continue to narrate the story.]

On the seventh day, the Israelites got up at daybreak and did as they had done for six days, except this time they marched around the city seven times. At the end of the seventh march around the great city walls, the Israelites stood still.

They did not turn toward the camp at Gilgal as on the previous six days, but instead looked toward the wall. Then the priests blew loudly with their trumpets and all the people shouted with a great voice. [Have students who are priests pretend to hold up their trumpets and make a horn sound and then have the rest shout loudly at once.]

At that moment, the stone wall began to tremble; then it shook and fell down flat. What a great miracle! The Israelites knew that God had caused the wall to crumble, because they had not even touched it. The secret of the Jericho battle was not in doing, but in believing.

God's method seemed peculiar, but they followed His instructions and it worked! The Israelites had shown their faith through their obedience. [Have students go back to their seats.]

Then Joshua reminded the people, "Everything in this city belongs to God. Only the woman Rahab and the others in her house will be left alive, because she helped the spies we had sent. Stay away from everything because they belong to the Lord! If you take any of them, you will be destroyed and you will bring trouble to the people of Israel and cause them to be destroyed. All the silver and gold and everything made of bronze and iron belong to the Lord and must be put in His treasury."

Rahab and Her Household Are Saved

Then Joshua said to the two spies who had gone into the city, "Go to Rahab's house and bring her and her family out like you promised." They found Rahab's family without any trouble because of the scarlet cord in the window. They were spared when the walls tumbled down because Rahab followed the orders that the spies had given her. Because she put her trust in God, Rahab shared in the great victory with the Israelites.

The Israelites took all the silver and gold and everything made of bronze and iron and put it in the Lord's house. They then burned the whole city and everything in it except Rahab's family. The Lord was with Joshua, and the people throughout the land heard about him.

What have we learned from Joshua and Rahab's stories? [Pause for students' responses.] God's commands seemed strange to the Israelites at first, but they had strong faith in Him. They believed His commands wholeheartedly and followed His instructions obediently.

Deuteronomy 29:29 states that "the secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever; that we may do all the words of this law." Let's remind ourselves that even though we may not always understand what God is doing, our job is to keep on obeying His commands.

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

- 1. Who did Joshua meet outside Jericho?** Joshua met the Commander of the Lord's army.
- 2. Why did the Commander of the Lord's army ask Joshua to take off his sandals?** Joshua was standing in a holy place with God's presence.
- 3. What instructions did Joshua receive about how to take down the city of Jericho?** Each day for six days they were to march once around the city. They had to take along the ark of the covenant and have seven priests walk in front of it, carrying trumpets made of rams' horns. On the seventh day, they were to march around the city seven times while the priests blew the trumpets. When the priests made a long blast on the trumpets, everyone was to shout. The walls would then fall down for everyone to go in.
- 4. What did Joshua remind the Israelites of before they entered Jericho?** Not to take anything from Jericho; all the silver, gold, and everything made of bronze and iron belonged to the Lord and had to be put in His treasury.
- 5. How do you think the people of Jericho felt about the Israelites circling their city?** They were probably afraid at first, then confused. They might have laughed at the Israelites' way of battle.
- 6. Why did God choose to defeat Jericho without using Israel's army?** To show both the Israelites and Canaanites that it was God and not Israel's army that defeated Jericho.

MEMORY VERSE PRACTICE

Please reinforce the memory verse every week.
You can practice the memory verse with your students anytime during class.

"With God all things are possible." (Mark 10:27b)

HOMEWORK ANSWER KEY

1. "With God all things are possible." (Mark 10:27b)
2. A
3. C
4. False; seven priests.
5. True
6. silent, shout
7. scarlet
8. Commander
9. Answers may vary.

SPIRITUAL TEACHING & LIFE APPLICATION

1. We may not understand God's method, but we need to obey His commands.

This is what God told Joshua to do:

- The people were to march around the city – silently – once a day for 6 days
- The priests were to blow their trumpets
- On the 7th day, they were to march around the city 7 times – silently
- On the 7th time around – they shouted and the walls fell down

On the seventh day, the Israelites marched seven times around the wall of Jericho. On that morning, they rose early and prepared for the long march. They knew the day for victory had come. At the end of the seventh march around the great wall, the Israelites stood still. They did not turn toward the camp at Gilgal as on other days, but looked toward the wall. Then the priests blew loudly with their trumpets and all the people shouted with a great voice. At that moment, the stone wall began to tremble; it shook, and then fell down flat. What a great miracle! The Israelites knew that God had caused the wall to tumble, because they had not even touched it. The secret of the Jericho campaign was not in doing, but believing. God's method seemed unreasonable, but for those who followed instructions, it worked! The Israelites had shown their faith by their obedience.

What lessons can we learn from this incident? God's commands seemed strange to the Israelites, but their faith was in the Lord, and they believed His commands. The Bible says, "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law" (Dt 29:29). In this verse, "this law" refers to God's word. We may not understand what God is doing, but we are to obey His commands. When we obey His teachings, we will be blessed.

2. All things are possible with God—rely on God!

In today's lesson, it might have seemed impossible for the Israelites to take over the mighty city of Jericho, but with the help of God, anything is possible. The bravery and obedience of Joshua and his fellow Israelites were the key factors to their battle victory.

God does not want us to be afraid to face our problems. He wants us to stand firm in our faith and believe in His great love and power to solve our problems. Do you have that simple faith to believe and obey God's words? You need to pray to God every day to give you faith and believe in God's mighty power to solve your problem(s). Do you have problems that you can't seem to fix? Maybe you had a big fight with your siblings. Maybe you are being bullied at school. However, as long as you rely on God and pray to Him, you may be surprised to see how God can help you make things better.

ACTIVITIES

1

Joshua Says...

Objective: To have a fun time practicing the skill of following instructions.

Instructions

1. Play "Joshua Says" (like "Simon Says"). You can keep to the following script or create your own version of "Joshua Says."
2. Students are to perform the action only when they hear "Joshua says."

Script

- Joshua says, "Blow your trumpet."
- Joshua says, "Walk in a circle."
- Joshua says, "Yell 'Hallelujah!'"
- Clap your hands.
- Joshua says, "Stomp your feet."
- Turn around.

2

Building Courage

Objective: To reinforce the message of being brave and believing in God's mighty power.

Instructions

1. Beginning at the arrow, skip six letters and write down the seventh letter. Make sure to count the thicker "wall" at the top center of the puzzle when you reach it.
2. Skip another six letters and write down the seventh letter. You can cross out the letters you have written down so you don't forget which letter you're supposed to count from. You still have to include those letters when counting six letters to skip.
3. Continue until you have filled in all the blanks.
4. You will discover God's message from Isaiah 12:2 and Matthew 19:26.

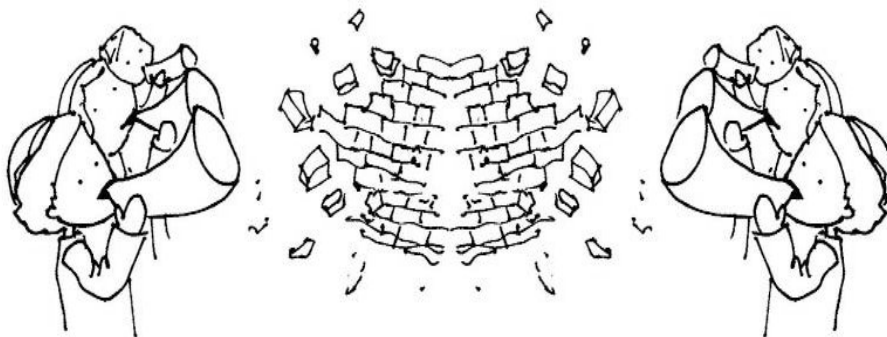
Answer

I will trust and not be afraid.
With God all things are possible.

Building Courage

Beginning at the arrow, skip six letters and write down the seventh letter. Go around the "walls" seven times and you will discover God's message from Isaiah 12:2 and Matthew 19:26.

	H R G E A P O I U O										↓	I O T N S D W D S										B
N	■	□	■	□	■	□	■	□	■	□											G	
E	□	■	□	■	□	■	□	■	□	■											T	
R	■	□	■	□	■	□	■	□	■	□											A	
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I _____

_____.

W _____

_____.

E1 Year 1 Book 3 Lesson 11—The Fall of Jericho

Homework Assignment

Name: _____ Parent signature: _____ Date: _____

Bible Truth: God is almighty and He has the power to accomplish anything.**Lesson Objectives:** 1. To obey God's command even though we may not understand God's methods.
2. To rely on God's strength when things seem impossible.**Bible Reading:** Please put a checkmark in the space when you complete the reading each day.**Prayer:** Please put a checkmark in the space on the days you prayed to God.

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Bible Reading							
Prayer							

Memory Verse

Please write down this week's memory verse.

(Mark 10:27b)

What I Learned from the Bible This Week

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Homework Assignment

Understanding What You Have Learned

1. Write down the memory verse for this week.

Multiple Choice

2. What did the Commander of the Lord's army ask Joshua to take off?
- a. His sandals
 - b. His coat
 - c. His belt
3. How many times did the Israelites circle the city on the second day?
- a. 3 times
 - b. 2 times
 - c. 1 time

True or False

4. God wanted six priests to carry six trumpets in front of the ark of the covenant as the Israelites marched around Jericho. _____
5. The Israelites destroyed everything in the city of Jericho except Rahab and her family, and the plunder that Joshua told them to put into the treasury of the Lord. _____

Fill In the Blank

scarlet	shout	Commander	silent
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6. Joshua told the people to be _____ the first six days, and to _____ on the seventh day when the priests blew the trumpets.
7. Then Joshua said to the two spies who had gone into the city, "Go to Rahab's house and bring her and her family out like you promised." They found Rahab's family without any trouble because of the _____ cord in the window.
8. When Joshua was outside of the city of Jericho, he met the _____ of the Lord's army.

Life Application

9. Please interview one of your family members or older church brothers or sisters, and have them share with you their testimony of how God solved their "impossible situation." Write your interview results in the space provided below.
