



CONTENDING FOR THE PROMISE

STUDY GUIDE

Joshua 6:1-25 · Joshua 1:6-9

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VERTICAL TAMP A

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide walks back through Sunday's message, "Contending for the Promise," so you can dig deeper on your own or with your group this week. Read each point, sit with the Word Study and Key Line boxes, and let the questions move you from information to reflection. You do not have to answer every question in one sitting. Slow down. Let the Word do its work.

A suggested rhythm: read the Opening and one Point per day across the first four days of the week, then return to the Big Idea and the Close on day five to reset before moving forward.

BIG IDEA

God's word must govern our silence, our shout, and our steps.

Contending for the promise means holding to God's word and following His instruction while what He said and what we see have not yet come together. Contending is not fighting harder, shouting louder, or forcing a door open. It is staying under God's word when the wall is standing, staying with His instruction when the process is uncomfortable, and staying obedient when the way opens. This guide is built to help you locate yourself in that process honestly.

REFLECT BEFORE YOU BEGIN

1. Think of something God has said over your life that has not yet come together with what you see. Where are you right now: facing a shut gate, walking another lap, or standing in front of an opened way?
2. Read Numbers 13-14 and Joshua 6 side by side. Same land, two very different generations. What made the difference?

OPENING · WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE TO CONTEND?

JOSHUA 1:8-9, NIV

Keep 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. Have 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.

When we hear contend, we may picture fighting harder, shouting louder, or forcing a door open. But before Joshua faces Jericho, God tells him what contending requires: keep My word on your lips, meditate on it, be careful to do it, and be courageous because I am with you. God prepares Joshua to obey His word before Joshua ever sees the wall.

WORD STUDY · HEBREW

הָגָה (*hagah*) "meditate"

To murmur, mutter, ponder aloud. The same word is used of a lion growling over its prey (Isaiah 31:4). Not an empty mind. A mouth that keeps returning to God's instruction until it shapes what you do.

The proof that God's word is on your lips is not that you are always talking. It is that His word governs your silence, your shout, and your steps.

Notice the tension. God tells Joshua to keep His word on his lips. Later, Joshua tells the army not to say a word until he commands them to shout. Last week Israel crossed the Jordan, but entering the land was not the same as possessing every part of it. God's presence is with them. God's promise is before them. Jericho is still shut.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When you hear the word contend, what picture comes to mind first? How does Joshua 1:8-9 challenge that picture?
2. What would it look like, practically, to keep returning to God's word until it shapes what you actually do this week?
3. Where are you living in the space between entering something God gave you and fully possessing it?

POINT 1 · CONTEND WHEN THE WALL SAYS OTHERWISE

JOSHUA 6:1-2, NIV

Now the gates of Jericho were securely barred because of the Israelites. No one went out and no one came in. Then the Lord said to Joshua, "See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men."

Verse 1 is what Joshua sees. Verse 2 is what God says. The gates are barred. The king has fighting men. God does not tell Joshua to pretend the city is open. He announces the victory while the obstacle remains standing. His certainty does not remove Joshua's need to obey the instructions that follow.

WORD STUDY · HEBREW

נָתַן (*natan*) "have delivered"

To give, hand over, deliver. In verse 2 it is spoken as a finished action: "I have given." God describes the handover as done before a single lap has been walked.

God said "delivered" while Joshua still saw "barred." That is the space where he has to contend.

But Joshua cannot see everything happening behind those gates. In Joshua 2:9-11, Rahab says the people inside have heard what God has done and are melting in fear. Your eyes can accurately describe the obstacle and still give you an incomplete account of what God is doing. Faith does not require Joshua to deny the wall. Faith requires him not to give the wall more authority than God's word. The wall can tell you what you are facing. It cannot tell you whether God is faithful.

One caution: Joshua had a specific word concerning Jericho. Our confidence must rest in what God has truly said, not in treating every outcome we desire as a divine guarantee.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What wall in your life is accurately describing your obstacle but trying to tell you something about God that is not true?
2. Read Joshua 2:9-11. Has God ever been working behind a gate you could only see from the outside? What happened?
3. How do you tell the difference between standing on what God has actually said and treating what you want as a promise?

POINT 2 · CONTEND WHEN OBEDIENCE IS QUIET

JOSHUA 6:10-11, NIV

But Joshua had commanded the army, “Do not give a war cry, do not raise your voices, do not say a word until the day I tell you to shout. Then shout!” So he had the ark of the Lord carried around the city, circling it once. Then the army returned to camp and spent the night there.

God’s instruction does not resemble an ordinary military assault. They march, hear the trumpets, and return to camp. Then they get up and do it again. The ark of the covenant, the sign of God’s covenant presence, went with them around Jericho. Their quiet season was not a season without God’s presence.

Their feet were moving while their mouths were quiet. Pay attention to “until” in verse 10. They could not choose their own moment to break the silence. Contending required restraint as well as endurance. An earlier generation in Numbers 13-14 let fear govern what it said about the land. Now this generation must follow God’s instruction while looking at a wall that has not moved.

WORD STUDY · HEBREW

רוע (*rua*) "war cry / shout"

To raise a shout, sound an alarm, give a battle cry. The same verb forbidden in verse 10 is commanded in verse 16. The difference was not the sound. It was the timing.

PSALM 42:5, NIV

Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.

The psalmist does not pretend he feels fine. He also does not allow the feeling to announce the final outcome. Fear may say you will not make it. Disappointment may say nothing will change. Weariness may say you will never finish. Bring those feelings honestly to God, but do not give them authority to tell you what God will do. The feeling may be real. The future it predicts may be wrong.

Don't let a temporary emotion preach a permanent conclusion over your life.

2 KINGS 5:13, NIV

Naaman's servants went to him and said, “My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more, then, when he tells you, ‘Wash and be cleansed!’”

Naaman nearly rejected the instruction because it did not look like the healing he expected. Looking foolish does not prove you heard God. At Jericho and in Naaman's story, the action has authority because a clear instruction was given. Hebrews 11:30 says the walls fell by faith after the army had marched around them for seven days. That includes the days they returned to camp and the wall was still standing. The silent obedience mattered just as much as the celebrated shout.

Can you keep obeying when you have nothing new to report?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What temporary emotion has been preaching a permanent conclusion over your life? What has God actually said instead?
2. Where is God asking you for restraint, not just endurance? What would it cost you to wait for His "until"?
3. Like Naaman, have you ever resisted an instruction because it did not look like the answer you expected? Explain.

POINT 3 · DON'T KEEP CIRCLING WHAT GOD HAS OPENED

JOSHUA 6:20, NIV

When the trumpets sounded, the army shouted, and at the sound of the trumpet, when the men gave a loud shout, the wall collapsed; so everyone charged straight in, and they took the city.

For six days, circling Jericho was obedience. Once the wall fell, they charged straight in. God brought down what Israel could not bring down. Then Israel took the step the opening made possible. They did not merely celebrate an opening. They entered it. In Acts 12, God opens the gate and Peter gets up and follows. There are things only God can bring down. There are steps He calls you to take when He opens the way.

God did not bring the wall down so they could spend the rest of their lives walking around it.

WORD STUDY · HEBREW

חרם (cherem) "devoted things"

Something set apart irrevocably to God and removed from common use. At Jericho the city was placed under God's judgment, and its goods were not Israel's to take. The victory still came with instructions.

Once Israel gets inside, God's instructions still matter. Some people know how to listen to God while they need a door to open. The deeper test is whether they will keep listening once it does. And do not miss Rahab. Joshua speaks about sparing her before the wall falls, and when the city is taken, the spies go in and bring her entire family out. God was making a way for Israel to enter, and He made sure Rahab came out. The victory was not permission to forget the person to whom Israel had given its word.

Contending does not end when the wall falls. The promise is still God's when you step inside it.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is there a way God has already opened that you are still circling as though the wall is standing? What is keeping you outside?
2. What instructions from God tend to fade for you once the pressure is off and the door has opened?
3. Who is your Rahab, a person affected by your next step whom God is asking you to remember and honor?

CLOSE · WHEN THE WALL STANDS

Some of you see a shut gate. Some of you have walked another lap and have nothing new to report. Some of you know a way has opened, but you are still living as though the wall is standing. Contend for the promise. Hold to what God has said. Obey Him in the quiet season. When He opens the way, follow Him through it. And when you get inside, keep listening. God's presence was with Israel at the Jordan, around Jericho, and as they entered the city. His presence did not remove their need to listen and obey.

When the wall stands, keep marching. When God brings it down, go up.

HEBREWS 11:30, NIV

By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the army had marched around them for seven days.

JOSHUA 1:9, NIV

Have 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.

THIS WEEK, CONTENDING FOR THE PROMISE

1. Separate the fact from the conclusion. Write down what you see ("The door is closed") and the conclusion you are tempted to draw ("God must have forgotten me"). Test the second against what God has actually said.
2. Complete one more lap. Identify one clear act of obedience you have been tempted to quit or postpone, tell God honestly how you feel, then take the next step even if you have nothing new to report afterward.
3. Take the step, and keep listening. If a way has opened, make the call, have the conversation, submit the application, or finish the work. As you move, ask: Am I still listening to God? Am I honoring the people affected?

"When the wall stands, keep marching. When God brings it down, go up."

And when you get in, keep listening.