

Immoral Prayer and the Enemies of Faith

Chapter 12

Audio Lesson: Old Testament Survey lesson 26



Objective: to learn how our faith can overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil.



“Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your forefathers worshiped beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.” Then the people answered, “Far be it from us to forsake the LORD to serve other gods!”

—Joshua 24:14-16

The book of Joshua is full of allegories that teach us how to overcome the enemies of our faith. The first enemy of our faith, the world, is pictured by Jericho in chapter 6. The story of how Achan disobeyed and kept some of Jericho’s treasures is an allegory that pictures our desire for the things of this *world*. Achan said, “I saw. I coveted. I took.” In chapters 7 and 8 Israel’s defeat at Ai because of Achan’s sin represents our *flesh*. Then in chapter 9 the people from Gibeon made a treaty with Israel by tricking them. The devil deceives us in the same way. *Satan* works to get us to do a good thing to keep us from the best thing that God has for us. Joshua chapters 6-9 give us a picture of these three enemies of our faith: the *world*, the *flesh*, and the *devil*.

In the rest of the Book of Joshua, you find more allegories that profile faith for us. The lives of Joshua and Caleb give us “A Positive Profile of Faith.” They never lost their vision. Like the ten spies who focused on the difficulties, the people of Israel give us “A Negative Profile of Faith.” They failed to conquer all the nations of Canaan as God had ordered them to do and the next book of the Bible describes the penalty for their disobedience. The last picture of faith that we find in the book of Joshua is “A Verdict of Faith.” Joshua challenged his people to seal their faith by making a covenant with God. He made it known that he and his house would put God first and serve God.

The book of Joshua concludes with Joshua charging the people of God just as Moses did at the end of the books of Deuteronomy and Leviticus. Moses and Joshua challenge us to bring the issues of faith to a verdict by making the commitment to put God first in our lives.



1. True or false? The Israelites never had any defeats in the Promised Land because of their faith.
2. True or false? God never rebuked anyone for praying.
3. True or false? God will not give us victory when we cling to sin in our lives.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

4. Why did Joshua fall on his face after the defeat at Ai?
 - a. He felt guilty about his sin.
 - b. He knew this was a spiritual problem for Israel.
 - c. He was wounded by the warriors of Ai.
 - d. He was embarrassed.
5. What is the key to victory in our spiritual battles?
 - a. God being with us
 - b. Being stronger than our enemies
 - c. A good education
 - d. Well-planned strategy
6. Jericho is a good illustration of which of the following?
 - a. Effective military strategy
 - b. Badly constructed walls
 - c. The law of the tithe
 - d. Modern politics
7. Why did God tell Joshua to stop praying?
 - a. Because God gets tired of our prayers
 - b. Because God is not interested in our troubles
 - c. Because he was embarrassing himself
 - d. Because the will of God was obvious in this situation

8. When we want something God has forbidden, our sin usually goes through three stages. What is the normal order for these stages?

- | | |
|----------------|----------|
| a. "I took" | 1. _____ |
| b. "I saw" | 2. _____ |
| c. "I coveted" | 3. _____ |

9. Which of the following are typical characteristics of God? (choose all that apply)

- a. Order
- b. Chaos
- c. Randomness
- d. Design
- e. Foresight
- f. Recklessness

10. What mistake did the Israelites make with the Gibeonites?

- a. God had told them not to make any treaties, and they ignored Him.
- b. They forgot to consult God.
- c. They knew the Gibeonites were lying, but they did not care.
- d. They began worshiping the Gibeonite gods.

11. Match each of the following cities with the enemy they illustrate.

- | | |
|------------|--------------|
| a. Jericho | 1. the devil |
| b. Ai | 2. the world |
| c. Gibeon | 3. the flesh |

12. How does Satan usually tempt us?

- a. With obvious sins
- b. With the opposite of God's will
- c. With a good thing
- d. With the best thing

13. Which statement best describes Caleb's faith?

- a. He never lost the vision.
- b. He could never make up his mind.
- c. He rejected God's promises.
- d. He never stopped doubting.

14. What does it mean for us to "conquer Canaan" today?

- a. To go to Israel and join the fight
- b. To exterminate the enemies of God's truth
- c. To march around our cities and shout
- d. To get rid of all the areas of sin in our lives



How much of “Canaan” is still left in your life? What do you need to do to conquer it?



If you have never made a full commitment to serve God alone, this would be a good time to do so. Ask God to show you what parts of your life He wants you to defeat. Then ask Him for a battle plan and for the strength and courage to conquer the enemies of your faith. Then say as Joshua, “But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.”



Going Deeper

1. Why did Joshua immediately fall on his face and pray when he heard they were defeated at Ai? _____

2. How can we apply that, along with the reality that God rebuked him for praying? _____

3. Relate and apply the extraordinarily brilliant military strategy demonstrated by Joshua at the second battle of Ai to the ridiculous battle plan at Jericho. _____

4. Relate and apply three enemies of faith demonstrated by Jericho, Achan and the Gibeonites. _____

5. How can we apply the primary and most exemplary dimension of the faith of Caleb? _____

6. What do people of faith mean when they refer to conquering the Canaan in their life? _____

7. In what way does the victory at Jericho demonstrate the essence of the meaning of tithing? _____
