



Our biblical assignment is to serve God by overcoming evil with good, and it takes God to do that because He is the only One who is good. If we think we're going to overcome evil with social justice, apart from God, we're deceived. God is the only Source of justice. There is a great deal of confusion and consternation in the Church today about this because we want the applause of the secular culture. But Jesus warned us about the offensiveness of the gospel. He told us that we would have to choose Him above everything else—that our relationship with Him would have to be primary above all other relationships. We see how difficult that is as we witness the unprecedented capitulation of God's people and the great "falling away" of vast segments of the Church. So, what can we do? Well, the fundamental beginning point comes back to the Word of God. Our invitation is to read our Bibles on a systematic, daily basis—not random readings or the verse of the day, but purposeful, systematic reading of our Bible. It's a reflection of our respect for God and our pursuit of Him. And God said, "If you seek Me, you'll find Me." He also declared that He would reward those who diligently seek Him. Reading our Bibles is a good thing, and it's one of the ways we can overcome evil.

I. THE IMPORTANCE OF GOD'S WORD

Joshua 1:8–9 ⁸ *"Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; 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. ⁹ Have I not commanded you? **Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.**"*

***If we don't know the Word of God, we will not know the character of God. How would you encourage others to read their Bibles in a daily, systematic way?**

***Where should Christians be challenging the status quo (the existing state of affairs) in our culture today? Name some people who are currently doing that.**

II. JOSHUA & THE JUDGES

A. The Timeline: *Joseph — Exodus — Wilderness — Conquest — Judges — Monarchy*

B. An Extraordinary Life

Joshua 24:20–24 ²⁰ *If you forsake the Lord and serve foreign gods, he will turn and bring disaster on you and make an end of you, after he has been good to you.* ²¹ *But the people said to Joshua, "No! We will serve the Lord."* ²² *Then Joshua said, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen to serve the Lord." "Yes, we are witnesses," they replied.* ²³ *"Now then," said Joshua, "throw away the foreign gods that are among you and yield your hearts to the Lord, the God of Israel."* ²⁴ *And the people said to Joshua, "We will serve the Lord our God and obey him."*

*** How would you define idolatry? Give some examples of how idolatry shows up in today's world and in your life.**

C. When God Breaks In . . .

Exodus 17:8–14 ⁸ *The Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites at Rephidim. ⁹ **Moses said to Joshua, "Choose some of our men and go out to fight the Amalekites. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hands."** ¹⁰ **So Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had ordered,** and Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill. ¹¹ *As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning. ¹² When Moses' hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up—one on one side, one on the other—so that his hands remained steady till sunset. ¹³ So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword. ¹⁴ Then the Lord said to Moses, "Write this on a scroll as something to be remembered and make sure that Joshua hears it, because I will completely blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven."**

***How has God used a difficult situation to bring about a blessing to you?**

Joshua 1:1–3 ¹ After 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. ³ I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses.

Joshua 1:6–9 ⁶ "**Be strong and courageous**, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers 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. ⁸ Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; 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. ⁹ Have I not commanded you? **Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged**, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

***Why do you think Scripture so strongly emphasizes the command, "Be strong and courageous"? What does it mean to be strong? Courageous?**

1. A new kind of life . . .
2. Much realignment . . .

Joshua 5:13–15 ¹³ Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, "Are you for us or for our enemies?" ¹⁴ "Neither," he replied, "but as commander of the army of the Lord I have now come." Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked him, "What message does my Lord have for his servant?" ¹⁵ The commander of the Lord's army replied, "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so.

3. God's involvement — the supernatural — is necessary.

Joshua 7:1 But the Israelites **acted unfaithfully in regard to the devoted things**; Achan son of Carmi, the son of Zimri, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of them. So the Lord's anger burned against Israel.

4. A Holy God

Joshua 7:5–7 ⁵ They chased the Israelites from the city gate as far as the stone quarries and struck them down on the slopes. At this the hearts of the people melted and became like water. ⁶ Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell facedown to the ground before the ark of the Lord, remaining there till evening. The elders of Israel did the same, and sprinkled dust on their heads. ⁷ And Joshua said, "Ah, Sovereign Lord, why did you ever bring this people across the Jordan to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us? If only we had been content to stay on the other side of the Jordan!"

Joshua 7:20–21 ²⁰ Achan replied, "It is true! I have sinned against the Lord, the God of Israel. This is what I have done: ²¹ When I saw in the plunder a beautiful robe from Babylonia, two hundred shekels of silver and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. They are hidden in the ground inside my tent, with the silver underneath."

***How has prayer impacted your faith? Share some places you can share the *Proclamation* and *Blessing* prayers this week.**

PROCLAMATION (Shema = hear)

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ⁵ Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength." Deuteronomy 6:4–5 (NIV)

A BLESSING (Aaronic Blessing)

"The Lord bless you and keep you; ²⁵ the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; ²⁶ the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace." Numbers 6:24–26 (NIV)