

Victory Will Be Yours If You Follow God's Instructions

God promised Joshua and the people of Israel victory over the city of Jericho, but it would only be achieved by His power through faith and obedience to His plan.

One of the most important cities of the Jordan Valley was the ancient city of Jericho. It is said to be the oldest city in the world, and it is first mentioned in the Bible in Numbers 22 as the place where the Israelites camped as they were conquering the cities east of the Jordan River. Jericho would be the first city in the Promised Land that Joshua would lead Israel to conquer — it was to be a firstfruits offering to the Lord. Although God had promised certain victory, it would only be obtained under one condition: Joshua and his people were to follow God's instructions verbatim, and so they did.

All of us want victory in our lives, and through faith in Jesus Christ, *victory is our inheritance*. Whether it's victory over fear and anxiety, financial lack, sickness and disease, or challenges in our relationships, we are destined to win in every situation we face, as long as we will listen to the Lord and obey His instructions. If we are to win any battles, we must follow His strategies.

Victory Depends on Actions of Faith

The children of Israel had just crossed the divinely parted waters of the Jordan River, and they were preparing to take their first city in the Promised Land.

Joshua 6:1-2 (NKJV) –[1] Now Jericho was securely shut up because of the children of Israel; none went out, and none came in. [2] And the LORD said to Joshua: “See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, [and] the mighty men of valor.

Naturally speaking, Jericho and its people were safe within their walls. The city was under lockdown, and the idea that *Israel had already conquered them* was a stretch of the imagination. Nevertheless, God had told Joshua, “It’s yours — the city of Jericho, its mighty warriors, and its king have all been given to you.” This monumental defeat of an otherwise impenetrable city was *a finished work* and *a done deed* in the mind of God. But in order to carry it out and take possession, there was a very specific strategy Israel needed to carry out.

This was essentially what God told Joshua when he had just become the leader of the nation. The Lord said, at the beginning of Joshua.

Joshua 1:2 (NKJV) –[2] “Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them—the children of Israel.”

The land was promised by God to Israel, but in order for them to claim it, they needed to physically walk through it. God said,

Joshua 1:3 (NKJV) [3] “Every place that **the sole of your foot will tread** upon I have given you....”

The children of Israel were to take possession of the land *step-by-step* by faith. God required them to put their faith in action in order for the territory of promise to rightfully become theirs. The same is true for you. God will give you a promised dream or vision of how He wants to bless your life, but in order for it to become reality, there are certain steps of faith you will have to go through.

God Gave Specific Instructions

In Joshua 6:3 and 4, the Lord began to unveil His blueprint for victory over the city of Jericho.

Joshua 6:3-4 [3] “You shall march around the city, all [you] **men of war**; you shall go all around the city once. This you shall do six days. [4] “And seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams’ horns before the ark. But the **seventh day** you shall march around the city **seven times**, and the priests shall **blow the trumpets**.”

God said that all the “men of war,” which were all the men of Israel who were 20 years old or older, were to walk around, or encompass the city once a day for six days. Then on the seventh day, they were to march around the city seven times, and when they were done, the priests were to blow their shofars.

God’s directions were simple and clear. Although they may have seemed unorthodox, the people were to fully obey those instructions. Lack of action or a refusal to obey for any reason would result in *no victory*. Victory over Jericho would only be experienced through faith. God was setting a standard by which all the other cities in Canaan would be taken.

Likewise, you may not always understand why God tells you to do certain things, but He is always right, regardless. Whatever He tells you to do, obey it completely, and you’ll reap the reward of victory — just as Joshua and the children of Israel did.

The Purpose for Sounding a Shofar

According to Joshua 6:4, seven priests, each carrying a shofar, were to walk before the Ark of the Covenant and sound their horn just after their seventh trip around the wall on the seventh day. Israel regularly used rams’ horns, especially on four specific occasions:

1. Whenever they were going make a *sacrifice of faith*.
2. To declare in faith that the *presence of God was with them* as they marched forward.
3. As the Israelites were about to do something that could only be *accomplished by the power of God’s Spirit* going with them and performing His part.
4. The blowing of the shofar was a *declaration of celebration*. And in the case of Jericho, the sounding of shofars on the seventh day was a *declaration that victory was theirs*.

The Reason for the Shout

In addition to telling them to blow the shofars, God instructed the people of Israel *to give a great shout*.

Joshua 6:5 – [5] “It shall come to pass, when they make a long [blast] with the ram’s horn, [and] when you hear the sound of the trumpet, that all the people shall shout with **a great shout**; then the wall of the city will fall down flat. And the people shall go up every man straight before him.”

The people of Israel would lift up a *great shout*:

1. To initiate or *announce the start of each battle*.
2. As an *expression of faith*.
3. To *express great joy*.
4. To *put the enemy to flight*.

Interestingly, in each of these situations, *faith* was required in order to shout. In other words, the people of Israel probably didn’t *feel* like shouting when they plainly could see the solid walls of Jericho standing right in front of them.

Likewise, we don’t always *feel* like giving a *great shout* when our problems tower over us and seem impossible. A shout of victory requires *faith*.

Joshua Received God’s Plan and Mobilized the People

When Joshua called the priests to take up the Ark of the Covenant — and positioned the seven priests with their shofars in front of the ark.

Joshua 6:7 (NKJV) –.... “**Proceed, and march around the city, and let him who is armed advance before the ark of the LORD.**”

First, notice that Joshua said, “*Proceed,*” (KJV says, “Pass on”). Even though the Israelites had no visual proof that the wall was about to fall, they had been commanded by God to begin marching around the city, and it was

time to get up and get moving.

Next, Joshua said, “march around the city.” The KJV used the word “compass” which means *to move forward in an organized fashion with determination*. Israel was to put all their energy into what God had told them to do — and to do it to the best of their ability.

Also notice what they were to compass — “the city.” God didn’t say, “Randomly begin marching.” He gave them a target, a goal, an objective. They were to harness all their energy, efforts, and focus on accomplishing a specific objective: *to march around the city of Jericho to see it conquered*.

Last, Joshua said, “Let him who is armed advance before the ark of the LORD.” In other words, it’s time to begin making forward movement. This is the same thing God is saying to you.

It is time to quit sitting around wishing for things to change. It’s time for you to “*Proceed!*” In faith, God wants you to get on your feet and with your “trumpet” in hand, begin moving forward in what He has told you to do. Start shouting that *the victory is yours, in Jesus’ name*.

God Told Israel When To Be Quiet and When To Shout

Joshua 6:8-10 (NKJV) –[8] So it was, when Joshua had spoken to the people, that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams’ horns before the LORD advanced and blew the trumpets, and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them. [9] The armed men went before the priests who blew the trumpets, and the rear guard came after the ark, while [the priests] continued blowing the trumpets. [10] Now Joshua had commanded the people, saying, “**You shall not shout or make any noise with your voice, nor shall a word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I say to you, ‘Shout!’ Then you shall shout.**”

For six days, the people were to march around the city and not utter a word. It is very likely that if the people were to have begun talking, they would have talked themselves out of their victory. Knowing their track record, they would have likely said things such as, “*What in the world are we doing? This just doesn’t make any sense. What is going to become of*

us? How is this ever going to work? This seems so absurd.”

Fear, doubt, and unbelief are often what our mouth defaults to when we don't understand what God is doing. In fact, if we're not careful, we can quickly talk ourselves out of obedience. God knew that, which is why He told the people of Israel, through Joshua, to keep quiet and not utter a sound until the seventh day when they were to give a great shout. *I don't want to hear a peep out of you until I tell you to shout.*

Israel Stayed True to God's Plan

The instructions had been given and the people took their positions. All that was left to do was to obediently walk out God's plan.

Joshua 6:11 (NKJV) –So he had the ark of the LORD circle the city, going around [it] once. Then they **came into the camp and lodged in the camp.**

As soon as the Israelites were finished on their first day, they returned to headquarters to regroup and be refreshed. At their camp, they could strengthen and encourage each other, pray together, rehearse God's strategy, and rest until the next day.

This reminds me of when the apostle Paul wanted to visit believers in Rome for a time of refreshing.

Romans 15:32 (NKJV) –that I may come to you with joy by the will of God, and may be **refreshed** together with you.

In the same way, you need a “camp” in which you can lodge. This would include a church that you call home, or a small group of people with which you can fellowship and be *refreshed*. People who share the same beliefs, goals, and challenges are a great encouragement and strength to you. They can help you stick with God's plan and stay on track until you see victory.

Joshua 6:12-14 (NKJV) –[12] And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD. [13] Then seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD went on continually and blew with the trumpets. And the armed men

went before them. But the rear guard came after the ark of the LORD, while [the priests] continued blowing the trumpets. [14] And the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp. So they did six days.

On days one, two, three, four, five, and six, they obeyed God's absolute word. Was it monotonous? Did it require discipline and determination? Yes, and it led to their victory.

Don't Get Bored With Your Obedience

Israel faithfully carried out what God had commanded them to do, and it resulted in victory.

Joshua 6:15-16 (NKJV) –[15] But it came to pass on the seventh day that they rose early, about the dawning of the day, and marched around the city seven times in the same manner. On that day only they marched around the city seven times. [16] And the seventh time it happened, when the priests blew the trumpets, that Joshua said to the people: **“Shout, for the LORD has given you the city!”**

For *six days* they had done the same thing over and over again, and nothing in the natural had changed. The city was still on lockdown, the walls were still standing, and the people of Jericho were safe inside. The people of Israel had to cast down imaginations like, *Is there any sense at all to what we're doing?* They had to follow the strategy and *not even a peep* was to be uttered. Then, on the seventh day when Joshua gave the signal for everyone to shout and they obeyed, **the mighty walls of Jericho came-a-tumbling down!**

If you want to taste the sweet victory God has promised, stick to the strategy He gives you. Even if progress is slow or nothing seems to be changing, or the task you've undertaken is monotonous, *never give up!* There is always hope in God's promise. The finish line is just ahead, and you are about to take the gold! Be faithful to the end and you will win!

—Dwight Hammond
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