

Food for Thought

For the week of December 8, 2013

(Questions and Scriptures for further personal study)

1. This weekend, Chris talked about the significant encounter Joshua had with God right before the battle for Jericho (Joshua 5:13-6:7). Most likely, Joshua knew about a similar encounter Moses had with God before he set out to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. Read Exodus 3:1-6 and notice the similarities between these two encounters.

What are some ways these two passages could affect our response to and interaction with God when we face obstacles, temptations, or other problems?

2. The Apostle Paul had many challenging experiences in his life and it would have been easy for him to quit. Yet he was consistently able to maintain an eternal perspective instead of giving up and throwing in the towel. What do you see in 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 that helps explain how he was able to persevere in the face of difficulties?

Paul mentions his "light and momentary troubles." In 2 Corinthians 11:21-29, he lists some of the difficulties and challenges he had been through. How do you think he was able to describe the things he lists as "light and momentary"?

3. Chris helped us imagine what it would have been like to be part of the army that marched around the city walls of Jericho for 6 ½ days without seeing any progress at all on the wall's destruction. By then most likely you'd be tired, doubtful, frustrated and questioning if obedience is really worth it. Have you ever been there in your own life? How could the following verses encourage you on the seventh lap of the seventh day?

1 Corinthians 15:58

2 Timothy 4:6-8

James 1:2-4

Galatians 6:7-10

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1. This weekend, Chris talked about the significant encounter Joshua had with God right before the battle for Jericho (Joshua 5:13-6:7).

Joshua 5:13-6:7

The Fall of Jericho

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.

6 1 Now the gates of Jericho were securely barred because of the Israelites. No one went out and no one came in.

2 Then the Lord said to Joshua, "See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men. 3 March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days. 4 Have seven priests carry trumpets of rams' horns in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets. 5 When you hear them sound a long blast on the trumpets, have the whole army give a loud shout; then the wall of the city will collapse and the army will go up, everyone straight in."

6 So Joshua son of Nun called the priests and said to them, "Take up the ark of the covenant of the Lord and have seven priests carry trumpets in front of it." 7 And he ordered the army, "Advance! March around the city, with an armed guard going ahead of the ark of the Lord." [NIV]

Most likely, Joshua knew about a similar encounter Moses had with God before he set out to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. Read Exodus 3:1-6 and notice the similarities between these two encounters.

Exodus 3:1-6

Moses and the Burning Bush

3 1 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2 There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. 3 So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up."

4 When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!"

And Moses said, "Here I am."

5 "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." 6 Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God. [NIV]

What are some ways these two passages could affect our response to and interaction with God when we face obstacles, temptations, or other problems?

2. The Apostle Paul had many challenging experiences in his life and it would have been easy for him to quit. Yet he was consistently able to maintain an eternal perspective instead of giving up and throwing in the towel. What do you see in 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 that helps explain how he was able to persevere in the face of difficulties?

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. 17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. 18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. [NIV]

Paul mentions his “light and momentary troubles.” In 2 Corinthians 11:21-29, he lists some of the difficulties and challenges he had been through. How do you think he was able to describe the things he lists as “light and momentary”?

2 Corinthians 11:21-29

21 To my shame I admit that we were too weak for that!

Whatever anyone else dares to boast about—I am speaking as a fool—I also dare to boast about.

22 Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they Abraham’s descendants? So am I. 23 Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. 24 Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, 26 I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. 27 I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. 28 Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. 29 Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn? [NIV]

3. Chris helped us imagine what it would have been like to be part of the army that marched around the city walls of Jericho for 6 ½ days without seeing any progress at all on the wall’s destruction. By then most likely you’d be tired, doubtful, frustrated and questioning if obedience is really worth it. Have you ever been there in your own life? How could the following verses encourage you on the seventh lap of the seventh day?

1 Corinthians 15:58

58 Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. [NIV]

2 Timothy 4:6-8

6 For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing. [NIV]

James 1:2-4

Trials and Temptations

2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. 4 Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. [NIV]

Galatians 6:7-10

7 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. 8 Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. 9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. 10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. [NIV]