

GUIDED BY GOD

Guided by God or Guided by Self? Joshua 9-10

Joshua 9:14 (KJV) ¹⁴ And the men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the LORD.

The Power and Purpose of Prayer

Luke 18:1 (KJV) ¹ "... men ought always to pray, and not to faint;..."

- Prayer is communication with God
- Prayer is the communication link between us and God
- Pray is communion, fellowship with God
- Prayer is an act of dependence
- Prayer is an act of faith
- Prayer is not merely us talking to God, but it is God responding back to us with His answer, guidance and direction
- Prayer is not only for the emergencies and crisis times in life
- It is a daily dialogue with God
- Prayer is seeking the mind of God
- When we seek God in prayer, we want to obey Him, do His will
- Prayer helps you, calms you, strengthens you, directs you
- We can't do what God wants without prayer
- Prayer leads us to greater intimacy with God
- Prayerlessness, however:
 - Can cause us to become distant from God
 - Can cause us not to pursue God
 - Can make us overconfident
 - Cause us to be impatient and rush into things instead of deliberating about it in prayer

The Enemy Has Heard About You

And it came to pass, when all the kings which were on this side Jordan, in the hills, and in the valleys, and in all the coasts of the great sea over against Lebanon, the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite, heard thereof; [2] That they gathered themselves together, to fight with Joshua and with Israel, with one accord.

- Joshua and the Israelites have just conquered the city of Ai (Joshua 8) and were celebrating their victory
- While Joshua and Israel were worshipping and celebrating the great victory God had given them, the inhabitants of Canaan were planning an attack
- The inhabitants of Canaan had heard about the victories of Joshua and Israel
- The inhabitants of Canaan heard about the success of Joshua and Israel and they decided to join forces to battle them
- Just as Joshua and Israel's enemies heard about what God was doing in their lives and are joining forces to stop, the enemy has heard about the progress you are making, too
- The devil has heard about your success despite the uncertainty of this pandemic

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- The devil has gathered all his forces to war against you ***Ephesians 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.***
- Some of our greatest spiritual challenges are going to come on the heels of great victories
- You can't let your guard down even when you God gives you a victory, you *must* stay alert ***1 Peter 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:***

The Deception

[3] And when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done unto Jericho and to Ai, [4] They did work wily, and went and made as if they had been ambassadors, and took old sacks upon their asses, and wine bottles, old, and rent, and bound up; [5] And old shoes and clouted upon their feet, and old garments upon them; and all the bread of their provision was dry and mouldy. [6] And they went to Joshua unto the camp at Gilgal, and said unto him, and to the men of Israel, We be come from a far country: now therefore make ye a league with us.

- All the neighboring cities of Canaan have joined forces against Joshua and Israel, *except one*; Gibeon
- Instead of fighting they resorted to “deception and lies”
- The devil is described as a “roaring lion” and a “serpent”
- The Gibeonites send a delegation to Joshua dressed ambassadors from a “far country”
- When they met with Joshua, they immediately start lying
- They lied about:
 - where they were from and that they desired a peace treaty with the Israelites
 - “honoring the LORD”, claiming that they had come because of the reports they had heard about the God of Israelites.
 - *who* they were, their prestige and importance. They claimed to be “ambassadors” from a far-away country (Joshua 9:11).
 - a willingness to “serve” the Israelites—if Joshua would just make a “peace treaty” with them.
 - their food and clothing (Joshua 9:12-13). They presented their cracked wineskins and showed their worn-out clothes and sandals.
- The plan worked like a charm
- The devil will fight you, using every trick he has

Joshua Didn't Seek God's Guidance

[14] And the men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord.

- Joshua thought based on what he “saw” this decision required seeking God in prayer
- Joshua saw the old clothes, worn shoes, cracked wineskins, and moldy bread, but he was *blind* to identities and motives of the Gibeonites
 - But there is a danger when we are guided by self and not guided by God
- The Bible says we are to *walk by faith and not by sight* God

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- Joshua examined their food, saw their appearance, heard their story, but he *never* consulted God
- Just because we looked at the “facts”, we may still miss the *truth* that God reveals when we come to Him in prayer
- The Gibeonites deceived Joshua because he did not consult God
- When we believe the lies of the enemy instead of seeking the mind of God through prayer, we can expect problems
- Many times, we can be a lot like Joshua when we fail to seek God’s will about a matter

The Discovery

[15] And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them, to let them live: and the princes of the congregation swore unto them. [16] And it came to pass at the end of three days after they had made a league with them, that they heard that they were their neighbours, and that they dwelt among them.

- Joshua signed the peace treaty with the “ambassadors from the far country”
- The text does not say how the deception was discovered, but just three days later, the leaders of Israel discover the “ambassadors” from a far country are not from a far country at all; they are Israel’s Canaanite neighbors!
- Unbeknownst to Joshua, the peace treaty he signed has preserved the lives of his Canaanite enemies
- Joshua now must now live with the *consequences* of his decision
- We often don’t know the enemy has “deceived” us until it’s too late

You Can Bounce Back

Admit that you missed God

- Be honest with God and yourself and admit you decided on what you didn’t pray about
- When we can humble ourselves and own up to our decisions, we are in a position where God can help us **James 4:6 (KJV) ⁶ But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.**

Don’t Try to Fix it Yourself (Joshua 9:18-19)

- The Israelites were upset with Joshua and the leaders for allowing themselves to be deceived by the Gibeonites
- They wanted revenge; they wanted the Gibeonites dead
- But making decisions without consulting God is what got them in the mess they were in
- But Joshua and the leaders did not kill the deceivers nor attack Gibeon
- God’s name and honor was at stake
- By keeping the peace treaty, they were saying God keeps His word

Don’t Try to Get Even (Joshua 9:20-21)

- Joshua and his leaders keep the treaty in force because they wanted to avoid the wrath of God
- They would have *compounded* their mistake with another one
- By not retaliating they were showing their loyalty to God and avoiding the judgment of God

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Make the Best of a Bad Decision (Joshua 9:27)

- Joshua publicly rebuked the Gibeonites for deceiving them
- Joshua made the Gibeonites chop wood and carry water for the Israelites
- They weren't *just* wood choppers and water carriers, but their place of service was the temple, a place where they would be exposed to the presence of God
- The *place of rebuke* became their *place of blessing*
- The Gibeonite deceivers eventually became worshippers of the true and living God

Pray next time...And there will be a next time! (Joshua 10:12-14)

- In Joshua 10 we find the Gibeonites in trouble
- Joshua must protect Gibeon from five armies
- It looks as though Joshua's bad decision is about to get worse
- *Only God* can even make our mistakes work for our good **Romans 8:28 (KJV)** ²⁸
And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.
- The Gibeonites call on Joshua for help
- At some point, Joshua begins to seek the Lord in prayer for help and guidance
- God responds to Joshua's (vs.8) and says ***fear not, I have given them into your hand, and no one will be standing when it's all over***
- Joshua acts in faith and he and his army march all night; uphill
- God answered Joshua's prayer by cause the enemy to go into a panic
- But the sun was going down before Joshua and his army could finish the battle
- Joshua prays again and makes one of the boldest prayer requests recorded in all of Scripture
- Joshua asks God to make the sun stand still;...***and God did it!***
- *God let the sun stand sill until Joshua got the victory!*
- Even though Joshua messed things up by not seeking God, seeking God *again* gave him the victory
 - Seeking God's guidance makes the difference **Proverbs 3:5-7 (KJV)** **5 "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. 6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. 7 Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, ..."**