

Quarter Four: Lessons of Faith from Joshua

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Lesson 12—God Is Faithful!

Thursday: Cling to God

December 18, 2025

- **Last Week:** “Living in the Land”
 - Joshua 22
 - Dispute between western tribes (children of Israel) & eastern tribes over altar / memorial
 - How to handle disagreements, even in the church
- **This Week:** “God Is Faithful!”
 - Joshua 21 & 23
 - First of the two final addresses from Joshua: focused on the future & how to worship God

Memory Text: “Not one word of all the good promises that the LORD had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass” (Josh 21:24, ESV)

The week in brief:

- 1. **Sunday:** All Came to Pass (James)
 - Josh 21:43 – 45 – culmination of book: our covenant God defeated their enemies & settled them in the land; it was ALL God
- 2. **Monday:** A Sign of Concern (John L)
 - Josh 23:1 – 5, 10 – First of Joshua’s final 2 addresses to the Israelites; success is conditional on continued dependance on God & obedience to Him
- 3. **Tuesday:** Clear Boundaries (SQ)
 - Josh 23:6 – 8; 12, 13 – danger of other nations is the threat of their friendship, nor war; warning against idol worship & intermarriage with the heathen nations
- 4. **Wednesday:** The Anger of the Lord (Ryan J)
 - Josh 23:15, 16 – danger of Israelite’s failure to keep the covenant & destruction that will come upon them; balance of God’s love & justice
- 5. **Thursday:** Cling to God (Jill)
 - Josh 23:11 & various Scriptures – how to walk in obedience & avoid breaking the covenant

Thursday: Cling to God

Josh 23:11; Deut 6:5; Deut 4:4; Gen 2:24; Ruth 1:14; Judges 2:2, 7, 11; 3:7, 12; 4:1; John 13:34; Ex 19:4; Matt 22:37; John 15:17; 1 John 3:11; Lev 19:18

- Joshua 23:11 – “Therefore take careful heed to yourselves, that you love the LORD your God.”
 - Single Joshua verse for lesson
 - NIV: “So be very careful to love the LORD your God.”

- Hebrew is emphatic: “Be very careful for the sake of your own soul...”
- To **love** = *aw-hab*’ = friendly attachment, sexual intimacy, maternal tenderness, romantic love, loyalty to God
- Love & obedience
 - This week: obedience to God
 - No idol worship
 - No intermarriage with heathen
 - Disobedience brings the wrath of God
 - How do we remember the do’s & don’ts of the covenant?
 - How do we obey?
 - Today: love = underpinning of everything
 - Love is central to the Covenant
 - Love is central to obedience
 - Love is crucial to be faithful
 - Love in OT vs NT
 - OT God is love & justice
 - NT God is love & justice

7 realities of love for God

- 1. Love for God reveals who belongs to Him
 - John 13:34, 35 – “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. (35) By this, all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”
 - How do people know we belong to God?
 - If we love each other
 - Love is the standard of Christianity
 - 1 John 3:11 – “For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.”
 - *Do SDA Christians belong to God?
 - What about your church?
 - Your home?
 - Your heart?
- 2. Love for God is intimate, into every fiber of our being
 - Gen 2:23, 24 – “And Adam said: ‘This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.’ (24) Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be **joined** to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”
 - Joined = Heb, *daw-bak*’ = “to cling, cleave, adhere to” something or someone
 - Not just physical
 - Emotional / intellectual / spiritual
 - Covenant language: same word
 - Josh 23:8 – “But you shall **hold fast** to the LORD your God, as you have done this day.” (KJV: = “cleave”)

- Deut 4:3, 4 – “our eyes have seen what the LORD did at Baal Peor; for the LORD your God has destroyed from among you all the men who followed Baal of Peor. (4) But you who **held fast** to the LORD your God are alive today, every one of you.”
 - Held fast – from *daw-bak*’ = “cling, cleave, adhere to”
 - Isa 26:3 – “You will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is **stayed** on You, because he trusts in You.”
 - Heb – “to lean, lay, rest upon”
 - *Love for God is intimate, into every fiber of our being
 - Intimacy works both ways
 - We hold onto Christ
 - He holds onto us
- **3. Love for God is never forced, or it would cease to be love**
 - The moment love is forced, it becomes
 - Obligation
 - Fake / a “lie”
 - Resentment
 - Control
 - Fear
 - *Relationships where there is obligation or force or fear
 - Isa 30:15 – “For thus says the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: ‘In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength.’ But you would not,”
 - Love does not force
 - Love calls to us – return to Me and rest
 - Love allows free will – “but you would not”
 - Josh 24:15 – “...choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”
 - Choose Him
 - Not tradition (gods which your fathers served)
 - Not peer pressure (gods in whose land you dwell)
 - Choose Him
 - Regardless of cost or price
 - Regardless of pain or pleasure
 - Regardless of other’s opinions
 - Regardless of hardship & discouragement
 - Regardless of how I feel
 - For now and forever
- **4. Love for God originates with Him**
 - We love Him – because He loved us first
 - Rom 5:8 – “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

- We choose Him – because He chose us first
 - John 15:16 – “You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain...”
- **5. Love for God depends on Him** – maintaining love depends on God
 - Different than it originates with Him
 - God is the source / originator of love – yet God is the One who maintains that love
 - God justifies me – then He sanctifies me
 - Not justification by faith & sanctification by works (all by faith)
 - John 15:5 – “I am the Vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”
 - Dependence on Christ for everything
- **6. Love for God is foundational for obedience**
 - John 14:15 – “If you love Me, keep My commandments.”
 - Cannot obey without love
 - Keeping of the covenant – not walking in idolatry nor intermarriage =
 - All dependent on love
- **7. Love for God brings joy**
 - Zeph 3:17 – “The LORD your God, in your midst, the Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love. He will rejoice over you with singing.”
 - Joy comes both for God and ourselves
 - Matthew Henry: “After the promises of taking away sin, follow promises of taking away trouble. When the cause is removed, the effect will cease. What makes a people holy, will make them happy.”
 - God desired obedience & for His people to forsake idolatry & keep His covenant
 - That holiness brings happiness & joy

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- 2. Love for God is intimate, into every fiber of our being
- 3. Love for God is never forced, or it would cease to be love
- 4. Love for God originates with Him
- 5. Love for God depends on Him – mutual, not symmetrical nature of divine love
- 6. Love for God is foundational for obedience
- 7. Love for God brings joy