

# Winning Strategy

GOD GAVE HIS PEOPLE VICTORY WHEN  
THEY TRUSTED AND OBEYED HIM.

## Joshua 6:12-25

**12** Joshua got up early **the next morning**. **A** The priests took the ark of the LORD, **13** and the seven priests carrying seven **rams' horns** **B** marched in front of **the ark of the LORD**. **C** While the rams' horns were blowing, the armed men went in front of them, and the rear guard went behind the ark of the LORD. **14** On the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp. They did this for six days. **15** Early on the seventh day, they started at dawn and marched around the city **seven times** **D** in the same way. That was the only day they marched around the city seven times. **16** After the seventh time, the priests blew the rams' horns, and Joshua said to the troops, "Shout! For **the LORD has given you the city**. **E** **17** But the city and everything in it are **set apart** **F** to the LORD for destruction. Only **Rahab** **G** the prostitute and everyone with her in the house will live, because she hid the messengers we sent. **18** But keep yourselves from the things set apart, or you will be set apart for destruction. If you take any of those things, you will set apart the camp of Israel for destruction and **make trouble** **H** for it. **19** For all the silver and gold, and the articles of bronze and iron, are dedicated to the LORD and must go into the LORD's treasury." **20** So the troops shouted, and the rams' horns sounded. When they heard the blast of the ram's horn, the troops gave a great shout, and the wall **collapsed**. **I** The troops advanced into the city, each man straight ahead, and they captured the city. **21** They **completely destroyed everything** **J** in the city with the sword—every man and woman, both young and old, and every ox, sheep, and donkey. **22** Joshua said to the two men who had scouted the land, "Go to the prostitute's house and bring the woman out of there, and all who are with her, just as you swore to her." **23** So the young men who had scouted went in and brought out Rahab and her father, mother, brothers, and all who belonged to her. They brought out her whole family and settled them **outside the camp** **K** of Israel. **24** They burned the city and everything in it, but they put the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron into the treasury of the LORD's house. **25** However, Joshua spared Rahab the prostitute, her father's family, and all who belonged to her, because she hid the messengers Joshua had sent to spy on Jericho, and she **still lives** **L** in Israel today.

### Exploring Key Words

- A** The day before, God had given Joshua and the people specific instructions for capturing Jericho (6:1-11). Now, they were ready to move.
- B** Known as a *shophar*. Often used to call Israel to battle, these trumpets also were used in worship (Ex. 19:16; Lev. 25:8-10; Ps. 81:3; Joel 2:1,15).
- C** A reminder of the Lord's presence among the Israelites (Ex. 25:10-22; Num. 4:5). It had led the way across the Jordan (Josh. 3:1-4) and was prominent in the strategy against Jericho.
- D** A symbol of God's perfection. Seven appears prominently in Joshua 6 with trumpets (v. 4), priests (vv. 4,13), days (v. 15), and times around the city (vv. 15-16).
- E** Joshua kept the focus on God. He was the One who would fight the battle and conquer the city.
- F** "Devoted" (NIV; ESV); "belongs" (NASB). Everything and everyone in Jericho was given over to God or destroyed.
- G** Rahab had protected Israel's spies from being captured in Jericho. In return, they promised to spare her family (2:1-13; see also 6:22-23).
- H** Disobedience would lead to judgment, as God would reveal in Joshua 7.
- I** "Fell down flat" (ESV; KJV). The Hebrew wording suggests the wall's collapse may have started at its base.
- J** The total destruction of Jericho demonstrated the Israelites' total obedience to God.
- K** As Gentiles, they had to remain outside Israel's main body for a time. However, Rahab became part of Jesus's genealogy (Matt. 1:5).
- L** At least part of Joshua was written during Rahab's lifetime.



## Instructions Obeyed (Josh. 6:12-14)

- Following God's directions, Joshua, the priests, and the Israelite army walked around the city of Jericho one time. The army was silent as the priests blew rams' horns and carried the ark of the covenant.
- By God's command, they repeated this march around the city for six days.

## Victory Assured (Josh. 6:15-19)

- On the seventh day, the Israelite army circled Jericho seven times. Then, Joshua ordered them to shout because God had given them the city.
- He noted that they should spare nothing because God had set the city apart for destruction. The exception to this command was Rahab the prostitute and her family because they had protected the Israelite spies who had scouted the city (see Josh. 2:4-21).
- The Israelites also were warned not to claim any spoil from the city for themselves.

## Walls Destroyed (Josh. 6:20-21)

- When the army shouted, God made the walls of the city collapse.
- The Israelites captured Jericho and completely destroyed everything and everyone as God had commanded. This victory was from the Lord, not the result of human efforts.

## Promises Kept (Josh. 6:22-25)

- Joshua sent the men who had spied the city to get Rahab's family and move them outside the Israelite camp.
- The Israelites burned the city and set aside any gold, silver, bronze, or iron for the Lord's treasury. Only Rahab's family was spared, and they still lived among the Israelites when the story was written.

## Summary Statements

*God gave His people victory when they trusted and obeyed Him.*

- We should obey God's directions, even when they don't make sense.
- We experience victory in life when we obey God completely.
- We can trust God to do what only He can do.
- We can live in victory by trusting in God's promises.

## Memory Verse

*Joshua 6:20*

## Key Doctrine

*Stewardship*

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. (See Deuteronomy 10:14; Psalm 24:1.)



For additional commentary, see the Leader Guide or Adult Commentary, available for purchase at [goExploreTheBible.com](http://goExploreTheBible.com).

## DISCUSSION PLAN

### ENGAGE

**What is involved in learning to trust someone?** (PSG, p. 37)

- Parents want to teach their children to trust them. Some parents build trust by encouraging their children to leap into their arms, even when it seems dangerous. When a parent catches the child, both are exuberant.
- God often calls His children to make some enormous leaps. He does this to demonstrate that they can always trust in Him as they obey Him.

**Bonus: When have you taken a “leap” by trusting God about something?**

### EXPLORE

**INSTRUCTIONS OBEYED (JOSH. 6:12-14)**

**Bonus: When have you felt like you were going around in circles? What makes that so frustrating for us?**

- In the “battle” of Jericho, God commanded Joshua and his army to march silently around the city. While some priests carried the ark of the covenant, other priests blew ram’s horns.
- When all was completed according to the word of the Lord and Joshua’s instructions, they returned to their camp for the night. The army did this for six days as God directed.

**How do God’s unusual instructions test our faith?** (PSG, p. 40)

**VICTORY ASSURED (JOSH. 6:15-19)**

**Bonus: How do you know if you’re “winning” in life? What scorecard do you use?**

- Everything Joshua and the army did during the first six days pointed to God’s incredible work on the seventh day. On that day, the Israelites rose at dawn and marched around Jericho seven times.
- After they completed the seventh lap, the priests blew the rams’ horns, and Joshua commanded the army to shout. He also shared that God would give the city to them, that Rahab’s family would be protected, and that everything else was devoted to destruction. The Israelites were not allowed to claim any spoil from the battle.

**Why did God set the treasures of Jericho apart for Himself?** (PSG, p. 42)

**WALLS DESTROYED (JOSH. 6:20-21)**

**Bonus: Who do you trust most in life? Why?**

- When the priests blew their rams’ horns and the soldiers shouted, the wall around Jericho “collapsed.” The Israelites had no problem entering the city and capturing it.

- God’s people obeyed His commands. No person or animal was spared.

**What potential victory is God asking you to trust Him to provide?** (PSG, p. 43)

**PROMISES KEPT (JOSH. 6:22-25)**

**Bonus: Who is the most famous member of your family tree? Why is that person significant?**

- Joshua instructed his men to spare Rahab and her family because she protected the two spies from the king of Jericho. Her faith in the Lord, her kindness to these men, and the promise they made to her would not be forgotten (Heb. 11:31).
- The two men who had made the promise went to her home and moved her family outside the Israelite camp. This likely was a matter of ceremonial cleanness.
- Once Rahab and her family were safe, the Israelites burned Jericho according to God’s commands. Items of silver, gold, bronze, and iron were dedicated to the Lord’s treasury.
- The writer of Joshua noted that Rahab and her family still lived among the Israelites at the time the book was written. In time, she married a man named Salmon and became an ancestor of both King David and Jesus (Matt. 1:5).

**What victories does God promise His people today?** (PSG, p. 44)

### CHALLENGE

As a group, talk about what it means to obey God each day.

**Discuss ways that the people of God in general and you as a group in particular can and should unite together to demonstrate their trust in and obedience to God.** (PSG, p. 45)

Encourage individuals to reflect on times when it was difficult to trust God fully.

**Is there anything happening in your life right now where you are struggling to trust in God’s promises and obey Him?** (PSG, p. 45)

#### FURTHER DISCUSSION



Scan here for additional discussion questions for this week’s study.

### BIBLE SKILL (PSG, P. 44)

Examine New Testament passages to better understand an Old Testament passage.

The writers of both Hebrews and James referred to Rahab in their letters to first-century believers. Examine Hebrews 11:31 and James 2:25 to see what these passages say about her. ***What are some key points each writer draws out? What are they trying to emphasize with their readers? How does that help you understand Rahab better?***

Draw two columns on the board: “Hebrews” and “James.” Direct attention to the Bible Skill activity on page 44 of the PSG. Instruct half the group to examine Hebrews 11:31 and the other half to examine James 2:25. After a few minutes, allow volunteers to share their insights and record them under the appropriate column on the board. Emphasize the impact of Rahab’s faith and how we can imitate her faith today.

### OBJECT LESSON: SHOPHAR

Prior to the session, locate a shophar (ram’s horn trumpet) or print a picture of one from the internet.

During the session, encourage adults to share any musical instruments they might play. Lead a brief discussion on why they chose that instrument and how long they have been playing it. Be prepared to share your own responses if applicable.

Display the shophar and allow volunteers to share what they know about this instrument. Ask: ***What was the purpose of the horns? Why was this an unusual “weapon” for battle?*** Note that shophars were used to call people to battle, but they also were used to call people to worship.

Highlight that shophars were a key part of God’s strategy for Israel’s victory over Jericho, even though that might seem odd. Affirm that God can use ordinary, seemingly insignificant things (and people) for His glory.

### SET APART FOR DESTRUCTION

Sometimes the ways of the Lord can appear to be odd, or even cruel, to us. Taken at face value, His command to set apart the city of Jericho for destruction certainly qualifies (Josh. 6:17). But digging deeper into His command helps us to see His words in a better light.

In the wilderness, God worked to shape the Israelites’ perspective of Him and His ways. In keeping with His wisdom, He told them that He owned the promised land, along with everything and everyone in it (Lev. 25:23). Even though He was allotting property to each tribe, He retained ownership (Josh. 12:7; 17:1; 18:10). Accordingly, He had sole authority to set apart certain parcels of land for specific purposes.

He intended for Jericho to be set apart exclusively to Him. The Hebrew word for “set apart” (*cherem*) was used to describe devoting something to God or devoting it to destruction. Therefore, the spoils of victory would not belong to Israel. His people could

not take anything for themselves. Instead, the entire city would be placed into a net and given to the Lord. Giving it to the Lord meant storing the riches in His treasury, killing the people as well as the livestock, and reducing the city to ashes.

The annihilation of Jericho and its residents centered on the Lord, but it also had a beneficial impact on the Israelites in the years ahead. The Lord directed Moses to warn them about pagan idols they would encounter in the promised land (Deut. 20:16-18). In the process of destroying Jericho, they completely eliminated that city’s idols. Destroying the pagan gods would remove the temptation to worship them.

The Israelites walked in the light the Lord gave them. Although His ways in those days centuries ago appear to be odd to us today, we still can trust Him to lead us in the light of His eternal wisdom.