

Can Faith Take Me From Failure to Victory?

Lamentations 3:22-23: (NASB) *²²The LORD'S lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. ²³They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness.*



As Christians, we all fail. We all think, say or do things that are out of harmony with God's will and way, and this can be frustrating. What can change those failures? Will focusing on having more faith make a difference? The answer to this is "yes" and "no." Having more faith can only make a difference if we really understand the meaning of faith. For many, having Christian faith is professing a belief. It is looking towards Jesus and choosing to be his follower. While this is appropriate and necessary, it is only a beginning. True faith is far deeper

than that. When we look at both the Old and New Testaments together, we see a very different description of faith. This description shows us how we can use true and genuine faith to help take us from failure to victory. So, how does faith work?

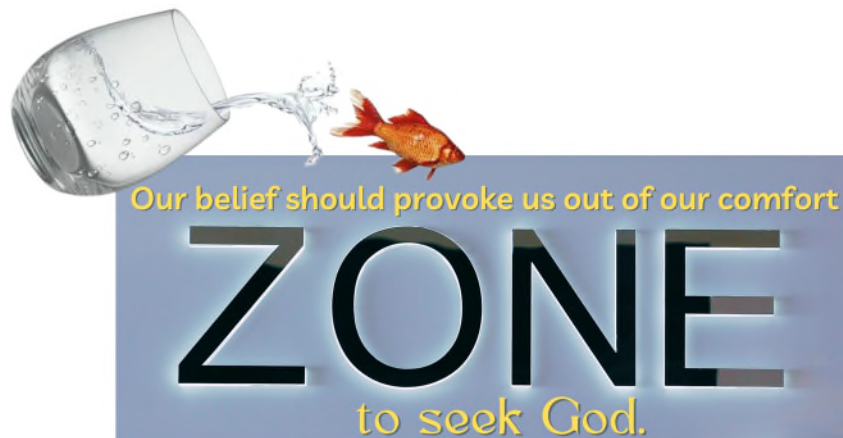
Faith is always from the same Greek word in the entire New Testament:

Faith: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #4102 *pistis*; persuasion, i.e., credence; moral conviction. Reliance (especially upon Christ for salvation) constancy in such profession, by extension the system of religious (gospel) truth.

Persuasion, credence, conviction, reliance and constancy are internal decisions we make when we observe the evidence needed to commit ourselves to an approach or cause. This is an internal process and an absolute Christian necessity!

Christian faith requires much more than an intellectual and emotional recognition of something; it requires action:

Hebrews 11:6: (KJV) *But without **faith** <4102> it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*





Christian faith has an established standard of action for us to acknowledge and follow:

Jude 1:3: (KJV) *Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the **faith <4102>** which was once delivered unto the saints.*

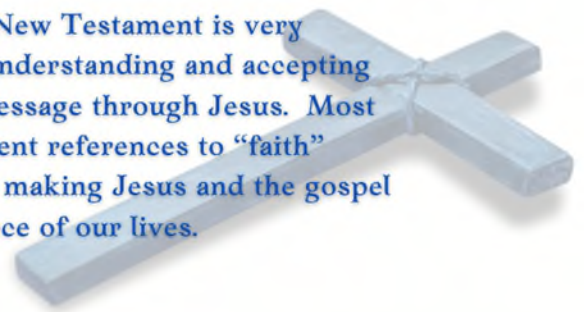
We have a clear heritage of the true gospel and those who were tasked with its care and expansion. Jude is telling us that we have this heritage (this faith we must *earnestly contend for*) and need to follow through on this heritage.

Hebrews 11:6 tells us it is not possible to please God without faith - we must *diligently seek Him*. There is action involved.

FROM FAILURE >>>>>



Faith in the New Testament is very focused on understanding and accepting the gospel message through Jesus. Most New Testament references to “faith” focus on our making Jesus and the gospel the centerpiece of our lives.



The object of faith in the New Testament is built around making Jesus our centerpiece. This is a critical concept. However, we need to go further.

With this New Testament foundation, we will now see that faith in the Old Testament has a slightly different approach.

It is interesting that the word *faith* only appears twice in the King James Version of the Old Testament - Deuteronomy 32:20 and Habakkuk 2:4. The words *faithful*, *faithfulness* and *believing* are more common. Faith is mentioned throughout the New Testament but only shows up sporadically (but dramatically) in the Old Testament.

Old Testament faith is very action-oriented and focuses on “believing,” which, as we shall see, extends far beyond an intellectual affirmation.

The following text is the first time the word for “believe” appears in the Old Testament:

Genesis 15:5-6: (NASB) ⁵And He took him outside and said, “Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them. And He said to him, so shall your descendants be. ⁶Then he (Abram) **believed <539>** in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.

Abram’s faith is here translated *believe*. The word here is used as an action of devotion.

Believed: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #539 *'aman*; to build up or support; to foster as a parent or nurse; figuratively to render (or be) firm or faithful, to trust or believe, to be permanent or quiet; morally to be true or certain; to go to the right hand



Our English word “amen,” which means “so be it,” is derived from this word for *believe*. It has the sense of being reliable, firm and trustworthy. When we say “amen,” we are entering into the thoughts of the prayer. There is a beautiful action involved in doing that.



Genesis 15:6 is saying that Abram was firm in his devotion to God. It was about much more than the promise of having a son - it was about his LIVING in a devoted way, whatever might come.

A form of this word is used to describe God as faithful in this devoted way:
Lamentations 3:22-23: (NASB) ²²The LORD'S lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. ²³They are new every morning; great is Your **faithfulness <530>**.

Faithfulness: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #530 'emunah; literally firmness; figuratively security; morally fidelity

There is an action in God's faithfulness. God is faithful. He is firm, trustworthy and immovable when it comes to His human creation. He does things for us. He does not just intellectually think of us; He acts on our behalf!

God recognized this high level of devotion in Moses as well:

Numbers 12:7-8: (NASB) ⁷Not so, with My servant Moses, he is **faithful <539>** (this is the same word as he used with Abram) in all My household; ⁸With him I speak mouth to mouth, even openly, and not in dark sayings, and he beholds the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant, against Moses?

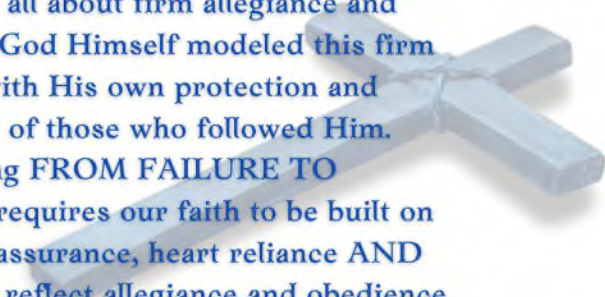


Moses was FIRM in his devotion to God. Where God led, Moses followed. What God instructed, Moses did. In the Old Testament, Faith was ACTION. Moses being *faithful* is saying Moses was FIRM IN HIS OBEDIENCE to God on all levels. We see action - what we need to do.

FROM FAILURE >>>>>



Faith in the Old Testament is all about action. It is all about firm allegiance and obedience. God Himself modeled this firm allegiance with His own protection and punishment of those who followed Him. For us, going FROM FAILURE TO VICTORY requires our faith to be built on intellectual assurance, heart reliance AND actions that reflect allegiance and obedience.



True faith needs to be an all-encompassing basis of our lives. This means there is a lot to learn.

**We now know more about what faith is.
How can we practically apply it to leading us through trials?**

As we examine faith and its power, we will use several accounts from the life of Joshua. It is interesting to note that in the entire book of Joshua, the words for *faith* we previously discussed do not appear at all! Why use him as an example and a basis for a faith lesson? Because Joshua exemplified firm obedience and allegiance to God.



The word 'faith' does not actually appear in the book of Joshua. But he lived what the definition is with every step.

Here is how Joshua began leading Israel. God unequivocally appointed Joshua to lead.

We will see how Joshua is given what we will call "The Obedience Factor" as a basis for success:

Joshua 1:1-3,5-9: (NASB) ¹Now it came about after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, that the LORD spoke to Joshua, Moses' servant, saying, ²Moses My servant is dead; now therefore arise, cross this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them, to the sons of Israel. ³Every place on which the sole of your foot treads, I have given it to you, just as I spoke to Moses.



God was preparing and directing Joshua by telling him he would be continuing the work of Moses. Imagine following after Moses - this incredible leader who, by God's grace and direction, freed millions of people from slavery with his staff in his hand. *And now imagine - Moses dies, and God comes to you and says you are taking his place.* It would be overwhelming! God told Joshua He will deal with him as He did with Moses. Joshua receives great assurance.

God next displays His faith - firm allegiance - to Joshua and the cause of Israel:



⁵No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you. ⁶*Be strong and courageous*, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.

These are POWERFUL promises from God to Joshua who is now the leader of Israel.

Can you imagine having God speak to you and clearly say, "I will not fail you or forsake you!" And your end of the bargain is to be "strong and courageous" and do the work you are supposed to do. The Christian receives that assurance when Jesus tells us in Matthew 11:28-30 to *take my yoke upon you*. There is work to do, but we do it with Jesus. We know our Father will not fail us or forsake us either. We have that same faith connection with work and actions.

HAVE I NOT COMMANDED YOU?
Be strong and courageous!
Do not tremble or be dismayed,

FOR THE LORD YOUR GOD IS WITH YOU WHEREVER YOU GO.
Joshua 1:8-9



Christian Questions
Think about the Bible like you never have before



Now God instructs Joshua how to live up to his responsibilities and the promises he was given:

⁷Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go.

...so that you may have success wherever you go - there is success and clarity in making sure he is strong and keeps the Law with him wherever he goes.

⁸This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.



Here are the things Joshua must do in order to be successful as the leader:

⁹Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.

We count five instructions for success:

1. Be strong and courageous.
2. Do according to all the Law.
3. Do not turn from it to the right or the left.
4. Do not let the Law depart from your mouth.
5. Meditate on the Law day and night, so that you do all that is written in it.



We also count three separate commands to be strong and courageous - this next event must have been dangerous! God was preparing Joshua to take the land of Canaan as the leader of Israel. God was planting the necessary ingredients so Joshua could act in faith.

God requires allegiance and obedience. Our compliance with this requirement is a profound expression of our own personal faith.

We looked at the **Obedience Factor** for Joshua. He had to cling to the Law, be strong and courageous and follow exactly what God said.

Our Obedience Factor to take us from failure to victory:

Romans 12:1: (NASB) Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

- GIVE UP OUR WILLS AND PREFERENCES
- HONOR GOD AND DO HIS WILL.

THIS IS THE ACTION PART OF FAITH!

A holy sacrifice gives up its life for the sake of honoring God. We are holy offerings and living sacrifices. We give up our wills and preferences for the sake of honoring God and doing His will. This is the action part of faith.

Being a living sacrifice is not just a thought or heart-felt sentiment; it is **action** - we must BE that sacrifice. That is the point of understanding the depth of faith.



FROM FAILURE >>>>>



True Christian faith cannot be expressed without true obedience to God through Christ. When struggling with failure, we need to ask ourselves; what has my “Obedience Factor” been in my failures? Have I lived according to sound scriptural principles or rationalized personal preferences? In faith, if we change the basis of our actions, we can change the outcome!



By the grace of God, I’ve had lots of experiences to be involved in the lives of many who have struggled with a lot of things, including with several married couples. One of the issues is, frequently we get so tied up in our lives that sound scriptural principles get put aside. This happens with our spouse because we are so comfortable with them. We start to lean on our own personal preferences. When this happens, the respect for our spouse we started out with diminishes, often turning into resentment. Personal preferences overwhelm the principles of righteousness. By reminding those involved - *what have you been following and why - what can you do?* - can cause a paradigm shift. This is how faith can take us from failure to victory. We need to recognize and make that shift.

Our next Joshua lesson: **“The Adjustment Factor”**

Joshua sent two spies ahead of the people. The King of Jericho was afraid of Israel, and he was watching and had everybody on the alert:

Joshua 2:2-4: (NASB) ²*It was told the king of Jericho, saying, Behold, men from the sons of Israel have come here tonight to search out the land.* ³*And the king of Jericho sent word to Rahab, saying, Bring out the men who have come to you, who have entered your house, for they have come to search out all the land.* ⁴*But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them...*

The men have entered the city and are looking around. Rahab finds and hides them at her house. She proceeded to send Jericho’s soldiers on a wild goose chase to protect the spies...a classic, “They went THAT-a-way!”



Rahab is controversial. She is a Gentile prostitute in the idolatrous land of Canaan who lies to protect the spies. As a woman in this environment, she had little hope to change her way of life. But through her contact with men over the years, she heard the stories of how the God of the Israelites was with them and how He was feared by the surrounding nations.



Next, Rahab speaks to the spies and reveals her reasons for hiding them. This was a powerful expression of faith - without using the word faith:

Joshua 2:9-14: (NASB) ⁹and said to the men, I know that the LORD has given you the land, and that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before you. ¹⁰For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you (40 years ago) when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites...whom you utterly destroyed.

We see Rahab's confession of Israel's short 40-year history. She noticed. This speaks volumes because the people knew who Israel was long before they arrived.

Rahab's faith now became evident through her firm actions of allegiance to the God of Israel. She asks for mercy:

¹¹When we heard it, our hearts melted and no courage remained in any man any longer because of you; for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath. ¹²Now therefore, please swear to me by the LORD, since I have dealt kindly with you that you also will deal kindly with my father's household, and give me a pledge of truth, ¹³and spare my father and my mother and my brothers and my sisters, with all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death.

Here she was, stuck in her circumstances of sin and she saw a sliver of hope that it could be changed. In her lack, she recognized that God is the only God and displayed great allegiance to Him by protecting His people. She was obedient to the little part she knew about Israel and the God of heaven. This is amazing considering the cesspool of paganism she grew up in. She left her past behind, which is an inspiration for any of us looking for a "do-over."

For their part, the spies were not expecting help to come from someone like her. That is a lesson for us, too. She leaves her past behind with no guarantee of a future. The only thing she has is the action to stand in front of the spies and say, *I believe in your God. I am asking for mercy for myself and my family.*



When conquering the enemies of God, let us through grace and wisdom be aware of our surroundings so we can notice God's providences along the way.

The spies were aware of their surroundings. They listened and responded in an appropriate way:

¹⁴So the men said to her, Our life for yours if you do not tell this business of ours; and it shall come about when the LORD gives us the land that we will deal kindly and faithfully with you.

The spies replied with wisdom and mercy. The spies trusted Rahab to hide them. They did not know who she was, aside from being an enemy, yet they trusted her to hide them. They trusted the words she said, and then she trusted them as well. All of these actions showed firm allegiance and obedience to the God of heaven - they were actions of faith.

We jump to the New Testament (where the word faith is actually used!):

Hebrews 11:31: (NASB) *By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace.*

This is a bridge from the Old Testament to the New Testament.



The spies had to adjust. They had to change their strategy because they found a very strong ally in the middle of enemies. **The Adjustment Factor** was trusting the word of the enemy who was not expected to be an ally. They could see the sincerity in her. They thought everyone was corrupt and evil but met someone who was not.

Our Adjustment Factor to take us from failure to victory:

Romans 12:2: (NASB) *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*

We can intellectually say we will *not be conformed to this world*, but it happens. We must continually *adjust* and reset our allegiance because our default is sin.

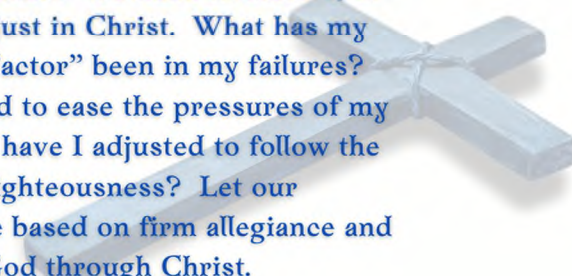
The end of the story: Rahab married an Israelite from the tribe of Judah. Her son was Boaz, the husband of Ruth. Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus, is her direct descendant.



FROM FAILURE >>>>>



To live a life of true Christian faith is to live a life of adjustment. We need to mature, to change and adjust in Christ. What has my “Adjustment Factor” been in my failures? Have I adjusted to ease the pressures of my experience, or have I adjusted to follow the principles of righteousness? Let our adjustments be based on firm allegiance and obedience to God through Christ.



Sometimes the adjustments we need to make are subtle. I had a brief hospitalization a couple months ago. I did not realize it was serious; it came upon me by surprise. Before the hospitalization, the normal events of “Rick being Rick” were very difficult. They were beginning to weigh a lot. Sitting in the hospital bed, facing some pretty serious things in that very short period of time, gave me pause and helped me look at life differently. I realized these things were not burdens; they were blessings. I came out of this hospital experience with a renewed joy in whatever the LORD gives me, whether it is difficult or not. It was an adjustment I personally needed to make to be able to handle the things the Lord was going to bring me after my hospital stay. There were a lot more experiences He had in store that I just would not have been ready for. We need to be able to adjust.

This is faith. It is an action-oriented part of our lives. It is not just intellectual and not just in our hearts. It is important to realize the importance of resetting our actions. As imperfect humans, we get off course easily.

**To go from failure to success through faith is not a natural progression.
How do we rise above nature?**

The obedience and adjustment experiences of Joshua have so far given us concrete actions to follow. The next two Joshua lessons are clearly designed to make the previous lessons sink deeply into our hearts and minds. Every Christian needs their faith to have *visible connections* and *reminders* to their source of strength.

Our next Joshua lesson: **“The Reverence Factor”**

The time had come for Israel to cross the Jordan as the first step to conquering the land.

This step would need to be a God-sanctioned step. Joshua showed his faith by doing exactly what he was instructed to do:

Joshua 3:9-13: (NASB) ⁹Then Joshua said to the sons of Israel, Come here, and hear the words of the LORD your God. ¹⁰Joshua said, By this you shall know that the living God is among you... ¹¹Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is crossing over ahead of you into the Jordan. ¹²Now then, take for yourselves twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one man for each tribe. ¹³It shall come about when the soles of the feet of the priests who carry the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan will be cut off, and the waters which are flowing down from above will stand in one heap.



The Jordan River here was at full flood stage, overflowing its banks and seemingly impossible to cross. Sometimes we see *our* circumstances as impassible. But think about this - that overflowing river prevented the enemy Canaanites on the other side from attacking Israel. Their defenses were down because they never imagined Israel could cross to reach them. Sometimes God's instructed way seems unreasonable or beyond reach.



Do we balk at His instruction, or do we - on faith - take the next small step?

Sometimes what appears to be a negative is a blessing in disguise and part of a larger plan:

1 Peter 4:12: (KJV) *Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.*

The next small step is the next small action. What can seem like a difficulty is actually God's providence to move us forward. But we need to take action! Our faith is not powerful enough if we just think on it or feel it; we must ACT on it.

The next part of the account shows literal steps of faith - steps of FIRM OBEDIENCE by the priesthood of Israel:

Joshua 3:14-17: (NASB) ¹⁴So when the people set out from their tents to cross the Jordan with the priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant before the people, ¹⁵and when those who carried the ark came into the Jordan, and the feet of the priests carrying the ark were dipped in the edge of the water (for the Jordan overflows all its banks all the days of harvest) ...

Remember, there are about three million people getting ready to plunge themselves into a swollen, raging river, led by their most priceless and precious possession, the Ark of the Covenant. Some commentaries say the river was a mile wide at this point. Can you imagine the nervousness and the excitement as they approach the water and nothing is happening?



¹⁶waters which were flowing down from above stood and rose up in one heap, a great distance away... were completely cut of...



God used natural means with supernatural timing. There had been a landslide a great distance away in a town called “Adam” that stopped the flow of water upstream.

The name of the location, of course, reminds us how the curse of death first imposed by mankind was because of the sin of Adam. By God’s providence and just at the appropriate time, there was a stoppage of the Jordan, the curse of death, allowing the Israelites to pass into Canaan.

...So the people crossed opposite Jericho. ¹⁷And the priests who carried the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan while all Israel crossed on dry ground, until all the nation had finished crossing the Jordan.

It is one thing to cross this dry riverbed, but it is another thing to stop in the middle and stand there! Picture the Ark of the Covenant in the middle of the river with the priests standing with it. This was a raging river just a little while before, and now the priests are standing in the middle as the nation crosses.



For those crossing, the Ark was before them as a sober assurance of where God was delivering them to and what they would be delivered through. They saw the Ark in front of them and could move in faith towards it. For those who had crossed, the Ark was a sober reminder of how they had been led and protected to get to this point.

The Ark represented the presence of God. In the middle of the dry riverbed, it meant to the people: *I, the LORD your God, am with you as I get you from one side to the other.*

And the process reversed - in [Joshua 4:18](#) we read that with each step the priests took up the bed of the river, the water began to flow again and increase in volume, licking at their heels as they walked. As soon as they were at the opposite shore, the Jordan was once again a raging torrent.

This was a natural occurrence with supernatural timing, and with enough time to get millions of people across that river. It was a big production, and God literally paved the road with His presence. He showed an action of faith and the people had to live that faith and follow through. Their **Reverence Factor** was all based on the presence of God.

Our **Reverence Factor** to take us from failure to victory:

Philippians 3:7-9: (NASB) ⁷But whatever things were gain to me (the Apostle Paul), those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, ⁹and may be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith.

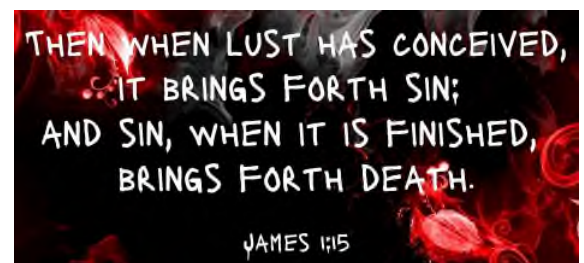
FROM FAILURE >>>>>



To live a life of true Christian faith we must position the presence of God in our lives before us and behind us. What has my "Reverence Factor" been in my failure? Can I observe God's presence in where I have been and where I am going? Let us be sure that our reverence for God is driven by **FIRM ALLEGIANCE** in every direction, every thought and every action of our lives.

We do not have the Ark of the Covenant sitting in the middle of the dry bed of the river Jordan. Or do we....? We have the presence of God through Jesus Christ essentially holding back all those things that are opposed to us. We revere God the Father through our Lord Jesus. We stand firm, walking the path we are supposed to walk. It may not look as dramatic as the crossing of the dry bed of the Jordan River, but it is incredibly dramatic in the transformation of our lives. Our **Reverence Factor** is every ounce as important to go from failure to victory through a faith full of allegiance and obedience.

Like God's presence was in the middle of the crossing of the Jordan, His presence is in the middle of our trials if we are doing our best to walk in His son Jesus' footsteps. But He does not stay close to us when He is being mocked. When we get caught up in egregious willful sins - such as temptation sins like lust, adultery, evil speaking and so on - we have to ask if we are reverencing God or mocking Him by continuing in our thoughts and actions.



We want to stay in His presence, but doing what we know is wrong and its associated guilt and shame will pull us farther and farther away.

What do we do to guard ourselves from our personal weaknesses, whether big or small? We should put up barriers and hedges to restrain ourselves from temptations, weaknesses or falling into old ways.

What did God tell Joshua over and over? *Think about the Law. Put the Law in your mind, meditate on the Law, repeat the Law, have it in front of you, have it behind you...* God put up those hedges for Joshua. The Law protected him when he surrounded himself with it. For us, it is that spirituality we must focus on if we are going to revere God. Reverence is not just simply praise or worship; it is the action of living it every day. This will take us from failure to victory if our faith is active in this way.

Our next Joshua lesson: **“The Recognition Factor”**

Reverence is just the beginning. Just like Israel, we need constant reminders of the depth of that reverence.

They had that moment of reverence as they crossed the river. Here is how God set up that reminder and recognition of that reverence:

Joshua 4:2-4: (NASB) ²Take for yourselves twelve men from the people, one man from each tribe, ³and command them, saying, take up for yourselves twelve stones from here out of the middle of the Jordan, from the place where the priests' feet are standing firm, and carry them over with you and lay them down in the lodging place where you will lodge tonight. ⁴So Joshua called the twelve men whom he had appointed from the sons of Israel, one man from each tribe.



The Lord had them pick up twelve stones from the middle of the riverbed and carry them to the far shore where they would camp that night. This would help with the recognition of reverence for this miracle.

Joshua commanded them as he was commanded. Then he told them why:

Joshua 4:6-7: (NASB) ⁶Let this be a sign among you, so that when your children ask later, saying, What do these stones mean to you? ⁷then you shall say to them, because the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. So these stones shall become a memorial to the sons of Israel forever.

This was a huge event - after generations of Egyptian slavery and then wandering in the wilderness eating manna, the people were finally entering the Promised Land flowing with milk and honey!



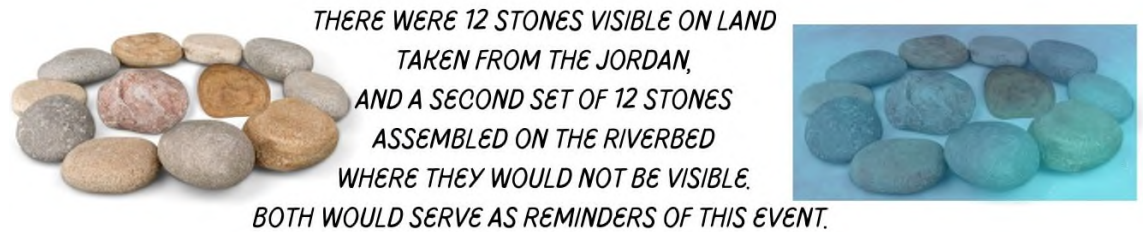
Do we stop long enough to be able to recognize the providence of God?

If so, do we stay quiet long enough to appreciate that which we have recognized?

We can recognize providence, but do we stay quiet and remember to recognize these providences again and again? Each tribe picked up their own stone to set up a memorial to help them reverence God as their ultimate Deliverer.

Joshua 4:9-11: (NASB) ⁹Then Joshua set up twelve stones in the middle of the Jordan at the place where the feet of the priests who carried the ark of the covenant were standing, and they are there to this day. ¹⁰For the priests who carried the ark were standing in the middle of the Jordan until everything was completed that the LORD had commanded Joshua to speak to the people, according to all that Moses had commanded Joshua. And the people hurried and crossed; ¹¹and when all the people had finished crossing, the ark of the LORD and the priests crossed before the people.

The Ark of the Covenant was the first out into the middle of the riverbed and last out of the middle, and the priesthood along with it. Joshua recognized and acknowledged the faith and strength of the priests as they stood in harm's way longer than anybody, in the middle of the temporarily-dry riverbed during the crossing. Those stones may not have ever been seen again because they were taken from the shore and put into the middle of the river, but God knew they were there! They were marking the pathway, the presence of God. Even though the stones would not be seen by anyone else, the Father saw them. This is faith and firm allegiance in action!



(This second set of stones appears in many Bible translations but not all.)

We have tremendous lessons of things that are seen to remind us and things that are not seen to remind us. That was the **Recognition Factor** for Israel crossing the Jordan to be able to take the land of Canaan.

Our **Recognition Factor** to take us from failure to victory:

Philippians 4:4-7: (NASB) ⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! ⁵Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. ⁶Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

This is how we recognize the power of God's providence and His spirit (His power and influence) in our lives. That is action - not just thinking, but doing. We have to live a life of faith so that we can reap the blessing of a life of faith.

FROM FAILURE >>>>>



To live a life of true Christian faith we **MUST PAUSE** and **RECOGNIZE** the power of God's deliverance. What has my "Recognition Factor" been in my failures? Can I recall pausing and recognizing God's hand in the matter or do I simply remember the thoughts of my mind and the pressures around me? Let us reverently pause and seek to intentionally recognize God's direction.



We need a way to actively place metaphorical stones of remembrance. I will give the example of my sister. She keeps a Prayer Journal to help her see in black and white the breadcrumbs God may be giving her to follow. Like many of us, she had a poor habit of praying and *not* watching for the outcome. Deliberately recognizing a definitive outcome to specific prayers has strengthened her faith. She regularly reviews the book to see how often the Lord led her through difficult situations that she would have otherwise forgotten. And she writes down when the answer is no or does not turn out the way she expected - like when the spies got help from Rahab. Those are answered prayers as well, and we accept that His will was done.

This is a powerful point. These are answered prayers, steps we can follow with assurances that give us the ability to have an active faith.

When faced with the pressures of our world, reverence to and recognition of God's will is easily clouded.

**Obedience, adjustment, reverence and recognition.
How do we conclude our journey to success through faith?**

The grand finale of this journey is profound but not surprising. We have examined many aspects of faith in action, which, according to Joshua's experiences, are firm obedience to God. Our final lessons are the logical conclusions of any good teaching: Know your objective and follow through!

Our next Joshua lesson: **"The Following Factor"**

After the millions of Israelites cross the Jordan River, they finally get to Jericho. What do they find? A huge city with immense walls and heavy fortifications. What...!?!? Here God just miraculously delivered them only to face another challenge? They went from one action of faith to another.

As Joshua was about to undertake an impossible situation, God again shows His faithfulness in assuring Joshua of his mission.

The message to Joshua would be to lead by following:

Joshua 5:13-15: (NASB) ¹³Now it came about when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing opposite him with his sword drawn in his hand, and Joshua went to him and said to him, Are you for us or for our adversaries? ¹⁴He said, no; rather I indeed come now as captain of the host of the LORD. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and bowed down, and said to him, what has my lord to say to his servant? ¹⁵The captain of the LORD'S host said to Joshua, Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy. And Joshua did so.



Observations:

- The angel is not on anyone's side - he stands for the Lord God only
- Joshua immediately displays great reverence
- Joshua asks for guidance
- The angel proclaims his visit as holy, and Joshua complies



Here is a good example of leading by following. Joshua confronts the soldier with, *Whose side are you on?* The angel answers that he is not on anyone's side, he is *captain of the host of the Lord*. Joshua's immediate response is: *Tell me what it is I need to know!* He is humble in his response even though God just brought them through the raging river. We need to be on God's side.

Joshua shows this **Following Factor**. He is going to be given very specific instructions by this angel.

Our Following Factor from failure to victory:

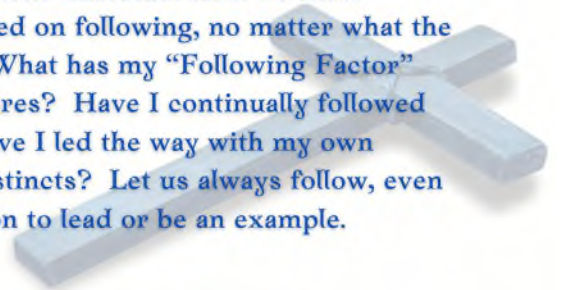
Matthew 26:38-39: (NASB) ³⁸*Then he said to them, my soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with me.* ³⁹*And he went a little beyond them, and fell on his face and prayed, saying, my Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not as I will, but as You will.*

As a man, Jesus had his own preference and brought to the LORD what was on his heart. Yet, he finished his prayer as, *yet not as I will, but as You will*. If Jesus could bring his perfect human preference before the LORD, but then set it aside to follow God's plans for him, we must be able to follow wherever our Father leads. That is what Jesus did.

FROM FAILURE >>>>>



To live a life of true Christian faith we must always be focused on following, no matter what the circumstance. What has my "Following Factor" been in my failures? Have I continually followed godliness, or have I led the way with my own thinking and instincts? Let us always follow, even when called upon to lead or be an example.



In studying for this, I sat down to think about what my failures are and how I can turn those into victories. Unfortunately, I found a long list of failures and was not happy about that. One example is how our emotions can easily get in the way of our victory. My failures too often include anger, frustration and other strong emotions. It is especially disheartening to me when it occurs with my husband. Marriage is precious and sacred, but after 25 years, everyone isn't at their "first date best" 100 percent of the time. I fail when I go to bed angry and wake up angrier, contrary to scriptural advice not to let the sun go down on your anger. And then I get mad at myself because I did that. It is a really bad cycle of failure.



I really understand, Julie, because my failure at this time is being impatient and frustrated with my wife over driving directions. After moving nine months ago and living in a new area, I get so frustrated with my wife and Siri! I thought after asking Siri to look up a lot of Bible citations, she was being converted to Christianity. But no, she still gets us lost. Jewel gets upset when

I won't wait two minutes for her to put directions in the GPS and then blame her when we take a wrong turn starting off on our destination. So, I've decided to work on going from my failure to victory by singing the hymn, "All the Way My Savior Leads Me," until she has the GPS set.





There is great power in recognizing our experiences in this way and acting to change. Those are good experiences even though they are difficult because they help us to understand our own flawed thinking and instincts versus following godliness at every turn and in every circumstance.

Our next Joshua lesson: **“The Follow-Through Factor”**

Joshua instructs the people to do exactly as God has commanded, even though it seems kind of odd. They were to circle the city once for six days, following their priests and not their soldiers.

Here is what happened next:

Joshua 6:15-17: (NASB) ¹⁵Then on the seventh day they rose early at the dawning of the day and marched around the city in the same manner seven times...¹⁶At the seventh time, when the priests blew the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, Shout! For the LORD has given you the city.

There is no record of any of the marchers complaining, but we can imagine they were wondering how walking in a circle would capture this huge, fortified city. Of course, they knew that walking in a circle in the wilderness for 40 years had been a part of God’s plan for them! Again, we see obedience and allegiance. A complete trust in God can sometimes seem to us to be unreasonable.

But there was no doubt this victory was from God and not because of the military might of the Israelites:

¹⁷The city shall be under the ban, it and all that is in it belongs to the LORD; only Rahab the harlot and all who are with her in the house shall live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent.

The instructions were precise even though they seemed odd. Aside from taking the city and sparing Rahab and her family, no one was to take even one little trinket for their own as spoils of battle.

But a man named Achan disobeyed, as if the LORD would not notice, and hid for himself a beautiful Babylonian robe, 200 silver coins and a bar of gold weighing over a pound. He stole from the treasure set apart for the LORD. When Joshua confronts him in **Joshua 7:21** (NLT), the man said: *I wanted them so much that I took them. (Think of how relevant that is to us today!) They are hidden in the ground beneath my tent, with the silver buried deeper than the rest.*



If someone had happened upon the first few items, they would think that was it. But there was a second level of hidden illicit treasure. **To what lengths do we go to hide our sins from the LORD and others?** He and his family were killed for disobedience. This was a heinous sin against God, and Joshua had to follow through with the appropriate punishment.



Joshua then was specific about honoring the agreement with Rahab:

Joshua 6:22-23, 25: (NASB) ²²Joshua said to the two men who had spied out the land, go into the harlot's house and bring the woman and all she has out of there, as you have sworn to her. ²³So the young men who were spies went in and brought out Rahab and her father and her mother and her brothers and all she had; they also brought out all her relatives and placed them outside the camp of Israel. ²⁵...and she has lived in the midst of Israel to this day, for she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

This shows great faith, firm allegiance and obedience to God. It brought all with such faith great blessing, Rahab included. The same two Jewish spies who were protected by Rahab were sent to check on her and keep her safe. Joshua followed through.

We have New Testament confirmation:

Hebrews 11:30: (NASB) *By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after the Israelites had marched around them for seven days.*



Israel took Jericho by
faith, **not by force**

Even though the word “faith” never appears in the book of Joshua, the lessons of faith are abundant. We do not need the word to see faith in action. We have seen examples of Joshua and Israel following through on God’s orders.

Our Follow-Through Factor to go from failure to victory:

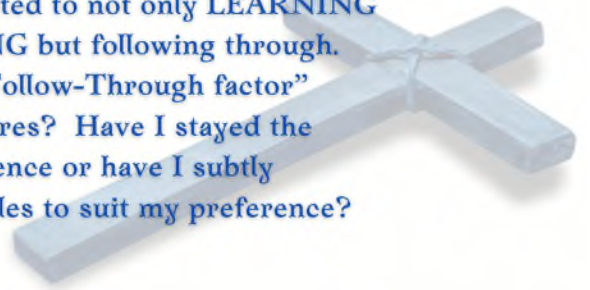
Philippians 4:8-9: (NASB) ⁸Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. ⁹The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

Our **Follow-Through Factor** is simple: We need to keep our minds focused on those things that are spiritually beneficial. As we go through our lives, we should dwell on those principles of godly righteousness that guide us through all our physical trials and tribulations. This will allow us to see those difficult times through the eyes of an active faith, in full allegiance to God.

FROM FAILURE >>>>>



To live a life of true Christian faith, we must be committed to not only LEARNING and ABSORBING but following through. What has my “Follow-Through factor” been in my failures? Have I stayed the course of obedience or have I subtly rewritten the rules to suit my preference?





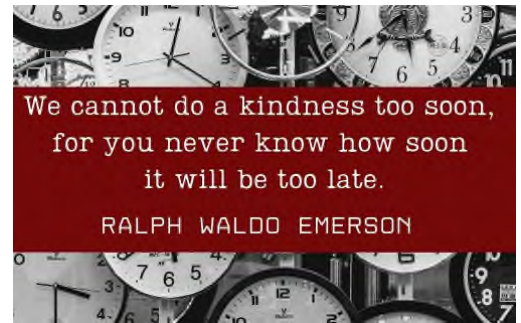
Rewriting the rules might look like this: *“I wanted them so much that I took them.”* Does this sound familiar? Coveting is a huge obedience killer. We want what we want and can justify nearly anything.

“I deserve it.”
“They DON’T deserve it.”
“But we’re in love.”
“I didn’t mean to.”
“I’m only doing it online; not in person.”

The list of our excuses goes on and on.

Sometimes it is hard to follow through when obedience does not make sense - like loving our enemies or turning the other cheek.

And following through means being a dependable person. Be reliable. If we say we are going to do something, we need to do it.



Remember the Lamentations verses from earlier? This is God’s example of His faith to us.

Lamentations 3:22-23: (NASB) ²²The LORD’S lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. ²³They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness.

Great are His actions and allegiance towards us as His human family.

As we grow in faith and firm allegiance to God, let us:

Obey - Adjust - Reverence - Recognize - Follow - Follow-Through on all things. In so doing, faith CAN take us from failure to success.

This is an important lesson because we often think about faith in terms of our minds and hearts. Joshua’s lessons in faith are much bigger. We have to ACT on our faith. Failures are opportunities to learn, change and grow. How do we act - not just think - in relationship to our failures? Failure is draining. It is like a snowball that gets so big we cannot move it. What do we do with that? We melt it with the warmth of the sun (son) of Righteousness. Live an active faith!

**So, can faith take me from failure to victory?
For Jonathan, Rick, Julie and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!**

All quoted scriptures are from the 1995 version of NASB unless otherwise indicated.



Join us next week for our podcast on March 21, 2022
Ep. 1221: How Do We Keep Hope Alive?
Christian Questions ©2022 all rights reserved

Study QUESTIONS

Ep. 1220: Can Faith Take Me From Failure to Victory?

<https://christianquestions.com/character/1220-failure-victory/>

See:  CQ.Rewind
SHOW NOTES

1. What are the requirements of true faith? What is the Strong's Exhaustive Concordance's definition of "faith" in the New Testament? What more is needed? (See Hebrews 11:6, Jude 1:3)
2. How does faith differ between the Old and New Testaments? What faith-like words are more often found in the Old Testament than "faith"? How is faith manifested in the Old Testament? (See Genesis 15:5-6, Numbers 12:7-8, Lamentations 3:22-23)
3. What was the "Obedience Factor" given to Joshua? How does God show His faith in Joshua? What are the five instructions for success in this passage? Three times God commanded Joshua to do what? (See Joshua 1:1-3, 5-9) What are the two parts to *our* Obedience Factor? At the times you have failed in your Christian walk, were you living according to your personal preferences? Explain: (See Romans 12:1)
4. How was the faith of Rahab unusual? What was her "Adjustment Factor"? How did the spies have to adjust? Describe *our* Adjustment Factor. What must we adjust continually and what should those adjustments be based upon? (See Joshua 2:2-4,9-14, Hebrews 11:31, Romans 12:2)
5. How did Joshua and the Israelites show reverence to God when crossing the Jordan? How was God with them in the riverbed? Describe the scene. Have you experienced what appears to be a negative (such as coming to a metaphorical raging river in your path) which actually turned into a providence to move you forward? (See Joshua 3:9-17,4:18, 1 Peter 4:12)
6. Why is reverence to God so important in the lives of Christians? Like the Israelites, what must we put before us and behind us in our lives? How can we protect ourselves from temptations, weaknesses or falling into old ways? (See Philippians 3:7-9)
7. How did God set up a reminder and recognition of the Israelites' reverence as they crossed the river? What two things can we do to help us recognize God's providence in our lives? How can we actively place "stones of remembrance"? (See Joshua 4:2-11, Philippians 4:4-7)
8. What did Joshua do to show his humility during his interaction with the angel? How did Jesus exemplify for us, his "Following Factor" in Gethsemane? (See Joshua 5:13-15, Matthew 26:38-39)
9. Why was it important for Joshua to follow-through on his previous actions of faith? How did he do so? (See Joshua 6:15-17,22-25, 7:21, Hebrews 11:30)
10. What can we do to follow-through on *our* commitment to faith? How can this lead us from our failures to spiritual success? How has your faith delivered you from your past failures? What did you learn during those times? (See Lamentations 3:22-23, Philippians 4:8-9)