

MOVING AHEAD TOGETHER WITH
A WINNING MINDSET

STUDY FOUR

Impossible Walls Still Tumble Down

Joshua 6:1–5, 15–17, 20

This is a message from God, from His Word to your heart. The walls of Jericho fit perfectly into your story.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

THE imposing walls of Jericho must have loomed large in Joshua's mind as he awaited word from the two spies (*Joshua 2:1*). Finally, they returned with hopeful news: "The LORD has given us the whole land . . . for all the people in the land are terrified of us" (2:24).

How the tables had turned! Forty years earlier, the *Hebrews* were the terrified ones, afraid the people of the land would crush them like grasshoppers. Now the Canaanites quaked at the sight of the Hebrews.

God removed the privilege of entering the promised land from the exodus generation and gave the privilege to their children born in the wilderness. This generation of Hebrews knew nothing of Egypt, only howling stretches of wasteland and a daily diet of manna. How much manna can a person eat? They were so close to the land of milk and honey they could taste it!

And yet, when they looked at Jericho across the Jordan, they saw towering impossibilities. There was no way to go beneath Jericho's massive walls, no way over, no way around, and no way through. From the human point of view, it looked hopeless.

From God's divine perspective, however, this seeming impossibility was a disguised opportunity for God to fulfill His promises. This new generation trusted the Lord to give them the land, but . . . *how to get past those walls?*



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PREPARE YOUR HEART

Perhaps a towering impossibility looms over your life. An intractable marriage or family conflict. A health issue that defies solutions. An oppressive addiction. What impossibility casts its shadow over you?

Use the following space to express it to your Father in prayer and invite Him to show you His perspective.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

The next morning, Joshua led the nation to the banks of the Jordan River. When the priests carrying the ark of the covenant stepped into the Jordan, the river “began backing up a great distance away” (Joshua 3:16). All the people walked across the dry riverbed into the promised land (3:14–17)—just as their parents walked to freedom through the Red Sea from Egypt.

After everyone had crossed, “the water of the Jordan returned and overflowed its banks as before” (4:18). The people camped at Gilgal, where they set up twelve memorial stones taken from the riverbed for future generations to remember God’s mighty hand that stopped the Jordan’s flow (4:1–24).



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Read *Joshua 5:1–12* and write down which covenant ceremonies the nation reestablished. How do you think these ceremonies prepared the Hebrews for the spiritual battles ahead?

For the first time, the Israelites celebrated Passover as free people in their new homeland. God stopped the heavenly manna supply because the days of wandering were over! Now, His people were ready to face those impossible walls.



Observation: The Lord's Instructions and the People's Obedience

Observation is the first step in *Searching the Scriptures*. Read carefully the verses, noting repetition of key words, cause and effect, contrasts, and logical flow. The account of Jericho's fall actually begins with a divine encounter between Joshua and a heavenly being.

What do you observe about this encounter in *Joshua 5:13–15*?

Joshua was face-to-face with an angel or, possibly, the preincarnate Christ. A temporary, visible manifestation of God is called a *theophany*. As Joshua “fell with his face to the ground in reverence” (5:14), Joshua learned that *consecration precedes conquest*. Joshua consecrated himself to do battle according to God's plan, not Joshua's.



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For each of the three sections in *Joshua 6:1–27*, list the details of that section along with any other key observations, and then write a single-sentence summary of its emphasis.

The Instructions from the Lord—Joshua 6:1–5

<i>Joshua 6:1–5</i>	
Details	Emphasis

God is nothing like us. He does things we cannot do. He thinks things we cannot think. He sees the end from the beginning, and He knows what can be done. His plan has nothing to do with human strategy. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

The Obedience of the People—Joshua 6:8–21

<i>Joshua 6:6–21</i>	
Details	Emphasis



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No one in Israel was worried. No one wondered, “Can we really do this?” They got up early the seventh day, anticipating what God was going to do. They believed the walls would collapse. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

The Collapse of the Wall—Joshua 6:22–27

<i>Joshua 6:22–27</i>	
Details	Emphasis

Imagine the sounds—first of the shout of all those people and then of the falling of those walls. I can’t read about that without a chill going up my back. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: The Lessons from Jericho

Reflect on the account of Jericho’s fall from various angles to discover rich lessons about God and how His people relate to Him.



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Imagine yourself as one of the Israelites feeling the earth rumble as the massive walls split apart, giant stones tumble from top to bottom, and the entire structure crumbles in a heap. What unforgettable truth or truths does the account reveal about God?

What is the significance of the priests carrying the ark in the middle of the procession and blowing horns to herald it? What lesson or lessons do you draw from that detail?

From a human point of view, God's plan to defeat Jericho made no sense. What lesson was God teaching His people about putting their faith in Him and obeying Him?



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The Commander of heaven wasn't teaching the Israelites innovative strategies in the art of warfare. By circling the city, the nation experienced God's promise come to life: "Wherever you set foot, you will be on land I have given you" (Joshua 1:3). What was the *spiritual* lesson God was teaching His people?

The people had been on a march through the wilderness with Moses. They crossed the Jordan with Joshua, and now they're in Canaan. The first thing they see are the walls of Jericho—a 30-foot impossibility. Not if they follow God's plan! —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: Wait on the Lord's Help

The rubble of Jericho's wall proves that nothing is impossible for God. Jesus echoed the point to His followers who wondered whether anyone could be saved. What did Jesus reply, according to [Luke 18:26–27](#)?

Higher than the wall of Jericho is the barrier of sin that stands between sinful humanity and a holy God. Through moral effort alone, no human can scale the wall, and yet, the salvation that is impossible for people to achieve is possible with God, who broke down the wall through the death and resurrection of Jesus.

If God can break through the sin barrier, then no impossibility can stand against His power.



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Did the Hebrew nation learn that lesson? Years later, God’s people faced an imminent invasion from a powerful enemy. Victory against such a mighty foe was impossible. And yet, God urged His people to trust Him for their salvation:

*“Only in returning to me
and resting in me will you be saved.
In quietness and confidence is your strength.” (Isaiah 30:15)*

What did the nation do instead, according to [30:16–17](#), despite God’s warning?

What was God’s response to His people who had more faith in horses than in Him, according to [Isaiah 30:18](#)? What lesson do you learn about facing impossibilities?

In the waiting, God will go to work. I don’t know how. I don’t know when. I don’t know what He will do. But we wait on Him to show us His love and compassion.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



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Application: Consider Your Impossibilities

In *application*, the Scriptures speak to our situations with four statements of reality. Like Jericho's wall . . .

1. *Your impossibility is real, and it isn't going away.* It will likely be there tomorrow unless God immediately and decisively intervenes.
2. *Your impossibility is bigger and stronger than you.* You are outmatched.
3. *In the face of your impossibility, you've tried everything to handle your impossibility on your own.* You can't fix it or remove it. Energy and hope might be running low.
4. *To deal with your impossibility, you need God's strategy from Scripture.* Come to Him for help. Rest in His power. Yield to His methods. Trust in His timing.

Reflect on these points regarding the specific impossibility that you wrote down at the beginning of this *Searching the Scriptures* study. Do you find them true in your life? How so?

So, what is God's strategy for handling impossibilities? Should we circle the problem, blow horns, and shout? No, none of that caused Jericho's wall to crumble. God brought the walls down. Israel's seven-day parade was God's way of teaching His people to *wait on Him* and *trust in Him*. It was a lesson in faith.



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In the space below, prayerfully, deliberately, and confidently turn your impossibility over to the One who can cause a breakthrough, resolution, or healing.

Now, leave it with God to handle it in His time, His way, and according to His will. Express your faith in the space below.

Like the Israelites, we have a part to play. A part may be to seek counsel, pursue treatment, pray daily, or any number of things. But only God can do the real work of bringing down walls. Once we place them in God's hands, we are relieved of the worry. The impossibility is in God's hands, and you're trusting Him.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, as I shift the burden of my impossible situation or person into Your hands, I release the outcome to You. I wait on You for help to do what no person can do, for wisdom to know which direction to choose, for the perseverance to keep trusting You when I feel like giving up. You alone are my help. In Jesus' name, amen.