Joshua Chapter 6 – John Karmelich

- 1. This lesson poses a unique challenge as a bible teacher: This chapter covers material that is very familiar to many people. So how does one prepare a study of something that is familiar, and still make it "fruitful"? For those of you out there that don't know this chapter, this is the story of Joshua leading the Israelites to march around the walls of Jericho. On the 7th day of marching, the walls fall down by themselves and the Israelites attacked and defeated Jericho.
- 2. With that said, I want to open with a cute joke that fits this story:
 - a) A children's Sunday school teacher was asking questions of kids in his room. One of the questions the teacher asked was "Who knocked down the walls of Jericho?" None of the kids answered the question. Then the teacher picked on one boy and asked again, "Who knocked down the walls of Jericho?" The boy responded, "I didn't do it." The teacher thought that was funny and when his mother picked him up, he told her exactly what her son said. Her mother responded with, "If my son said he did not knock down the walls of Jericho, well I believe him and I suggest that you believe him too."
 - b) The teacher thought the joke was even funnier now with mom's response. After church, he told the story to the head pastor who got a good laugh out of it. The head pastor had a meeting that night with the board of elders and decided to share the story. After the pastor finished the story, the elders all sat there in silence. Finally one of the elders said, "It's ok pastor. Just tell us how much it cost to fix the wall and we'll take care of it".
 - i) I created a moral to go with this joke, but I will save that for the end of this lesson in order to get you to read further. ©
- 3. With that out of my system, let me summarize the chapter:
 - a) The chapter starts with God talking to Joshua and explaining to him how to attack Jericho. God said in effect that for six days, all the male adult Israelites are to quietly march around the city one time per day. Then on the 7th day, the same Israelites are to march around the city seven times. After the seventh lap is completed everyone is to shout and then the walls of Jericho fall down. The Israelites are then to attack the city and kill everyone except those who are residing in Rahab's house.
- 4. Now let me give my title for this lesson: It is, "What wall does God need to knock down in our life?" Let me also add, that unlike the residences of Jericho, we are not to kill anyone. ☺ The only killing God wants are sins and problems in our lives. Let me explain further:
 - a) As an example, our "walls" may be covering a broken relationship with someone.

 Another example may be that our "walls" may be a sin issue that we have to conquer.
 - b) Here is an interesting point to remember about this lesson: God knocks down the wall, but it was up to the Israelites to actually go in and conquer this city. If God knocks down a wall that reveals some sort of sin issue, it is then up to us to deal with that issue once the wall is down. It is up to us to go forward and actually win the battle.
- 5. Let me talk about one other topic before jumping into the chapter: Why kill everyone in Jericho?
 - a) The Israelites were told to kill everyone in Jericho except for Rahab and her family. That meant killing non-soldiers and children. Why would God command such a thing? The answer has to do with the "sin issue" that is part of that particular society. God judges all people fairly. For the residents of Jericho who were not involved in that particular sinful practice, I am sure God will judge them fairly. The same with innocent children that died in this slaughter. The point is God is using the Israelites as His instrument to bring a judgment on a particular group. This judgment was determined over 400 years earlier and told to Abraham. (See Genesis 15:16).
 - b) The Israelites were never told to kill every person who didn't accept their God. The orders were to wipe out a specific group of people because God was judging that group.

- 6. Chapter 6, Verse 1: Now Jericho was tightly shut up because of the Israelites. No one went out and no one came in.
 - a) If you recall, the Israelites crossed the Jordan River (miraculously) at least four days earlier. In that time span, all of the Israelite men circumcised each other and all of the Israelites celebrated the Jewish holiday of Passover.
 - b) During this time frame, it was a good thing that the residents of Jericho did not get "wind" of what the Israelites were doing or else the guards of Jericho could have defeated the Israelites due to their weakness recovering from circumcision.
 - c) The point as far as the residences of Jericho were concerned is that the Israelites had miraculously crossed the Jordan River. The residents of Jericho were scared of the Israelites, as now they were all in the city with the gates locked shut.
 - d) I'm sure there were guards on top of the tower walls who saw the Israelites at a distance. From that distance those in Jericho could see that the Israelites were in "eyesight", but they had no idea exactly what the Israelites were doing at this point.
 - e) We learned from Rahab back in Chapter 2 that "the 40 year old story of parting the Red Sea" was common knowledge in Jericho and how the Israelites had defeated two other nations east of the Jordan River (when Moses was still the leader). Therefore, the citizens of Jericho did fear the Israelites. Now that the Israelites miraculously crossed the Jordan, they were even more scared for their own life and shut up the city.
- 7. Verse 2: Then the LORD said to Joshua, "See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men.
 - a) It is best to think of Verse 1 as a "footnote". In the last few verses of Chapter 5, God was speaking to Joshua. In the first few verses of Chapter 6, other than Verse 1, God is speaking to Joshua. I see this as one continuous speech with a footnote in Verse 1.
 - i) Some see this speech in Chapter 6 as a separate speech by God, but to me, the text makes more sense to see it as one continuous speech.
 - b) Notice the word "have" in Verse 2. God says that "I have" (as in past tense) delivered Jericho into your hands. This verse is a good reminder that God sees all of history as if it were a familiar "rerun" on television. In other words God knows all things and He knows the outcome of all things. Therefore God could describe this victory as if it were a "done deal" even though the battle has not happened yet.
 - c) What God "has done" is deliver all of Jericho along with its king and its soldiers into the waiting hands of Joshua and his army. It was still up to the Israelites to defeat the city, but again, God is describing this battle as if it is a done deal.
- 8. Verse 3: March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days. ⁴ Have seven priests carry trumpets of rams' horns in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets. ⁵ When you hear them sound a long blast on the trumpets, have all the people give a loud shout; then the wall of the city will collapse and the people will go up, every man straight in."
 - a) These verses are the rest of God's speech to Joshua. The orders are for Joshua and the Israelites to march around the city one time per day for six days. On the seventh day, Israelites are to march around the city seven times. At the end of the seventh time around Jericho (on the 7th day), the Israelite priests are to blow trumpets. Then all of the Israelites are to shout and then the walls of the city will collapse. At that point the Israelites are to march in and literally wipe out the city.
 - b) Let me describe the physical size of Jericho. The best estimate from archeologists is that the city of Jericho was about 11 acres in size. I was taught in "real estate school" that if you want to visualize an acre, it is roughly the size of a football field. With that visual, one can imagine walking around a big wall that surrounds an 11-football field size city.
 - i) For every fighting man in Israel to walk around that city, it would take time, but it was still small enough that one could walk around it seven times in a single day.

- c) It's interesting to speculate about these verses from the standpoint of Joshua having to explain all of this to the Israelites.
 - i) If you have ever been to a business staff meeting, you know what it is like for everyone to look at the boss and think, "The boss has completely lost it this time and I can't believe what the boss wants us to do."
 - ii) I'm sure the Israelites thought they had to build weaponry or prepare for a siege in order to attack Jericho. When Joshua told this plan of God to the Israelites, I expect that some them thought, "Are you sure you heard God right on this one?"
 - iii) The point is, even as it was an act of faith to trust God to perform the circumcision at this time (a few days back) and it was an act of faith to celebrate the Passover meal with the enemy in close site, so it was an act of faith for the Israelites to agree to this plan to march around the city for seven days.
 - iv) This is a reminder that if God calls us to do something, God also makes it possible for us to follow through with that command. In other words, it took an act of faith for the Israelites to accept Joshua's plan and carry it out, but the Israelites did it.
 - v) In fact, this story of the walls of Jericho falling down is mentioned in Hebrews (Chapter 11, Verse 30). That chapter lists great acts of faith in God in the bible.
 - vi) The point to you and I is, if God asks us to do something "special", we will know God is behind that plan if He makes it possible for us to follow through with that plan for our lives.
- d) Now let's think about this plan from the guards on the walls of Jericho.
 - i) I'm sure that the first time the Israelites marched around the wall, the city guards just stood there in shock at what the Israelites were doing.
 - ii) I'm guessing that beginning the second time, or the third time at the worse, the guards on the walls were yelling out insults at the Israelites. More likely, by the third time, they were throwing things down at the Israelites. I even wonder if they were firing arrows down at them as they marched around the city.
 - iii) For those of you familiar with the children's cartoon "Veggie Tales", they did a cute production of this scene. In the cartoon, the guards of Jericho were throwing down "slushies" at the Israelites. (A "slushie" is a flavored frozen drink.) I suspect in real life, the men in Jericho were throwing down things that were more deadly.
 - iv) My point here is that it took a real act of faith for the Israelites to do this day after day in silence. God commanded the Israelites not to say a word until the command came for everyone to yell out after the seventh trip on the seventh day. I'm sure it was tempting for everyone to yell out as they were marching around the city day after day, or at least to react to whatever was being thrown at them.
- e) It's time to come back to my lesson theme. It is, "What wall does God need to knock down in our lives or, what does God want us to deal with once those walls are down?"
 - i) To explain this, first I have to explain a few "irregularities" about what the Israelites were doing at this moment in time:
 - a) A strange aspect about this series of marches around the city is the concept of the "seventh day". God's program for the Israelites was to work six days and rest on the seventh day. Yet here, the Israelites were to work "seven times harder" on the seventh day and actually attack on the seventh day.
 - b) One more strange thing is the "ark" was part of the parade around the city. The ark was supposed to stay in the Tabernacle and only the High Priest could see it once a year. (See Leviticus 16:14-15.)
 - ii) It also meant they had to attack right after they spent the whole day marching around the city. They had to be physically tired from all that marching. It is another sign to show God's miracle working in their life.

- f) Verse 4 mentions the horns that were used to assemble the Israelites were "ram's horns". These ram's horns were associated with "jubilee" and not with fighting. The Israelites were instructed in the law to make silver trumpets to be used when the tribes were to "move". (See Numbers 10:2). Given that law, the silver trumpets were associated with tribe movement and therefore, with "warfare" movement. Here in Joshua, the horns used were "ram's horns", which are associated with the "jubilee". Therefore, I have to explain what the term "jubilee" means:
 - i) In ancient Israel, God said in effect that the "Land belonged to Him and He (God) gave it to the 12 tribes of Israel. Therefore, when one wanted to sell land, it is the equivalent of what we consider "leasing" the land. There was a point of time called the "Jubilee" when the land reverted back to the "seller" of the land.
 - ii) A similar principal applied to when Israelites owned slaves. Israelites were allowed to own slaves, but the "year of the jubilee" is when all slaves must be set free. Separate question: Why did God allow slavery? The short answer is that it was part of their lifestyle and people were used to it. Modern Israel like the rest of the world today does not allow slavery.
 - iii) Without going into too much detail about "jubilee", the point is the same ram horns that symbolize the start of the jubilee were the same ones being associated with the sound of God leading the charge against Jericho.
- g) OK John, what is your point? The knocking down of Jericho's walls does help the Israelites conquering Jericho. However, the underlying point of the book of Joshua is about God ruling in our hearts and taking charge over our lives. That also means, "cleansing out the sins" that exist in our hearts. That cleansing is a time of "jubilee".
 - i) Often our sins are hidden in that we don't want to deal with those sins. We build up "walls" so no one can see them. Well, God likes to knock down those "walls" so we have to deal with those sins head on and deal with them by killing them.
 - ii) Let me put it this way: We all have things that we are embarrassed by in our lives. God does not want anything to block His relationship with us. Therefore, God will often knock down the walls we build up so we <u>have</u> to deal with those issues. The reason He wants us to face those issues "head on" is not only to make us better people, but to prevent anything (i.e., any issue) from blocking a relationship between God and ourselves.
 - iii) On that convicting note, ② we can go back to the text.
- 9. Verse 6: So Joshua son of Nun called the priests and said to them, "Take up the ark of the covenant of the LORD and have seven priests carry trumpets in front of it." ⁷ And he ordered the people, "Advance! March around the city, with the armed guard going ahead of the ark of the LORD."
 - a) Remember that the first five verses lead up to the actual march around the city. In verse six, the Israelites actually carry out God's orders to march and well, "here they go".
 - b) The procession around the city was lead by seven priests blowing "ram's horns". The ark of God, which represented the presence of God, followed the priests. The "men of war" then followed the ark and the priests.
 - c) It's interesting to think of the story this way: Was the purpose of the "Ark of God" going into battle done for the sake of the Israelites or for the sake of those in Jericho?
 - i) I would argue it was for the Israelites for the following reason: Everyone in Jericho would soon be dead after the seventh day. There will be no one left in Jericho to tell the story to others. The exception is Rahab and her family, but she will become part of the Israelite "clan" so in that sense, she doesn't count.
 - ii) The purpose of the ram's horns and God's presence in the ark is strictly for the Israelites to learn to trust God. The purpose of the walls coming down is for the Israelites to learn to trust God and obey by doing things "His way".

- d) So, does this mean for us to face our sins, we march around "those sins" for seven days with God "leading" the parade and then the wall between us and those sins will magically disappear? Not exactly. ©
 - i) It is time to consider the number "seven". The number seven in the bible is associated with the "completeness" of God. The key example is God rested on the seventh day of creation. It is no coincidence that in this text, it was exactly seven priests who blew these ram horns that lead the parade.
 - ii) The point is when God "knocks down" the walls, it is done on His timing and it is done "His way" and not ours. So what does that mean? It means we pray for God to help us deal with the sins of our lives and we pray that God work it out on His timing and not ours.
 - iii) We see our "walls" and they appear to be too big to conquer. We may have to march around our "walls" for six days or six weeks or six years. The point is those walls won't come down until we are willing to trust that God is working and watch Him eliminate the walls from the issues we must deal with.
 - iv) Sometimes the "walls of separation" are still standing because 1) We have not asked God to help us with that issue or 2) We want it done on our timing and not God's timing. A proper prayer is then to ask God to help us deal with the sins that exist in our life and to help us deal with it "God's way" and on His timing.
 - v) Meanwhile, the parade around the city is just getting started. ©
- 10. Verse 8: When Joshua had spoken to the people, the seven priests carrying the seven trumpets before the LORD went forward, blowing their trumpets, and the ark of the LORD's covenant followed them. ⁹ The armed guard marched ahead of the priests who blew the trumpets, and the rear guard followed the ark. All this time the trumpets were sounding.
 - a) We get a detail about this parade in these verses that was not given until now. The priests blowing the trumpets are to blow them on all seven days and not just on the last day when the walls actually fall down.
 - i) In other words, the orders were for all the soldiers to keep quiet as they marched around the city. The only noise that came from the Israelite army was the sound of the trumpets blowing during the whole procession.
 - ii) Notice there were two "sets" of priests. There were the seven in front who blew the trumpets and those that followed the ark.
 - b) As a reminder, the Israelites were divided into 12 tribes. One of the tribes was named "The Levites". Among the Levites were the priests. Among the duties of the priests were to be in charge of the "ark of the covenant".
 - i) So why were the priests and the ark in the march around the city? It is best to think of it this way: A purpose of the priests is that they were "chosen" by God to be His witnesses between Himself (God) and the rest of the Israelites. Therefore, with God's presence leading this march, the Levites were in charge of sounding the "horns of God's presence" leading this parade.
 - ii) I used to think that the purpose of all of this was just to warn those living in Jericho. However, since they are all sentenced to die, I know realize the presence of God is there for the Israelites to realize that God is the one leading them to the victories in their life and the Israelites themselves cannot take credit.
 - c) One more issue: Why were the priests surrounding the ark? Was it to protect the ark from being captured by those of Jericho? Since Jericho lost this battle I don't think so.
 - i) What it has to do is to remind us that the ark of God is "holy" and the Israelites were not to treat it casually. The point? God is still to be respected as God. Yes God wants a personal relationship with us, but He still wants us to remember He is the God of the universe and to be respected as such.

- 11. Verse 10: But Joshua had commanded the people, "Do not give a war cry, do not raise your voices, do not say a word until the day I tell you to shout. Then shout!" ¹¹ So he had the ark of the LORD carried around the city, circling it once. Then the people returned to camp and spent the night there.
 - a) In Verses 10 and 11 we complete "lap one" around the city. On the seventh day, the Israelites marched around the city seven times. Therefore, the size of the city was small enough where seven laps around the city could be done in one day's time. Remember we are still completing "day one" so I believe the first lap was done in an hour or so.
 - b) The point here is the Israelites were to keep quiet until the time they actually shout.
 - c) So what is the reason for the silence? Why can't the Israelites at the least "hoop it up" and holler while they are going around the city? I believe the symbolic answer has to do with waiting on God's timing in our lives and not to "work" ahead of God.
 - i) I find the biggest mistakes I make in life is when I try to fix things without God's help. Whenever I try to correct things "without God", I find it messes things up even more than it was in the first place.
 - ii) The idea of silence is to wait for God to act and not speak until that point. The reason the Israelites are to yell when the walls do fall is that God wants to speak "through us". God wants us to follow Him and do what He says, on His timing.
 - iii) So how do we know whether or not God is leading us in a situation? First of all, have we asked God to "lead our parade" in dealing with our "walls"? Next, often we still don't know what is God's timing for our lives. Sometimes we can only tell by the results if God wants us to do something at any given time. A good example of us jumping ahead of God is when the results of what we want to do are bad!
 - iv) I usually find that when something significant is "God's timing", it becomes obvious. Yes there are things in life God wants us to deal with. The key is learning to deal with them on His timing. If you are not sure whether or not "now" is God's timing, ask Him. If one still doesn't have a great answer, then sometimes we just need to step out in faith and watch where God is leading us.
 - v) This leads me back to the "silence" issue. What I have to remember in my prayer life is to be willing to listen and not just talk all the time. Often God is willing to lead us best when and only when we are willing to "Shut up and listen!"
- 12. Verse 12: Joshua got up early the next morning and the priests took up the ark of the LORD. ¹³ The seven priests carrying the seven trumpets went forward, marching before the ark of the LORD and blowing the trumpets. The armed men went ahead of them and the rear guard followed the ark of the LORD, while the trumpets kept sounding. ¹⁴ So on the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp. They did this for six days.
 - a) Verses 12-13 cover "Day Two". Verse 14 says in effect that the Israelites did the exact same thing for six days. That same thing is to march around the city one time per day with the only noise coming from the Israelites was the sound of the ram's horn blowing.
 - b) It took discipline to keep quiet all this time. Think how tempting it was to call out something like, "Hey, did yesterday's pace seem a little slower than today's pace?" It would be tempting to yell out, "Look out, they are throwing "x" over the wall at us!"
 - c) Bad jokes aside, the point is silence and waiting on God's timing requires "silence"!
 - i) Let me add at this point that God is more than capable of talking to us anytime He wants to. He is more than capable of speaking louder than any background noise or speak anything we are saying. It is not true that God only speaks to us when we have been silent for a specific period of time.
 - ii) The point of "silence" is for us to learn to be <u>willing</u> to listen for God as opposed to just "saying something". Our prayers should not just be a one-way speech to God.
 - iii) It also does not mean we can force God to speak when we are silent. Again, the key is working on His timing and not ours.

- 13. Verse 15: On the seventh day, they got up at daybreak and marched around the city seven times in the same manner, except that on that day they circled the city seven times.
 - a) Now we come to the seventh day. The text specifically states the Israelites got going at daybreak, knowing they have to march around seven times before attacking.
 - b) I want you also to think about the actual attack this way: If one has just finished seven laps around this "11 acre" city, one will be tired after the seventh lap. The point is after the seventh lap is when the work begins of actually attacking the city. Therefore, the Israelites were at a disadvantage when they attacked, as they were tired from all the marching. It is just another sign of God working in our life when we can have victories even when we are already tired after a full day's work!
- 14. Verse 16: The seventh time around, when the priests sounded the trumpet blast, Joshua commanded the people, "Shout! For the LORD has given you the city! ¹⁷ The city and all that is in it are to be devoted to the LORD. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall be spared, because she hid the spies we sent. ¹⁸ But keep away from the devoted things, so that you will not bring about your own destruction by taking any of them. Otherwise you will make the camp of Israel liable to destruction and bring trouble on it. ¹⁹ All the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron are sacred to the LORD and must go into his treasury."
 - a) These verses are a "prelude" to the big moment when the walls came down.
 - b) In these verses, Joshua gives the command for everyone to shout prior to the walls actually falling down.
 - c) Joshua also commands to spare Rahab and whoever is in her house. The text mentions the two "spies". Other translations call these two men "witnesses". My point is those two guys never did a lot of spying. Their mission was to be a living witness to God to Rahab.
 - d) The Israelites were to burn everything in the city. That includes the dead bodies of all the people and all the animals. Only the things that cannot burn by fire (i.e., things made of silver, gold and bronze) were to be taken out. All those metal items were to be placed in the house of the Lord.
 - e) OK John, I know you have a symbolic reason why the Israelites were to kill everything that lived and not keep anything of value for themselves: so let's here it. ©
 - i) It ties to the idea of giving the "first" of what we earn to God. Israelites were required to give ten percent of whatever profit they make to God. The idea is to give to God the first of our earnings and then we can use whatever we get after that for ourselves.
 - ii) So, are you saying Christians are required to given ten percent? No, but I am saying that Christians <u>should</u> be givers. Further, one should give the first of one's earnings and not the "leftovers". The idea is to learn to trust God with our earnings as with every other aspect of our lives. If and when we learn to trust God with our livelihood (earnings), God promises that we "cannot out give Him".
 - iii) Going back to the Israelites, Jericho is the first city they attacked and the first of their victories belonged completely to God. Thus the spoils of war go into the treasuries of God and were not to be used by individual Israelites.
 - f) There is one more spiritual concept to get out of the idea of "killing everything" and that is the idea of completely killing the sins we deal with in our lives.
 - i) Let's face it, if we don't completely kill the desire of whatever sin troubles us, that sin will come back to haunt us. Sometimes killing a sin is a slow and painful, lifelong process and sometimes it is an "instant thing". The point is we can't do it without God's help either on "day one or day one thousand".
 - ii) In a spiritual sense, those sins we cannot "burn up in the fire" we are to dedicate to God and let Him deal with those specific issues.
 - iii) I personally like the visual picture of laying sin at the "foot of the cross". The visual idea is to crucify it dead once and for all.

- 15. Verse 20: When the trumpets sounded, the people shouted, and at the sound of the trumpet, when the people gave a loud shout, the wall collapsed; so every man charged straight in, and they took the city. ²¹ They devoted the city to the LORD and destroyed with the sword every living thing in it--men and women, young and old, cattle, sheep and donkeys.
 - a) We are now at the big moment where all the Israelites shouted and the walls came down.
 - b) Let me start by asking, "Why have everyone shout?" Was it the shouting that led to the walls coming down? Was it to cover up the sound of God knocking down the walls?
 - i) On one level, I see the shouting as the Israelites ending their frustration of not being allowed to speak for seven days.
 - ii) Think of it this way: When God does knock down the wall that exposes some issue we have to deal with, does God want us to be silent about it and ignore it?
 - a) Of course not. The time to deal with whatever wall is knocked down is right after that wall is down. It is time to "shout" and take on that issue.
 - b) If God is knocking down some sort of wall in our life, then God wants us to react and face that issue head on and not let that wall be rebuilt.
 - c) Now we come to Verse 21. This is the part where the Israelites destroyed all living things.
 - i) There are certain aspects to life that are fairly easy to explain from a logical perspective but almost impossible to explain an emotional standpoint.
 - ii) I can logically tell you that God ordered the destruction of all living things in Jericho as a symbol of destroying sin. I can also tell you that it has to do with a four hundred year old promise of "eliminating the sin of the land of Israel" by destroying a nation who's sins were being judged. (Again, see Genesis 15:16).
 - a) However, "emotionally" it is impossible to explain why God would give an order to kill all people (young and old) as well as all animals.
 - b) Let's face it, God could have said to save the babies and raise them as Jews and they would not know of the family sins. God could have said to save the animals, as they have no idea what is going on here.
 - c) There is no way to emotionally explain the idea of complete destruction. One has to remember that this was only a specific order given to a specific group of people and in that sense it is never an example to be followed.
 - iii) A good comparison might be the concept of "suffering". I could give you a wonderful logical explanation of why suffering exists in the world. (It has to do with God allowing freedom in the lives of humans.) When it comes to explaining suffering from an emotional standpoint, that logical explanation doesn't help.
 - a) When a loved one is suffering from say, cancer, that disease was no fault of their own. Explaining how the "consequences of sin" in the world allowed such a disease to exist will not provide any sort of emotional comfort, even though it may be a biblically correct explanation for what happened.
 - b) The same with the killing of everyone in Jericho. It is "emotional" to say that we should just spare these animals or these babies. It is logical to make every effort to kill whatever bad influences God wants us to kill.
 - c) Let me put this concept into an example: If a person is battling alcoholism, they may have to avoid going to most restaurants as those restaurants serve alcohol. In other words, one may not only have to kill the desire itself, but anything and everything that is associated with that desire. That means avoiding going to places where that desire could strike up.
 - d) It may be ok for the Christian next to you to go to that restaurant, you or I may have to completely kill anything associated with that bad desire.

- 16. Verse 22: Joshua said to the two men who had spied out the land, "Go into the prostitute's house and bring her out and all who belong to her, in accordance with your oath to her." ²³ So the young men who had done the spying went in and brought out Rahab, her father and mother and brothers and all who belonged to her. They brought out her entire family and put them in a place outside the camp of Israel.
 - a) Well, before we kill everything in site, we can't forget about Rahab. © For those who don't remember, the story of Rahab took place back in Chapter 2.
 - b) The interesting thing to think about was when the walls fell down, I'm sure the shock of the "earthquake" rumbled all of Jericho. Rahab's house that was built along the wall of Jericho. Her home stayed in tact, at least long enough for the Israelites to rescue her.
 - c) I also find it interesting that in Verse 22, they still refer to her home as the "prostitute's house". Yes, she is saved from the disaster and saved eternally, but I'm guessing that for many years she still had to deal with the reputation of being a prostitute.
 - i) Note that in the last sentence of Verse 22, Rahab and her family were placed outside the camp of Israel. Commentator's suspect that meant she was not considered ceremonially clean for an unspecified time frame. Whatever this punishment is, it did not last forever. We learn in the book of Ruth that Rahab married a Jewish man and she became part of the ancestral line of David.
 - d) OK John, Rahab and her family were saved and placed outside the camp. How does that bit of information affect my life other than knowing some bible history?
 - i) First, it is a reminder that God expects us to keep our word. The Israelites promised to spare her and her family, and they stuck to it. It is a reminder that God cares about His reputation among believers. The idea of sticking to our word is important as "If we can't be trusted to keep our word, how will anybody ever trust us when we talk to them about God?"
 - ii) It is also a reminder that those who trust in God <u>do</u> get saved from the destruction that is to come upon the world. The rest of Jericho feared the Israelites as they feared dying. Despite that fear, no one in Jericho put their trust in the true God of the world, other than Rahab and her family.
 - iii) So why was Rahab "ceremonially unclean" despite all that she did? What does that mean for us? Once one is saved, then and only then does God begin to work on their lives to "clean it up". In other words, nothing was required of Rahab other than her trust in God prior to being saved. Now that she is saved, God wants to work on her life (the same way He wants to work on our life) to change her into the type of person God wants her to be. Now that she is saved, she needs to be in a "time out" to learn of what God expects of her. That is technically what happened to her to learn the ways of God better.
 - a) The point is we should not demand that "non-Christians" live like Christians, but once someone makes that commitment, we let God (not us) work on their hearts to change them into the type of person God wants them to be. It never ceases to amaze me to watch people give their lives to God and then watch their lives change for the better.
- 17. Verse 24: Then they burned the whole 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 But Joshua spared Rahab the prostitute, with her family and all who belonged to her, because she hid the men Joshua had sent as spies to Jericho--and she lives among the Israelites to this day.
 - a) Once everyone in the city was killed, the entire city was burned. For what it is worth, there is good archeological evidence of the walls of Jericho coming down and of the city being burnt. There have been some good archeological digs of this location over the last 100-plus years. The archeological evidence is not as perfect as we would like it to be, but it is still good enough to support the evidence of this story being true.

- b) In these verses we have a "recap" of the results of the attack on Jericho: 1) The fact that the city was burnt up, 2) Rahab and her family were saved and 3) The things that would not burn up in a fire (i.e., things made of metal) were put into God's "treasury", which means they were put for use for the priests.
- c) OK, so why repeat these verses? Why is it important to know that Joshua went through with all of this and why does the bible take the time to emphasize the success?
 - i) One thing I have come to learn about the bible is it goes "out of its way" to describe when someone (or some group) is loyal to God. It is almost as if God is writing, "I love how this person (or this group) went out of their way to be obedient and let me write about it in detail".
 - ii) Sometimes I suspect that people who "least expect it" are going to have great rewards in heaven simply because they followed through on what God had asked them to do, just like Joshua did in this story.
 - iii) It comes back to the idea of "following God's lead". It was God Himself who gave this "crazy plan" to just march around the city for seven days. It was God Himself who said the ark is to lead in the parade along with priests blowing horns. Yet despite that "crazy plan", give Joshua credit for following God's orders.
 - iv) The purpose of the marching around the city was mainly to show the Israelites about the importance of being loyal to God and whatever He wants them (and us) to do no matter how strange that plan is.
- d) The lesson for us about this story is not about knowing one's history of Israel or knowing who knocked down the walls of Jericho (God). The lesson is about trusting God, when the "walls in front of us" appear to be too big for us to overcome.
 - i) My theme for this lesson is about dealing with <u>our</u> walls in our life. God is willing to knock down those walls if we are willing to then step forward in faith and deal with what is on the other side of those walls.
 - a) For some, those walls may be healing a broken relationship. For others, those walls may be dealing with some sort of sin issue. For others, it may be that those walls are keeping them from drawing close to God.
 - ii) The point is God is willing to knock down our "walls" if we let Him. What God asks of us if He knocks down those walls is then to step forward in faith and deal with what is on the other side of those walls.
 - a) Often, God may not knock down our "walls" yet because deep down we are not ready to deal with what is on the other side of that wall. Our prayer should not be so much for God to "knock down the walls" as much as it should be for us to know how to properly deal with what is on the other side of the wall. It is for God to prepare our hearts to deal with and conquer what is across those "spiritual walls".
- e) This would be a great time for a closing prayer, but I still have 2 more verses to go. ⑤

 18. Verse 26: At that time Joshua pronounced this solemn oath: "Cursed before the LORD is the man who undertakes to rebuild this city, Jericho: "At the cost of his firstborn son will he lay its foundations; at the cost of his youngest will he set up its gates."
 - a) The last thing Joshua does before "moving on to the next battle" is to place a curse on the site of Jericho. The curse is essentially, "Anyone who tries to rebuild this city will lose his first born and last born son in the process."
 - i) Know that historically, this did come true. Many centuries later, in 1st Kings Chapter 16, the city was rebuilt and the man in charge of rebuilding that city did lose both his first born and last born son in this process.
 - b) OK, other than the fact that curse historically came true, why is this curse important? If the walls of Jericho represent the walls that separate us from being "closer to God", well then cursed be us if we rebuild those walls. Let me explain:

- i) Let's suppose God wants us to deal with some sort of significant issue in our life. We have prayed about dealing with it and then prayed for "the walls come down" that separate us from those issues. We then get in trouble if we work to rebuild those walls as oppose to dealing whatever is on the other side of the wall.
- ii) So are you saying it will cost us our first and last born son if we rebuild that "wall?" Well, if you have daughters like me, it can't. © Understand that there is some sort of heavy price to be paid if we rebuild our walls. The point is God wants those walls down and for us to "kill and burn up" the sin issues that exist on the other side of those walls.
- c) This, surprisingly enough, leads me back to the joke I told when I opened the lesson. I said there was a moral to that joke and I meant it.
 - i) The joke ended with the board of elders saying, "Just get us an invoice and we'll take care of rebuilding the wall". My point here is that once those walls come down, there will be people or issues that will help us rebuild those walls if we want to. We could easily say, "I was really hurt and I have every right to be angry". That type of attitude will cause the wall to be rebuilt real fast.
 - ii) To keep the walls down, one has to have forgiveness, no matter who was at fault. The point is not who is right or wrong, the point is God wants a love relationship between Himself and us, and He wants that love to spread to those around us.
 - iii) Think of it this way: The only line in the Lord's Prayer where we have a responsibility to do something ourselves is the line that says, "Forgive us our sins as we have forgiven those who have sinned against us." (Ref.: Matthew 6:12). That prayer line does not make any commentary on who was right or wrong. To paraphrase that line: "God has forgiven us for lots of things, so why can't we forgive those who have harmed us in some way."
- d) The point I'm getting at is the key theme of this lesson: The "walls of Jericho" are a great miracle and part of bible history. The real lesson is not to learn about the literal walls of Jericho, but to think about what "walls" exist in our lives that are either covering sin or blocking a love relationship between God and ourselves or our loved ones and ourselves.
 - i) The prayer for the walls to come down should first focus on the following: "Dear God, show me what issues are blocking my love relationship with You. Help me to forgive for that issue and let that issue die. Prepare my heart so that when the walls do come down, I can be forgiving and I can go out and kill the sin that caused those walls to be there in the first place."
 - ii) Let me continue with one more prayer thought: "Lord, help me to let go of my anger and let go of what I did wrong. Just as You have forgiven me, so I must forgive others. Give me the power and strength to do that and bring down the walls that exist in my life."
- 19. Verse 27: So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame spread throughout the land.
 - a) What I "envision" this verse to say is that while the Israelites were destroying Jericho, there were some spies from other nearby cities watching in the background. The point is word got around "Israel" pretty fast of how Joshua and the Israelites had utterly destroyed everyone and everything in Jericho. In that way, God was with Joshua and the fear of Joshua and the Israelites spread through the land.
 - b) OK, and how does that fact tie into "killing the sins of our life"? Let me put it this way: Once we defeat a key sin in our life, there are demonic spiritual beings that are still watching our life. When those demons that are watching us win a battle with sin, "they" are now scared for their future. Let me explain a little further:

- i) Let's start with the question: Why do demonic beings harass believers? They can't take away our salvation, but they can harass us in order to make us bad witnesses for Christ. Satan knows that his time on earth is limited and will end one day when "x" number of people (no one knows that number) give their lives to Christ.
- ii) When we are eliminating sins in our lives, we are becoming a better witness for Christ and drawing others to Him. That is what Satan fears and that is why his demonic followers want us to focus on our sin issues and not on God Himself.
- iii) If Satan can get us to focus on our sins, we are focusing on ourselves and are bad witnesses for Christ. Therefore, demonic beings are constantly watching us and are doing their best to keep those walls "up high" in our lives.
- iv) It is only by the power of God that we have any hope of tearing down whatever walls are blocking our relationship with God and our relationship with others. Yes, we do pray for God to knock down those walls, but more importantly, we need to pray for God's guidance on how to act when those walls do come down.
- 20. Let's pray: Father, help us to eliminate and destroy whatever sin issues are separating ourselves from Your love for us. Knock down the walls that exist in our lives. More importantly help us to trust in You as to how to act when those walls do come down. Help us to work on your timing and trust in You for every aspect of our lives. Help us to listen to what You have to say to us. May our prayer life be a two-way dialogue and not a one-way conversation. Guide us as we are witnesses for You. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.