



S2.Lesson 7: God & Conflict – Jericho

Middle School Lesson Plans

Supplies Needed: Journals; Handout; tv or laptop to show movie clip (movie clip link is available at rfour.org/curriculum.html); A Bible for every student, preferably the same translation; a durable chair without armrests, wheels or a swivel - arrange it so that the chair is set up in an empty space (especially away from sharp edges and things that break easily) and is at least 10 feet from where everyone is sitting.

OPENING PRAYER

TELL

- The main character in the clip we're going to watch is named Greg.
- He joined the wrestling team because he's trying to figure out how to be popular.
- Let's see how his idea works out!

WATCH *Diary of a Wimpy kid*

ASK about movie clip

- ◆ Name the opponents that Greg faces in this movie clip... (the girl wrestler, the press, public opinion)
- ◆ Of these three opponents, which one do you think hurts Greg the most?
- ◆ What do you think Greg could've done differently to avoid these conflicts? (maybe nothing – except not try out for wrestling in the first place)
- ◆ What do you think Greg should do next?

ASK in general

- ◆ Like it was for Greg in the movie clip, conflict is sometimes inevitable. Individuals will go out of their way to argue with us or oppose us. What are some reasons for why conflicts happen? (desire to survive, scarcity of material, desire to rule over others, dislike for one another – why do we dislike each other, though? Other reasons for why conflicts happen?)

TELL

- ◆ So what do you expect God to do for you when you're in a conflict? (nothing? Scold you? rescue you? other things?)
- ◆ We're going to look at 3 stories in this session that highlight the relationship between individuals, conflict and God.
- ◆ Unfortunately, there is no easy answer or summary to these stories.
- ◆ The first story for our session is an Old Testament story in the book of Joshua.

- ◆ Joshua was the leader of the Israelites after Moses.
- ◆ So just a quick recap of who the Israelites are at the moment in history that this story takes place: The family of Israel (aka Jacob) moved to Egypt during the famine when Joseph and his brothers reunited. This family grew in numbers in the land of Egypt and under the rule of the Pharaohs. The Israelites were slowly enslaved by Egypt during the course of the 400 years they lived there. God then called Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt.
 - Once he does that, Moses then leads the Israelites to the promised land, but because they were slaves for 400 years, the Israelites have no understanding of independence that would motivate them to fight for the promised land (other nations lived in the promised land).
 - So God has them wander around in the desert for forty years, basically letting the enslaved generation of Israelites die off.
 - Now the “new” Israelites are back and are ready to fight for the promised land. That's where we start this story. The Israelites first real battle is with the city of Jericho. They've been surrounding the city for awhile now and have even sent spies into the town. Let's read about what happens next.

READ Joshua 6:1-26 (from The Message)

1 Jericho was shut up tight as a drum because of the People of Israel: no one going in, no one coming out. 2 God spoke to Joshua, "Look sharp now. I've already given Jericho to you, along with its king and its crack troops. 3 Here's what you are to do: March around the city, all your soldiers. Circle the city once. Repeat this for six days. 4 Have seven priests carry seven ram's horn trumpets in front of the Chest. On the seventh day march around the city seven times, the priests blowing away on the trumpets. 5 And then, a long blast on the ram's horn - when you hear that, all the people are to shout at the top of their lungs. The city wall will collapse at once. All the people are to enter, every man straight on in." 6 So Joshua son of Nun called the priests and told them, "Take up the Chest of the Covenant. Seven priests are to carry seven ram's horn trumpets leading God's Chest." 7 Then he told the people, "Set out! March around the city. Have the armed guard march before the Chest of God." 8 And it happened. Joshua spoke, the people moved: Seven priests with their seven ram's horn trumpets set out before God. They blew the trumpets, leading God's Chest of the Covenant. 9 The armed guard marched ahead of the trumpet-blowing priests; the rear guard was marching after the Chest, marching and blowing their trumpets. 10 Joshua had given orders to the people, "Don't shout. In fact, don't even speak - not so much as a whisper until you hear me say, 'Shout!' - then shout away!" 11 He sent the Chest of God on its way around the city. It circled once, came back to camp, and stayed for the night. 12 Joshua was up early the next morning and the priests took up the Chest of God. 13 The seven priests carrying the seven ram's horn trumpets marched before the Chest of God, marching and blowing the trumpets, with the armed guard marching before and the rear guard marching after. Marching and blowing of trumpets! 14 On the second day they again circled the city once and returned to camp. They did this six days.

15 When the seventh day came, they got up early and marched around the city this same way but seven times - yes, this day they circled the city seven times. 16 On the seventh time around the priests blew the trumpets and Joshua signaled the people, "Shout! - God has given you the city! 17 The city and everything in it is under a holy curse and offered up to God. "Except for Rahab the harlot - she is to live, she and everyone in her house with her, because she hid the agents we sent. 18 "As for you, watch yourselves in the city under holy curse. Be careful that you don't covet anything in it and take something that's cursed, endangering the camp of Israel with the curse and making trouble for everyone. 19 All silver and gold, all vessels of bronze and iron are holy to God. Put them in God's treasury." 20 The priests blew the trumpets. When the people heard the blast of the trumpets, they gave a thunderclap shout. The wall fell at once. The people rushed straight into the city and took it. 21 They put everything in the city under the holy curse, killing man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and donkey. 22 Joshua ordered the two men who had spied out the land, "Enter the house of the harlot and rescue the woman and everyone connected with her, just as you promised her." 23 So the young spies went in and brought out Rahab, her father, mother, and brothers - everyone connected with her. They got the whole family out and gave them a place outside the camp of Israel. 24 But they burned down the city and everything in it, except for the gold and silver and the bronze and iron vessels - all that they put in the treasury of God's house. 25 But Joshua let Rahab the harlot live - Rahab and her father's household and everyone connected to her. She is still alive and well in Israel because she hid the agents whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho. 26 Joshua swore a solemn oath at that time: Cursed before God is the man who sets out to rebuild this city Jericho. He'll pay for the foundation with his firstborn son, he'll pay for the gates with his youngest son.

ASK

- ◆ What do you think of this story? Do you like it? Are you troubled by it?
- ◆ How many days does the battle of Jericho take? (7)
- ◆ Is there another story that we read recently that took seven days? What was it? (Creation story)
- ◆ On the seventh day, what did the Israelites do differently? (Marched 7 times around the city and then shouted)
- ◆ What causes the walls of Jericho to fall? (we really don't know...Israelites' obedience?; trumpets?; shouting?; interference by God? Structural defects in the wall?)
- ◆ Does the power of voice in this story cause any of us to think about previous stories and themes that we've been discussing? (Pentecost/Tower of Babel?)
- ◆ Why were the Israelites successful in this attack? (because they did it God's way)
- ◆ What do you think about God taking sides in this story?

TELL

- ◆ The question of how God takes sides in this particular story is certainly something for us to struggle with... in a later class.

- ◆ For today, we're going to pretend that the people in Jericho are obstacles (instead of people), and we're going to think of the Israelites as you or me.
- ◆ When we do this, then the story offers us a comforting picture about God and conflict.
- ◆ The story is comforting because when conflict arises in our life (if it hasn't already in your life, ...it *will*. Unfortunately), then we can think of ourselves as the Israelites and know that God is with us. However, notice that God does not remove the conflict. The Israelites have to still interact with the problem.
- ◆ If we think about the patterns in the story, then we can also think about HOW God is with us. So what do the Israelites do when faced with this Jericho conflict?
 - They seek God's instruction.
 - What elements do God's instructions consist of?
 - Patience (this means the problem/obstacle/wall is not solved/removed right away), obedience and God-directed use of language.
 - Finally, what is the result of the Israelites obedience?
 - Success!
- ◆ So we can think the same things about ourselves when in conflict. We can remember that God won't necessarily fix the problem right away, and God won't remove the conflict from our lives. But if we continue to seek God, then there will be direction given to us on how we can respond to our conflict. How God calls us to respond might be a little unorthodox. But if we are obedient, successful resolution to the conflict will result.

EXPLAIN activity "Bible Verse Race"

- There's one chair (with no arm-rests) way over here.
- Y'all are way over here.
- (Depending on size of class, put them in teams or have a free-for-all)
- I'll start us off. I'll call out a book of the Bible, a chapter and a verse.
- Then you look in the Bible that you have.
- Once you find it, you run to the chair, sit down and read it outloud.
- Other people might be running to the chair too, so you might have to struggle a bit for the chair.
- First person to correctly read with their bottom fully on the chair gets to call out the next book, chapter and verse.

DO "Bible Verse Race" (5 or 6 rounds)

ASK

- So did we have some conflicts? (yes)
- Why? (more than one person wanted the same thing)
- And how were the conflicts resolved? (by reading scripture)

TELL

- Now, this isn't a perfect example of how this works, but hopefully you can see the point that's trying to be made: With God's help, we can do better...even when we're in the

middle of a conflict, if we choose to pay attention to God, then God will (eventually) show us a way to navigate the conflict.

- NEXT week we'll talk about Jesus and his disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane.
- The week after that, we'll talk about the story of the stoning of Stephen.

CLOSING PRAYER