



GROUPS LESSON | WEEK 6

Sermon: February 15, 2026

GAIN GROUND FOR THE KINGDOM: THE KEY TO GAINING GROUND (JOSHUA 1:1-9)

Simple obedience is doing what God says with courage and consistency

HOOK

MAIN POINT: *Simple obedience is doing what God says with courage and consistency*

Q: What is your favorite recipe to cook?

The first American cookbook, *American Cookery*, was published in 1796 by Amelia Simmons. Today, Americans still love recipes. Two-thirds of Americans use a recipe weekly and 10 percent cook from a recipe daily. Today, 88 percent of recipes come from food blogs, websites, or social media.

The purpose of a recipe is simple: it provides a formula for a tasty meal without having to take risks, experiment, or forget critical ingredients.

Q: Have you ever failed to follow a recipe properly and the outcome was disastrous?

Maybe your food was too salty to eat, burnt to a crisp, or far too liquidy. We have all experienced a poorly made meal as a result of poorly following instructions. It is critical to see that the promised outcome of a recipe is dependent upon the chef executed the directions properly.

To a certain extent, the Bible is like our cookbook, or our guidebook for life. It does not promise us an easy, self-gratifying life, but it does reveal the promises of God which exist for human flourishing. Those that are obedient and faithful are the ones that experience those promises to the fullest extent.

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Talking Point 1: Obedience is walking in the promises of God

Read: Joshua 1:1-5

Centuries before this moment in Joshua, God promised the land of Canaan, better known as the promised land, to Abraham and his descendants. The path from Abraham to Joshua had its twists and turns, but God's faithfulness remained. He brought them to the brink of the land, and now it was Joshua's responsibility to march forward and conquer. Obedience for the Israelites was simply to take hold of the promise that God had given them.

We rely on the promises of God in our obedience today, as well. The blood of Christ is the stamp of God's promise to forgive and redeem us. God has given us his Holy Spirit as a guarantee of the promise that he will bring us to salvation on the day of judgment. He has promised that we will dwell in the perfect New Creation for eternity. The promise of Christ's return, our salvation, and an eternal life with him should deeply affect the way we live daily.

The promised land in Joshua is a shadow of the New Creation that we will one day inherit. For the Israelites, obedience was mandatory for them to see the land. For the believer today, our salvation is not dependent on our obedience, but our salvation is expressed through obedience. For those that have received the promise of salvation, the inheritance of the New Creation, their faith will be evident by their obedience to God.

The author of Hebrews spends much of chapters 3 and 4 discussing Joshua's generation, and specifically those that missed out on the promised land, which he attributes to their disobedience in the wilderness. He is fearful that his own audience might miss out on the future promised land (eternal life) because of a lack of faith when he writes, "*Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience*" as the Israelites in the wilderness (Hebrews 4:11). The continued, unrepentant disobedience of a self-proclaimed believer might be the evidence that no heart change, no transformation, no work of the Spirit has yet occurred in their life. But when we are obedient, we are exercising our faith, walking in the promises of God, striving to enter his perfect and eternal rest.

- Q: What reasons could have led Joshua to be disobedient to the Lord's commands instead?
- Q: Are you ever susceptible to similar reasoning?
- Q: Read verse 5 again. What stands out to you about the promise God gives Joshua here?

Talking Point 2: Obedience is not circumstantial

Read: Joshua 1:6-7

Twice in these two verses God commands Joshua to "be strong and courageous." As a reminder, the land they were about to march into was inhabited by multiple people groups,

some of whom were much larger than the Israelites. Not only this, but they dwelled in fortified cities. The contingent of spies that visited the land in Numbers 13 came back fearful (except for Joshua and Caleb) because they “seemed as grasshoppers” to the people that lives there, and they did not know how they would penetrate the cities.

10 of the 12 spies, and most of the people of Israel, had a critical misunderstanding of what the mission was. God had already promised the land, and he would carry them in no matter what, just as he had brought them out of Egypt and provided for their every need in the desert. The people believed that obedience was circumstantial. The path ahead seemed scary so obedience suddenly was not worth it.

By Joshua 1, it seems the people have learned their lesson (at least temporarily). Joshua understands that obedience is not circumstantial. No matter what the material consequences might be, God’s commands are to be followed. Practically, for us as believers, this often translates into sacrificial living. Believers should take the commands of Scripture seriously, allowing it to actually affect our lives. Here are a few examples that believers have found themselves in (these are not universal commands):

- Quitting a well-paying job because it causes them to sin via lying and greed.
- Transferring out of their dream college because their surroundings are causing them to compromise their values.
- Switching away from a smart phone to avoid temptation and truly devote more time to God.
- Pulling their kids from travel/select sports in order to ensure the family is worshipping together each week.

These are just a few of the “value equations” that believers have to wrestle with. The world offers us a lot, but none of it lasts. How can we glorify God today?

- Q: Why do we often treat obedience as something that is circumstantial?
- Q: Have you ever made a significant sacrifice in an effort to be obedient to the Lord?

Talking Point 3: Obedience is the key to gaining ground

Read: Joshua 1:8-9

God commands Joshua to meditate on his Law. In other words, dedicate yourself to understanding obedience. We should do the same. If we want to understand obedience we have to go to the source, and we need to be reminded of it regularly. Scripture is the guidebook to walking with the Lord and needs to be central to our daily decision making.

Another key idea in these verses is that Israel’s advancement into the land was going to be fully dependent on God. And yet, how could they expect God to bless their efforts if they refused to walk in obedience? Obedience, in many ways, reveals the blessings of God, and that truly is the story of the book of Joshua. The people finally experienced the fruitful land, flowing with milk and honey.

We should strive to emulate Joshua’s faithfulness, choosing boldness and courage in the face of adversity, resting in the promises of God. Obedience does not guarantee you a life of

happiness, but it does reflect a life of faithfulness, which brings God glory. In our own lives, we gain ground spiritually when we walk faithfully in obedience. As a church family, our prayer is that the Lord would bless our efforts to gain ground congregationally, which obedience is central to.

Obedience may be the most simplistic application from any Biblical message, but it is also the most difficult for us to grasp daily. It requires self-denial. It requires submission to authority. It requires sacrifice. It requires trust in a God who knows better. All of these ideas are antithetical to what our culture promotes today. Each day, with the assistance of the Holy Spirit, we get to wake up and choose obedience.

- Q: What encourages you from these verses as you think about gaining spiritual ground in your own faith?
- Q: How have you seen obedience lead to blessings in your own life?



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Spend a few minutes discussing the practical applications of today's passage:

- Q: How does our study of Joshua 1:1-9 today connect to the Gaining Ground initiative?
- Q: What does sacrificial obedience look like for you this week?
- Q: What does it look like to be bold and courageous in your faith this week?