

Winning Strategy
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Joshua 6:12-25

Sometimes in life we are given wise advice that seems to be the opposite of our instincts. For example, what is the counterintuitive advice about these things: Driving on ice? Escaping a rip current? A panic attack? Hitting a golf ball farther? A toddler having a tantrum? Physical therapy after a joint replacement?

A truth from our text today: God's wisdom often runs contrary to our natural instincts, but His way is always the right way.

In Joshua 3, the Israelites had to cross the Jordan River at flood stage. God's command was simple: When the priests put their feet in the water it will back up and you will walk through on dry land. God's power would overcome what seemed impossible. They likely trusted His plan because of the Red Sea miracle forty years before.

Now in Joshua 6 they faced the fortified city of Jericho. The obstacle was greater (seemingly more impossible) and God's plan was strange, unusual, and made no human sense: *"Don't do all the things an attacking army would do. Instead, march around the city once daily with the Ark of the Covenant for six days. On the seventh day, march around Jericho seven times, then the priests are to blow their trumpets, the people are to shout and the walls will fall down flat so you can take the city."* Spoiler alert: They did as instructed, and God did what only He could do. The walls fell!

The Point: As Chuck Swindoll put it: *"God uses the unusual to accomplish the impossible."* He often works in ways that don't make sense to us. When we face "walls" (situations we can't climb over, tunnel under, go around, or break through), if we will trust Him and obey His Word, He will do what is best in a way that only He can do.

(NLT) — 12 Joshua got up early the next morning, and the priests again carried the Ark of the Lord. **13** The seven priests with the rams' horns marched in front of the Ark of the Lord, blowing their horns. Again the armed men marched both in front of the priests with the horns and behind the Ark of the Lord. All this time the priests were blowing their horns. **14** On the second day they again marched around the town once and returned to the camp. They followed this pattern for six days. **15** On the seventh day the Israelites got up at dawn and marched around the town as they had done before. But this time they went around the town seven times. **16** The seventh time around, as the priests sounded the long blast on their horns, Joshua commanded the people, "Shout! For the Lord has given you the town! **17** Jericho and everything in it must be completely destroyed as an offering to the Lord. Only Rahab the prostitute and the others in her house will be spared, for she protected our spies. **18** "Do not take any of the things set apart for destruction, or you yourselves will be completely destroyed, and you will bring trouble on the camp of Israel. **19** Everything made from silver, gold, bronze, or iron is

sacred to the Lord and must be brought into his treasury.” **20** When the people heard the sound of the rams’ horns, they shouted as loud as they could. Suddenly, the walls of Jericho collapsed, and the Israelites charged straight into the town and captured it. **21** They completely destroyed everything in it with their swords—men and women, young and old, cattle, sheep, goats, and donkeys. **22** Meanwhile, Joshua said to the two spies, “Keep your promise. Go to the prostitute’s house and bring her out, along with all her family.” **23** The men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab, her father,

- They did exactly what God commanded and the walls fell.
- The victory wasn’t because of military strategy or strength. They demonstrated faith in following God’s unusual instructions, and He supernaturally acted.
- These were no ordinary walls. Jericho was one of the most heavily fortified cities of its day. Its inner wall stood about 26 feet high—roughly a two-story building—and 13 feet thick. Beyond that was a second outer wall, creating another layer of defense. The entire system sat behind a 50-foot-high stone retaining wall with a steep, plastered slope, making the city appear virtually impregnable to any ancient army. Humanly speaking, Jericho was unconquerable—which is exactly why God’s method of victory was so extraordinary.ⁱⁱ
- Verse 20 states that “the wall fell down flat,” and the people were able to go “up into the city”—the phrase “fell down flat” indicates the wall collapsed forward, creating the ramp that allowed direct entry into the city.
- In Bible study we should look for repetition. What number is repeated? Anyone know the biblical significance of that number?
- The number seven carries profound theological weight in [Joshua 6](#), functioning as a signal that God alone orchestrates this victory.
- Seven appears repeatedly throughout the narrative—seven priests, seven trumpets, seven days of marching, and seven circuits around the city on the seventh day. God completed His work on the seventh day and sanctified it as holy, making seven the special number of God that connotes both completeness and holiness.ⁱⁱⁱ Other examples of seven in scripture:
 - Seven pairs of clean animals entered the ark before God’s complete judgment and renewal (Gen 7:2-4)
 - Seven days of unleavened bread marked Passover and God’s redemptive work (Exod 12:15)
 - Priests sprinkled blood seven times in the sanctuary (Lev 4:6)
 - Naaman washed seven times in the Jordan for cleansing (2 Kings 5:10)
 - Daniel’s seventy weeks prophecy structures God’s complete redemptive plan (Dan 9:24-25)
 - Revelation depicts seven angels with seven plagues through which God’s wrath is finished (Rev 15:1)
 - Jesus commanded forgiveness seventy-seven times (Matt 18:21-22)-
 - Throughout Scripture, seven functions as God’s signature—marking His work as complete, holy, and eternally significant.^{iv}
- Verse 21 is one of the most difficult passages in Joshua.
- God commanded the destruction of every person and animal in Jericho.
- That should trouble us because human life is precious.

- This was not ethnic hatred or Israel acting on its own, but God's judgment after more than 400 years of extraordinary patience (Gen. 15:16).
- Rahab's rescue reminds us God's mercy was available to those who trusted Him.
- While Scripture does not tell us the eternal fate of the innocent children, we can trust that the Judge of all the earth always does what is right (Gen. 18:25).
- If this passage makes us uncomfortable, we're not alone. It reminds us that God's judgment against sin is real, but so is His mercy.
- Let's get down to how this account applies to our relationship with God.
- If we go back to verse two, God said to Joshua: *"I have given you Jericho, its king, and all its strong warriors."*^v What do we call that statement?
- When God has made a promise in His Word, what are we to do?
- "The tense of the verb (in 6:2) is important: The victory had already been won! All Joshua and his people had to do was claim the promise and obey the Lord."^{vi}
- When God makes a promise, it is as good as done! Faith is not just saying we believe God's promises; it is ACTING on them even when they don't make sense.
- Believing God's promise is like accepting a check. Obeying Him in faith is like cashing it.
- Walls are a metaphor for obstacles in our lives that require God's intervention.
- Here are some examples:
 - **Walls around us** – difficult circumstances we can't control.
 - **Walls between us** – broken relationships, conflict, and unforgiveness.
 - **Walls within us** – fear, guilt, pride, doubt, anxiety, or discouragement.
 - **Walls before us** – challenges that seem too big for us but not for God.
- Nowhere in this text do we read that Joshua or the people said to God, *"This plan makes no sense; we don't need to be marching, trumpeting, and shouting; we need to be fighting."* It's not there. Israel's responsibility was obedience; God's responsibility was the outcome.
- *"Lord, they're attacking me. I need to fight back!"*
 - *"No. Trust Me. Let Me fight this battle."*
- *"Lord, my finances are falling apart. I need to take control!"*
 - *"No. Honor Me first, be faithful, and trust Me to provide."*
- *"Lord, this relationship is broken. I need to make them pay."*
 - *"No. Forgive, leave room for Me to work, and trust Me with the outcome."*
- *"Lord, I don't see a way forward. I need to force something to happen."*
 - *"No. Wait on My timing. Keep obeying Me one step at a time."*
- *"Lord, I'm overwhelmed with anxiety. I need to figure everything out."*
 - *"No. Bring your worries to Me, trust Me with what you cannot control, and take the next step I show you."*
- *"Lord, sharing my faith could cost me. I think I'll stay quiet."*
 - *"Trust Me. Be faithful to speak, and leave the results to Me."*
- That last phrase—"leave the results to Me"—is really the lesson of Jericho.
- Our responsibility is obedience. God's responsibility is the outcome.

So, What's the Takeaway?

- The famous missionary Hudson Taylor said there are three different ways to serve the Lord: (1) to make the best plans we can and hope they succeed; (2) to make our own plans and ask God to bless them; or (3) to ask God for His plans and then do what He tells us to do. Joshua received his orders from the Lord, and that's why Israel succeeded.^{vii}
- Review: Dealing with our walls (obstacles) like Israel dealt with Jericho's walls?
 - Seek God's direction before taking action.
 - Trust God's promises even when His plan doesn't make sense.
 - Obey God's Word one step at a time.
 - Be patient and wait on God's timing.
 - Depend on God's power rather than our own abilities.
 - Give God the glory when He brings the victory.
- Every one of us will face "Jericho walls" that seem impossible to overcome. Our responsibility is not to figure out how to bring the walls down but to seek God's direction, trust His promises, obey Him one step at a time, and wait for His timing. The victory belongs to the Lord, and when He brings the walls down, He alone deserves the glory.

ⁱ Swindoll, Charles R., General Editor. *The Swindoll Study Bible*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2017.

ⁱⁱ Titus Kennedy, [*The Essential Archaeological Guide to Bible Lands*](#) (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2023), [209](#)

Paul D. Weaver, [*Faith-Affirming Findings: 50 Archaeological Discoveries That Validate the Historicity and Reliability of Scripture*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2026), [52–54](#).

ⁱⁱⁱ [1] Adolph L. Harstad, [*Joshua*](#), Concordia Commentary (Saint Louis, MO: Concordia Pub. House, 2004), [277](#). [2] Tremper Longman III, ed., [*Deuteronomy Thru Ruth*](#), Layman's Bible Commentary (Barbour Publishing, 2009), [2:119](#).

^{iv} Joel F. Drinkard Jr., ["Number Systems and Number Symbolism,"](#) in *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, ed. Chad Brand et al. (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), [1199–1200](#).

Yigal Tzadka, David Smith, and Orly Kihaly, eds., [*Choice Words from the Story of Sabbath*](#), Biblical Hebrew Study Book (Jerusalem: Good Times Ltd., n.d.), [15–16](#).

M. G. Easton, in [*Illustrated Bible Dictionary and Treasury of Biblical History, Biography, Geography, Doctrine, and Literature*](#) (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1893), [616](#).

^v Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Jos 6:2). Tyndale House Publishers.

^{vi} Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *Be Strong* (p. 72). Victor Books.

^{vii} Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *Be Strong* (p. 73). Victor Books.