

Battle for Your Soul #7: Rebellious Friends

Battles of the Soul

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I'd like to ask you to take your Bibles. Turn them to Joshua chapter 10 this morning. And when the pastor asked me if I'd preach today, I gave it some thought. You know, should I preach a Thanksgiving sermon? But I figured the way I could be most thankful is if I could put the next sermon in the book of Joshua behind me. We started this series on the battles of the Promised Land, and each one represents a significant battle for our soul. And it's kind of interesting.

I told my Sunday School class this morning that a lot of times when you struggle over a passage of Scripture and you aren't getting any insights out of it, it may be a reflection of your relationship with the Lord. I kind of hated to admit that, because I've struggled with this passage for about four months now. And only recently did things start popping out of it and did it become clear for me.

If you did not come to Sunday school, I just want to advertise that we're studying the tabernacle. God devoted one verse to the creation of the stars, but 50 chapters to the discussion of the tabernacle. And you wonder why, and the fact is, someone asked me last week as they left, you know, "Where did the flour come from for making the showbread on the table?" And that was what we're studying this... right now in the tabernacle.

So I had to go home and study that and then I got bugged by the whole frankincense thing, why they put frankincense on bread and then ate it. And so I went and studied that and just some marvelous insights began popping out of Scripture. So it was an exciting morning for me. And I'm excited about Joshua chapter 10 as well.

Joshua chapter 10 represents the battle against rebellion. Now, I don't know if any of you have ever been a rebel. Just... everybody close your eyes for a minute, and this will be a confidential survey. Close your eyes. If you've ever been a rebel, raise your hand.

Well, we could have all kept our eyes open, because I think all of you raised your hand. Just about all of you. I remember myself that, you know, I guess growing up I was a good kid. I had a decent reputation in the community at least, which was a good thing, because when I came courting Judy, the Thorntons checked me out. They called a lady in

Jacksonville, Texas, who was kind of like my second mother, and figured she knew something about me.

But you know, I had some rebellious moments. I was ahead of my time in style. Now let me explain this. I had some jeans that I wore all the time. And I even remember after washing them a couple of times, leaving them out on the hood of my car to fade them out so they'd look a little cooler, you know? And then one day I finally achieved my goal. I had a hole in the knee of my jeans.

Now at the time, there weren't a whole lot of people that realized this is a fashion statement. But judging from the way I see young people dress today, it is now in style. I was just... I was ahead of my time. But I had a hole there, and of course what I was going to do... I wasn't really going to leave the hole there, but it looked cool back then to patch it. So I was going to go buy one of those iron-on patches and patch it and then that was kind of... that was the cool thing.

Then, at least, we used to patch our holes. Today they actually put holes in deliberately. You know, so they can show off what ought not to be showed off.

But anyway, I remember I came home to my horror one day to discover that my grandmother who was at that time in her upper eighties on her way into her nineties, she took it upon herself when she saw that hole in my knee to make me a pair of shorts out of my jeans. Now when I say shorts, you must understand that when an 80-something, 90-something-year-old lady makes shorts, they come right to your kneecap. And I was thinking, "I am not going out in public with shorts that long, because people will ask me what kind of confused state I am in."

And that I was enough of a rebel, I wanted to teach my grandmother a lesson. Now bless her heart, I was just mean, quite frankly. There's no other way of describing it. I only ever saw my grandmother read two things: the Bible and Reader's Digest. You know? Those were the only two things she ever read. I know she had her heart in the right place, but I'm sure I gave her some grief as a teenager.

Anyway, I saw that these shorts that were too long, and I decided I would modify them, that I wanted to modify them where they... to teach my grandmother a lesson. So I cut them so short that the pockets hung out about that far underneath the bottom there. And, you know, that was just wrong, you know. No telling how many people I defrauded with my great lakes back then.

But you know, that was the kind of the kind of rebel, you know... and then you know, I remember a sheriff stopping me one night because I had a blinking taillight, only to discover at age 15 that I had a case of beer in the back of my mustang. I'll tell you what, I wish he had just arrested me and thrown away the key, because he did something far worse. He called my mama. You don't ever want the sheriff calling your mama. That's bad news.

So I had my rebellious moments. And you know, the amazing thing is, all these many years later, I don't do anything that gets me in trouble with the sheriff. I don't cut my pants off too short, I don't need that. But do you know, there are still some little seeds of rebellion that raise up their ugly head every now and then that just make me say, "I'm going to do this because I want to", even though I know God doesn't want me to?

Now, I don't know if any of you ever do it. I may just be preaching to me this morning. But if you've ever had one of those little seeds of rebellion, then this might be a lesson for you. In fact, it is... let me just refresh you where we've been on this journey. We looked at the first battle of the Promised Land, which is the battle against a walled city.

And the Bible says that a brother offended is harder to be won than a walled city. And so this was the battle against bitterness, and it is the number one reason that I have to counsel people, is because they have some bitterness in their life. And it is destroying their marriages. It is destroying their relationship with their kids. It is destroying their relationships at work and it's eating them from the inside out.

Then we had the second battle, the battle of Ai. You will remember that they lost that battle in their initial encounter, because someone had taken something out of Jericho they were not supposed to take out, and when they did that the... what happened was, was that they lost the battle. They went with just a few people. They didn't pray before they went into battle. They went with just a few people and said, "Oh, we can whip up on that little old town of Ai." Well, the little old town of Ai sent them packing. And they ran for their lives. And people died.

And Joshua gets out and he pours out his complaint before the Lord, the Bible says. I'm glad I have a God who will listen to my complaints even when I'm not praying biblically. And God says, you know, "There's a problem." And so they make all the different tribes and then clans and then families pass before him, and the priests [?] and finally he picks out the family of Achan. And Achan and his family perish because of the goods from Jericho that they had hidden in their tent. So it's a battle against hidden sin.

And then we go to Joshua chapter eight and we see that there's a group of people who come from a long ways away, and they are wearing old clothes and old shoes and carrying old wine skins and carrying moldy bread and they say that from a long ways away they want to make a treaty with the children of Israel. And actually, the reality is that they weren't very far away at all. Gibeon was not too far from Gilgal, which is where Joshua and his people were camping. I'll show you a map of that in just a moment.

And so they came from this short distance to deceive them, and we call this the battle against the deception of pride. Because again, Joshua and the people, they never prayed. They think they're smart enough to make this decision, they're smart enough to be discerning on their own. And they never pray. And in pride, they make a decision and they make a league with the Gibeonites.

And when you look at all that the Gibeonites did, there were some fascinating symptoms of pride that came out of the things that the Gibeonites did. Now, by the way, all three of those are on our web site. And you can go out and listen to them and see some slides and listen to the audio. And so they're available on our church web site.

But now we're going to come to the fourth battle, and I've got to thinking about one or two people that may be wondering why I keep preaching from the Old Testament. I preach from the New Testament a lot too, but there's 39 of us back here and 27 over here, so you need to have a few sermons over here. God didn't throw away the Old Testament when Jesus came along. In fact, if you look only at the New Testament, you might as well take your eyeglasses and knock out one of the lenses, because you're only looking at half of it. If you want to see the whole counsel of God's word, there's two lenses and two eyes. And one needs to be on the Old Testament and one needs to be on the New Testament.

Someone has wisely said that in the Old Testament the New Testament is contained and in the New Testament the Old Testament is explained. And we need to understand that it's a whole counsel of the Word of God. And that's why we want to spend some time there.

Now, one other thing I need to establish for those of you who haven't been with us on our journey is why I call these the battles of the soul. And it is because there is a beautiful picture. Israel was a captive nation in Egypt. They had gone to Egypt and generations had grown up there and they eventually became slaves of the Egyptians. Pharaoh wore on his crown a cobra. That was his symbol. That was his regal symbol. In other words, he wore a serpent on his crown and so really, they were slaves to a serpent. Now, obviously we shouldn't have to go too far to make a spiritual analogy there. Before we have Jesus Christ in our lives, we are slaves to the serpent; that is, the devil.

Now, you may remember that what finally got them out after a series of ten plagues, the last of these plagues was that they ate the Passover lamb. They put the lamb inside them. It had to be a male lamb. It had to be a perfect lamb in whom there was no spot or blemish. It had to have been examined for a period of at least three days to make sure that it was perfect. Then it had to be killed and the blood had to be painted on the doorpost so that the angel of death would pass over the house. And the lamb had to be consumed. So it can truly be said that when Israel left Egypt on Passover night, they went out with the lamb inside of them. And so that's a beautiful picture of salvation.

And then, of course, once they get Jesus or they get the lamb inside them, they go out... Not everything's instantly rosy. Not everything's just hunky-dory. They've still got to cross the Red Sea and then eventually get to the Promised Land. And they're supposed to do some conquering, but yet 10 spies came back and gave them a bad report and said, "No, we're not going to do that." Two spies said, "We can do it." They wind up wandering in the wilderness for 40 years and we even had a lesson in this series called "Lessons Learned in the Wilderness", why God allowed them to go 40 years.

But really, these battles represent some different areas in the battle for our soul. Now, our spirit... when we ask Jesus Christ, when we invite the Lamb of God inside our lives, that process—the theological term for that is justification, “just as if I had never sinned”—and then we have the process of sanctification that I should be undergoing right now, that every day I’m more like Jesus and one day, when Jesus returns... Paul says in Philippians three, that “my vile body shall be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.”¹

So I’ll have a glorified body. That process is glorification. If you have justification plus sanctification plus glorification, you have what is called salvation. Now we always talk about salvation, you just ask Jesus into your heart. That’s not the way the apostle Paul used the term. If you look in Romans five, he says, “Being therefore justified by Christ we have much more shall we be saved by his life.”²

In other words, for Paul salvation wasn’t completed yet. It wasn’t going to be completed until he was in his glorified body. So these things that happened in the Promised Land are battles for our mind, will and emotion that we fight.

Now let me give you some reasons for looking at Joshua chapter ten in particular. And it is about the battle for rebellion. I think if you understand this Scripture, it will, first of all, help parents to deal with children when they rebel. And that’s good to know. In fact, this is the last slide I’m going to show you this morning are some tips for parents when your children are in rebellion.

Then, secondly, I think it helps those who are in ministry to better understand their persecutors, because those who persecute the children of God doing the work of God are actually in rebellion against God and need to understand that. I also think that it can help Christians to better recognize symptoms of rebellion and pride in their own lives, because I have some of those symptoms. And then finally, I think it is good to figure out how to prevent rebellion and there is something at the end of Joshua chapter ten that’s been waiting there for a long time for me. And I finally figured it out, and I thought, “Oh, this is beautiful. This helps prevent rebellion in my life.”

I want you to find what rebellion is, first of all. It is warring against God’s Word. Now I’m going to prove that to you in just a moment. But it’s warring against his commands, against his statutes, against his principles, against his laws. It’s warring against the 49 commands of Christ.

Now, it’s interesting that in Joshua chapter nine... look at the first two verses of Joshua chapter nine, because what you have at the end of chapter eight, Joshua goes out and they’re at Mount Ebal, and it says in verse 34 of chapter eight, it says,

“And afterward he [that’s Joshua] read all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the

¹ Philippians 3:21.

² Romans 5:10.

law. There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them.”³

So basically what happens at the end of Joshua chapter eight... Joshua goes out and he... they have experienced at Ai, they've had a brief period of rest and they've had a revival. Because what Joshua does is, he doesn't alter after their final victory at Ai. And he writes on these stones of the altar of the laws of God, and then he had half the people stand on Mount Ebal and half the people stand on Mount Gerazim, and he stood in the valley between. And he read the blessings and the curses of the law associated with the two mountains.

And so they had the Word of God brought to them fresh, and a revival breaks out among the people. And they're finally ready to go into the Promised Land, and what happens immediately after the people get back into the Word of God? The first two verses of chapter nine say this.

“And it came to pass, when all the kings which were on this side Jordan, in the hills, and in the valleys, and in all the coasts of the great sea over against Lebanon, the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite, heard thereof; [talking about their victory at Ai] that they gathered themselves together, to fight with Joshua and with Israel, with one accord.”⁴

Immediately the problem starts because they have experienced a revival. Now, we've already read these passages. Let me give you a little geography lesson that will kind of help. In Joshua chapter nine, it actually says that these people came together... if you look up at this red square at the top, this is the area from which the attackers were coming in Joshua chapter nine verses one and two.

They gathered together up here basically in the hill country of Israel. Joshua and his people are encamped at a place called Gilgal you see there in green. And they're getting ready to attack from the northwest to come against Joshua. So they're all milling there together. Now right in the midst of all this, in Joshua chapter ten.... Meanwhile, while they were gathered here, the Gibeonites came over here. You can see it's not a far distance from Gibeon to Gilgal.

They come over here and they make this little treaty with Joshua and his people. They were deceived when they made the treaty, but I want to show you something that happened to the Gibeonites, that they actually had a change of heart. And I'll show you that in a minute. So they basically came to deceive Israel, but they actually do become the willing servants and slaves of the nation of Israel.

³ Joshua 8:34-35.

⁴ Joshua 9:1-2.

Now, when the king of Jerusalem hears that... listen, remember, Jerusalem at this time is still in the hands of pagans. It's not the city of the great king David. We haven't got anywhere closer to that yet. But he gets together some other kings from the southwest and he says, "We're going to go and attack Gibeon. Gibeon's made a league with Gilgal, we're going to go attack them by... to teach them a lesson. They were one of us, and they have left us and they have gone off on their own."

So the northwest challengers got together. We already read the first two verses of Joshua nine. And then we have the southwest challengers. And it's interesting, by the way. Now, Joshua chapter eight, when the Gibeonites came to Joshua to make a treaty with him, they made up this statement that "we know that the Lord your God has given you your victory." So the Gibeonites recognized that God gave the victory.

Well, what's it saying in Joshua chapter ten? They give no credit to God. It simply says, "Now it came to pass when Adonizedek king of Jerusalem had heard how Joshua [not God but Joshua] had taken Ai, and had utterly destroyed it; as he had done to Jericho and her king [so Adonizedek is giving credit to Joshua for both those victories] so he had done to Ai and her king; and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel, and were among them."⁵

Now by the way, mark those words "made peace." Because you will see them no fewer than three times with reference to Gibeon making peace with Israel. They didn't just deceive them. They eventually made peace with them, which is a little bit different. It says,

"That they feared greatly, because Gibeon was a great city, as one of the royal cities, and because it was greater than Ai, and all the men thereof were mighty. Wherefore Adonizedek king of Jerusalem sent unto Hoham king of Hebron, and unto Piram king of Jarmuth, and unto Japhia king of Lachish, and unto Debir king of Eglon, saying, Come up unto me, and help me, that we may smite Gibeon: for it hath made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel. [There's that "made peace" phrase again.] Therefore the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, the king of Eglon, gathered themselves together, and went up, they and all their hosts, and encamped before Gibeon, and made war against it."⁶

So we have a little conversion, though, that takes place here. You will remember from Joshua eight that Gibeon came to deceive Israel and they wore all their old clothes, and their moldy bread and all that. And they just wanted to avoid having Israel as the enemy. But something changed, because in Joshua chapter nine and verse 15 and chapter ten and verse one, chapter ten and verse four, chapter 11 and verse 19, we read over and over again that they made peace—no fewer than four times. They made peace with Israel.

⁵ Joshua 10:1.

⁶ Joshua 1:2-5.

And in Joshua chapter nine and verse nine, he says, “Hey. Your success has been from God.” They recognized that there was something supernatural. Now, the other kings of the southwest are saying, “Joshua did this. Joshua did this.” But the Gibeonites said, “God did this.” So they recognize there is God involved and they want to make peace with Israel and with Israel’s God.

And you can see the change in their heart because Gibeon gave up some stuff. They gave up their pride. They... Joshua made a deal with them. He says, “If we find out you’re from close, you get to be our servants. You get to hew our wood and bring our water.” And the Gibeonites had no problem with that. The fact is, there’s no record that the Gibeonites ever complained about being the slaves of Israel. They did it willingly. They gave up their freedom. They gave up their will to the will of the Israelites. They gave up their status. They became choppers of wood, okay? They were reduced to blue card jobs. They went for manual labor. And they gave up their self-determination, because masters determine what happens to each slave. And they willingly did all that.

And by the way, if you looked at those four things, don’t you and I kind of need to give up those things to serve Jesus Christ? Don’t I have to give up my pride? Don’t I have to give up my freedom, because the apostle Paul says, “You’re either slaves to Satan or you’re slaves to Christ; it’s not a choice. You’re going to be somebody’s servant. Whose servant will you be?”

Well, I want to be the servant of God unto righteousness as it says in Romans chapter six. If I give up my status, I can’t be in charge of my own life. I can’t be a ruler. I have to be a servant. And I have to give up my self-determination. He says, “Take up your cross daily and follow me.” A man on a cross had no future of his own. And that’s what I need to be able to give up.

So Gibeon came to regard Israel not as a foe to be deceived, but as a savior to be implored. And we’re going to find out in just a moment, when they’re attacked, what’s the first thing they do? They call for Israel to deliver them. So they’ve been changed.

Now let’s look at the spirit of rebels. If any of you have ever been a rebel, you probably will recognize something of yourself in there or at least something about me when I was cutting off my pants, okay? Now first of all, you’re motivated by fear. One of the things... and by the way, there’s some... a place in the back of your bulletin to write down what I call key truths. And here’s a key truth. Rebels... and by the way, if you want, I forgot to hand it out but we’ll put it on the back table afterwards, here’s some notes on the sermon. So if you don’t take down everything, they will be there.

But rebels solicit support by sharing fears. In chapter ten and verse one, Adonizedek heard of the treaty. But you’ll notice in chapter ten and verse two, what does he say there? He says... it says, “They feared greatly.” Now verse one just talks about Adonizedek. But verse two says, “They feared greatly.” Why the change from singular to plural? Because the first thing Adonizedek did is he got everybody else upset about what he was upset about.

By the way, that is what rebels do. You get somebody that's in rebellion, the first thing they do is look for people who are susceptible and pliable and can change, and they start sharing their fears with them to get other people enlisted on their side. And now notice, fear does different things to different people. Fear moved the Gibeonites to come seek a treaty with the Israel, but fear moved the other five kings to come and seek Israel's destruction.

You see, it's not enough to just have fear. I hear somebody... I take that somebody told me on the phone just last week. She said, "You just need to preach hellfire and brimstone and put the fear of God in people." You know what? The fear of God is not enough to bring someone to Christ. Because being fearful of God... it may point you in the right direction, but ultimately you need repentance. And you need to understand God loves you and you need to want to be involved in a love relationship with him as well.

Here's another characteristic of a rebel. He has a mindset of pride. Now it's interesting... they all have high-sounding names and they all came from the mountains, it says in verse six. But you know, God says in Isaiah chapter 40 and verse four, "Every hill shall be made low, every mountain shall be low."⁷ In other words, he said it's part of that prophecy we read in Isaiah every year at Christmastime. Basically he said, "We're going to level..."

The fact is, during the millennial reign God is going to level the earth so we can see without the interference of the mountains and the valleys. And we're going to be able to very clearly see Jerusalem from a long way off.

But they had high-sounding names. Adonizedek means "the Lord of righteousness." Now you'd think with a name like that he'd have been on the right side, but maybe he thought he was his own lord and his own standard of righteousness. And then we have Hoham, which means "the Lord protects", you know? That's a pretty high-sounding name. Piram means "wild or fierce", Japhia means "high or elevated", Debir means "a seeker." He was probably the spokesman of the group. He was the gifted talker. He was the one that was most eloquent.

Now, it's amazing with names that kind of make you think a little bit of God in some respects, why were they on the wrong side of things? I'm not sure... well, secretly some of the worst rebels are Christians. Some of the worst rebels are Christians. In fact, do not be surprised that when you make a decision to homeschool or you make a decision to let God control the number of children that you're going to have, or you make a decision to be faithful in church or to sing in the choir or to dress modestly or to listen to the kind of music that the world doesn't listen to, you don't listen to worldly music...

When you make some of those decisions, don't think it's strange if you get persecuted by fellow Christians. Because the world will look at you, the lost world will look at you and they'll see the difference and they'll think, "I don't know what they're doing but I want

⁷ Isaiah 40:4.

what they've got." But other Christians will look at you and say, "You kind of make me feel bad." Because they're living by a different standard. And they may feel a little convicted.

By the way, they maintained their high places. Joshua chapter ten and verse six says that they all lifted the mountains. So they occupied an elevated position. They occupied the high ground. And it was a spiritual high place. What is a high place? In Scripture, a high place is any place that has a knowledge that exhausts itself against the knowledge of God. Paul talks about casting down [?] imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge in 2 Corinthians chapter ten verses four and five. It is any thing that exalts man's authority over the authority of God.

Also, rebels are made confident by numbers. In other words, they're a little chicken on their own. They're a little fearful on their own. But when they get together, suddenly they become over-confident. They become bold. Adonizedek was scared but when he got all the other kings, it says that they went out in verse five and they didn't lay siege to Gibeon.

Now, back in those days if you wanted to conquer a city, all the cities were walled so you surrounded the city. You cut off the supplies of food and water. You waited till they starved to death. Either that, or you started trying to build a siege ramp. You throw some stuff up at the base of the walls, a few of your people get killed. You run up there and throw a little more stuff under the wall, a few more of your people get killed because they're raining arrows and boiling water and all kinds of things from the top of the wall down on you.

But you keep sacrificing some people until you build up a ramp, and then they would go up the ramp and over the wall. It was called laying siege to a city. And the thing was called a siege ramp.

But you notice they don't do that in verse five. It says they encamped before Gibeon. In other words, they all got out and got right in front of Gibeon, got right up under their face and said, "We're going to attack you." Why? Now this is a bad battle plan because laying a siege would have been more effective, though more costly and longer. But what they're really doing here is, they're being overconfident because they've got numbers and they think that they can do that.

By the way, Ecclesiastes nine verse 11 says, "I returned and saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong."⁸ See, we get confident in our numbers when we rebel. We get a few people on our side, get people on our side of the issue and we think we can handle it. Guess what? God didn't let the battle necessarily go to the strong or the swift. He lets it go to those whose... he's on their side.

⁸ Ecclesiastes 9:11.

Well, they're malignant toward God. Psalm 120 verse seven says, "I am for peace: but when I speak, they are for war."⁹ So Jesus, or John says, "Marvel not, brethren, if the world hate you." You will be attacked if you're genuinely trying to serve God because rebels have a malignant spirit towards those who are. And they're manipulated by the flesh.

All five of these kings are Amorites. And we don't really know a whole lot about where the Amorites came from, but they were always against Israel. They were always in opposition against Israel. And it's interesting... in Genesis 15:16, a phrase pops up that we hear over and over again because it says, "But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full."¹⁰

The thing they were famous for was the iniquity that they had. In other words, the iniquity of the Amorites... God was going to let them go into the Promised Land until the iniquity of the Amorites was full. Which means that when the Amorites get just about as wicked as God can stand, then he's going to let Israel into the Promised Land. Now isn't that amazing that he'd known for your iniquity?

Well, how did the rebellion start? God had said [?]. . . he sort of was the worst kind of rebel. One has the name of God, but he refuses to allow him control. He heard about the conversion, the making of peace with Gibeon. And Gibeon... he had lost an ally. He had lost a royal city. He had lost an ally. And now it's an ally of his enemy Israel. And so he heard of the conquest. He heard about how Ai had been defeated. He heard about Jericho had been defeated. And they were utterly destroyed.

And by the way, it's important that we learn to utterly destroy stuff. In Matthew chapter five, when it talks about if you sin, you know, when you pluck out your eye or cut off your hand. Isn't that amazing that Jesus would use that imagery? Because the eye is that which is nearest to us. An animal will protect its eye when it has very little life left in it, and that's the way vultures know if an animal's really dead. They'll pick at its eye first, and if it flinches they know they animal's not quite dead. You protect your eye. It's a weak kind of a last reflex that's left.

And yet the hand is that which is most naturally useful to us. So we need to be willing to cut off the things most precious and most useful to us if they do not serve God. So here's a key truth. We must be ruthlessly thorough in mortifying the flesh. No compromise, no flirting with the world. We have got to be thorough in getting rid of all that doesn't please God.

By the way, when Israel went to Ai and they were routed by that small little town of just a few, a handful of people, they had some humiliation. They had some distress. But God was taking the fleshliness out of Israel.

⁹ Psalm 120:7.

¹⁰ Genesis 15:16.

Well, then they had... maybe they had their conscience pricked. Maybe they came under conviction because Gibeon is one of their own and yet they're leaving. Now, if you see somebody making a change in your life and God's been maybe talking to you a little bit about it and he's seeing them make a change, then sometimes it can be convicting, you know? I'll get convicted when somebody, you know, gives sacrificially. If the Lord's been laying that on my heart and I haven't done it yet.

So they've maybe seen a holiness in the lives of others and they rebel against that. By the way, that's a lot of where your attachment comes from. Ephesians two tells us we need to remember where we came from. "Remember that being in time past Gentiles in the flesh who were called Uncircumcision by that which is called Circumcision [that's the Jews] in the flesh made by hands; that at that time you were without Christ, you were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise. You had no hope, you were without God in the world."¹¹

That's how you and I were before Jesus Christ. We need to remember that that's where we came from so we don't have a lot of pride.

Well, what is the strategy of rebellion? Well, first of all it's the intimidation. So what do rebels try to do first? They try to intimidate. The northwest group of kings, they gather together and... so that they can come and attack Joshua before Joshua attacks them. They wanted to intimidate him. They wanted to be first strike capability. The kings in the southwest, they say, "Well, we're going to come against Gibeon and we're not going to take time to lay a siege. We're going to come with a frontal assault. We want to intimidate them."

Another rebels do is, they unite instantly with other rebels. You put a rebel in a room, and within 20 minutes if there's another rebel in that room, they will have found each other and made friends together. There's something in their spirit that seeks one another out.

So immediately they band together. In fact, as you notice Adonizedek says, "Come up to me, help me." And then he says that "we can conquer Gibeon." In other words, he's got a selfish motive that he's going to get them involved. And he reminds them, by the way, when he tells them this, that Gibeon is a royal city. Why? That means they've got treasure.

So in other words, it's kind of like, "Come help me, come to me. Come help me that we can take it because Gibeon is great and royal city." In other words, there's cash in it for you if you'll come and help me. There's the motivation. It's not a motivation of service. And by the way, he gives them a place to meet in chapter ten and verse four. If you want to stop a rebellion—and you parents listen here—if you want to stop a rebellion, you need to separate the rebels. Get your child away from whatever is inciting them to rebel, whether it's a TV show or it's a kind of music or it's a kind of music or it's an ungodly friend. Get him away from that or you'll never win the battle against rebellion.

¹¹ Ephesians 2:11-12.

They attack those who are under authority. It's interesting that the southwest kings, rather than going after Joshua, they wanted to attack Gibeon. Gibeon's enslaved; they're under authority. Let me tell you something. Most families that are experiencing opposition from Satan, the devil gets to the children first or the devil gets to the wife first. Because he goes after those under authority, who are more susceptible to his ploys. Watch out, dads. Pray a hedge of protection over your family. Pray Psalm 91. If you're not familiar with that, it's a great psalm. Pray Psalm 91 over your family on a daily basis. Make that your prayer. Because guess what? The devil will try to get to those under authority. That's why the devil talked to Eve before Adam.

They'll also plot distraction. Now it's interesting that the southwest kings decided that they would attack Gibeon while Joshua was worried with the northwest kings. In other words, if he's a little distracted, he's a little bothered, then we can deal with that issue. And then they point the attack, and the devil's most vicious attacks are against those who are really serving the Lord.

Now let me tell you something that somebody said a long time ago and I don't remember who it was. He just simply said, "Don't expect much opposition from the devil if you're walking the same direction he is." You're not bothering him. But if you start going the opposite direction, you start living for the Lord, you start doing what is unpopular but what is right with God, you can expect opposition. And the more set apart you are, the stronger the attacks get.

And let me just say something. Would you please make it a point to pray for your pastor and for me? Because as we strive to serve the Lord, the devil wants to attack us. Because if he can attack leadership in a church, he can affect the whole church. Always be in prayer. I'm constantly reminded all the time as the devil keeps working on, keeps working on me of that verse about "take heed when you stand so that you don't fall." We need to remember that.

"Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you."¹² Well, Jesus, by the way, his own family didn't believe in him, John chapter seven and verse five. There were other family members that said they thought he had a demon or he was crazy, he was out of his mind, Mark chapter three verse 21. His own disciple betrayed him. So get used to the idea that those close to you may be the ones that hurt you.

Well, how do you give of the devil a good shellacking? I was into the s's as you could see here. But how do you subjugate a rebel? Well, first of all there's a prayer for miraculous deliverance. And you parents write these down, or get a copy of these notes up here because you're going to need this someday, because eventually you'll have a child who will rebel.

Start out by crying out to God. Cry out to God. Maybe that's what I [?]. Gibeon did that. And by the way, when they called out to Joshua in Joshua chapter ten, they had no doubt

¹² 1 John 3:13.

he was going to come. Now, there's a couple reasons for that. Joshua had impressed them as a righteous man, and under the law of God, the law of Moses, if you had slaves you were obligated to defend them. And so he had a legal obligation from the Lord to go and defend Gibeon once he'd made a treaty with them. And they don't doubt his ability to rescue. They don't doubt his desire to rescue. They just call on him, cry out to him, knowing that he's going to do that.

And by the way, you and I... by the way, Joshua in Hebrew is יהושע (yeh-ho-shoo'-ah) which in Greek is Ἰησοῦς (ee-ay-sooce') which in English is Jesus. So Joshua is a picture of the Savior, and when we cry out to him for help, then he will come and answer. We don't have to worry about his ability to help. He can handle it. Our strength lies with what I call conscious weakness. Do you remember that the apostle Paul said... he says, "I've this thorn in the flesh. I prayed three times for it to go away." He says, "I will rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me."¹³

And that's what we ought to do, is glory in our weakness because it gives God a chance to be powerful in our lives. In Joshua chapter ten and verse six, they said, "Slack not thy hand." In other words, they acknowledged that he could help them if he would just stretch out his hand. And they begged for quick help. It's like, "I will need help and I need it now." By the way, is that a spiritual prayer? Well, I'll come back to that in a minute.

They asked for deliverance and acknowledge reality of this. By the way, 1 Peter 5:7 says, "Cast all your care upon him, for he careth for you."¹⁴ Now, Psalm 31 verse two, there are some passages that say you can ask God for help and help quick. So I'm glad for these. It says, "Bow down thine ear to me; deliver me speedily."¹⁵ Psalm 38:22, "Make haste to help me, O Lord of my salvation."¹⁶ Psalm 75, "I am poor and needy: make haste unto me." So yes, we can ask our deliverer to help and help quick. I think God was moved by those prayers of crying out to him.

And then there's the prayer of Joshua. I love this story, and I know you've heard this story. And there's actually a little bit of urban legend around some astronomer who found some time missing in a computer. And that's not real, in case you ever hear that sermon illustration. It didn't really happen. But it did happen that God sent the sun back. Joshua chapter ten, verses 12 to 13. "Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel..."¹⁷

Now, God's already delivering. And in fact, it's what's happening right now... it's that there's a hailstorm and God's killing more people with the hailstorm than the children of Israel are killing with the sword.

¹³ 2 Corinthians 12:9.

¹⁴ 1 Peter 5:7.

¹⁵ Psalm 31:2.

¹⁶ Psalm 38:22.

¹⁷ Joshua 10:12

And by the way, it's a very unique hail. It says they were great stones. They've had a hailstone in China that weighed 200 pounds. For those of us in [?] Bible institute Wednesday night, we know that the average weight of a hailstone during the Tribulation period as it falls on man is 120 pounds. It's going to be hard when a 120 pound chunk of ice hits you from heaven, going 200 miles an hour. Basically, you're not going to live through the experience.

So it's an amazing thing. This happens at the battle of Armageddon, and what an amazing thing. But notice what it says here. He says, "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon."¹⁸ In other words, he says, "I want to make a thorough job of defeating the enemy. So please, just stop time. Let the moon stand still, let the sun stand still." And they "stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher?"¹⁹

And you'll see the book of Jasher referred to several times in the Old Testament. It was a book where they kept records of their conquests. "So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hastened not to go down about a whole day."²⁰

Now, Joshua... by the way, when Joshua heard of this it says that he, in verse 11, basically... they marched all night long to get from Gilgal to Gibeon. It was a forced march at night. Now, what are you supposed to be doing at night, folks? Sleeping. I used to work from ten at night until six in the morning in a mental hospital. Some people say I'm still there. And I... when I worked that time, I recognized later that God really wanted me to sleep at night, because my body works better at night. They should have been sleeping. You know what they did? They were marching

And there's a couple reasons. Joshua wanted to get a surprise advantage on the enemy of Gibeon and he thought if they traveled all night long and showed up before the enemy was expecting them, that would probably be a good plan. So Joshua's a smart cookie in this regard. But notice this. He gave up a night's sleep and God gave him miraculous victory.

Now I just want to ask you Christians something. We get motivated every now and then to pray about some lost person. What would happen if you stayed up all night long begging God for their salvation? Wouldn't we see more people saved? What would happen if some of us gave up all night long praying for revival in our nation. It might just break out. It might start in urban Texas. That would be cool. It might start here.

We'd have that thing if... and here's a key truth. When confronted with rebellion—when you parents, when that kid's rebelling, give up a night's sleep and get on your knees and just pour out before the Lord and have your Bible in front of you and read a few verses

¹⁸ Joshua 10:12.

¹⁹ Joshua:10:13.

²⁰ Ibid.

and cry out to God and read a few more verses and cry out to God, it'll be time well spent.

Joshua, by the way... it never says that he prayed about going to Gibeon. He didn't have to because God's Word already commanded him to defend the Gibeonites. But in [?]. . . what kind of weird do you have to be to ask God to stop the sun and the moon? You've got to be off your rocker or you've got to have some kind of incredible faith, because there are no Scriptures in the Old Testament that say, "If you pray God will stop all the astronomical phenomena." Do you know what? He trusted in the character of God to bring him a victory that was going to take a little more time to win.

And I want to tell you something. Not all victories we win against rebellion in our families or with our kids or even in our own hearts, they're not all quick victories. It takes a while to deal with rebellion. But the character of God says he'll give you the grace to do it. And of course, he can deal with the winds and seas as well.

So live in conscious weakness. He says, "I will take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities and distresses, for when I am weak, then I am strong."²¹ Isaiah 40:29, "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength."²² Isaiah 31:1, now listen to this. He says, "Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the LORD!"²³

So next time you're trying to solve your financial crisis with a credit problem, you've got a credit card, you've got to read Isaiah 31:1. You all think about that.

Next time you think you can wiggle your way out or finagle your way out of a problem by manipulating Peter over here, and stealing money from him to pay Paul, maybe you ought to remember this verse. See, we... we're always conniving our way out of situation instead of submitting to God, aren't we?

Well, what else do we need to do? We need to claim the promises of God. In verse eight, it says "And the LORD said unto Joshua, Fear them not: for I have delivered them into thine hand."²⁴ So what's he doing when he's praying? He says, "I'm claiming the promise. You said you're going to deliver me, but I need more daylight. So stop the sun and the moon, because you've made me a promise." He was claiming the promise of God.

Isaiah 12:2, "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and song."²⁵

²¹ 2 Corinthians 12:10.

²² Isaiah 40:29.

²³ Isaiah 31:1.

²⁴ Joshua 10:8.

²⁵ Isaiah 12:2.

“Give the Lord the honor that is due.” I love Psalm 62:11. It says, “God has spoken; once, twice have I heard this, that power belongeth unto God.”²⁶ Now when God says something twice, you’re supposed to listen. He says twice, “Power belongs to God.” Power belongs to God. That means we ought to pay attention and remember it’s not us. Count on God to undertake for you.

Number four: act quickly. He left immediately so he could gain the advantage of surprise. He went all night long... And let me tell you parents something. If you see the seeds of rebellion in your children, don’t wait until hubby’s home Saturday night so you all can chat about it. You need to get on the phone and say, “I need some of your time. We got a problem right here, right now and we need to start dealing with it.”

And by the way, fathers, the Scripture says that when you hear of a problem with your kids, it says you’re to deal with it in the day that you hear of it. Not later, not like, “Well, I want to talk to you when I get back from this trip.” No, you talk to them right then, because you heard of it and you deal with it in that day. Don’t let rebellion sit or it just foments and gets worse.

We also need to act humbly. Now be careful, guys. A lot of dads, when they go to correct their children, do so in the spirit of anger. And it’s kind of like, “I demand respect. I’m the dad. It’s my way or the highway.” That’s an attitude of pride and if you come to your kids in that attitude, you know what? They’re going to rebel against you even worse. You need to be humble. You need to get that kid in front of you and say, “You know what, son? I struggle with this problem, too. I’ve had some issues with anger, too. That’s why you and I are going to work on it even if it kills you. But we’re going to deal with this anger.” You know? We’re going to deal with this issue that comes up because we need to act humbly. Jonathan Edwards said, “Nothing so removes a man from the devil’s reach as humility.”

Then we need to enlist the power of God. Now it’s interesting... in Job 38 it says this. “Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, [and listen to why God says he made hail] which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?”²⁷ By the way, Job was written at about the time of Joseph. It’s actually probably the earliest book recorded in the Old Testament, even though it’s kind of in the middle. But it’s actually one of the earliest books that was written.

And it’s interesting... he says, you know, basically he’s saying, “Hey, help me. [?] judgment.” And here we find he does it. “And there were great stones...” and not only were they big stones, but they were discriminating stones. They only hit the enemy.

Now, if you’re going to be throwing around 120-pound chunks of ice, I sure am glad your aim is good. And that’s what he did—enlist the power of God. God... and by the way,

²⁶ Psalm 62:11.

²⁷ Job 38:22.

you will not fix the rebellion in a child or in yourself under your own steam. You've got to have the power of God. Something supernatural has to take place to help that rebel. You need to pursue holiness.

Now, it's interesting in verse 12, he wants the sun and moon to stand still. Why? Because he has just heard... first of all, somebody comes and says, "Guess what. With the five kings that are having all this problem... they're hid up in the cave over here." But Joshua has also heard that some of the enemy is getting away. So he says, "Okay. I'll deal with the kings later. Roll a stone over the mouth of that cave. We're going to go get them, get on the road and knock them down."

They had already marched all night. They fought a hard battle. They had seen a great victory. You would think it's time to sit back and drink a cola. But no. It's time to finish the job and that's what he did. He pursued holiness.

See, there's a negative aspect to holiness. Holiness is not only doing what's right, but it's eliminating doing what's wrong. It's getting rid of the wickedness in our life. Joshua 10:19, he says to the people, "Stay ye not, but pursue after your enemies, and smite the hindmost of them."²⁸ In other words, he knows some of them aren't going to make it back to the city. But he wants it to be as few as possible. He wants to win all the victory he can while he can. And by the way, don't give up. If you've got a child that's rebelling and they quit doing one or two things, don't sit back and say, "Ah, that's better." No, you keep dealing with the rebellion until you don't see any evidence of it anymore. Purge the traces of rebellion.

Verse 15, they're going to go back to Gilgal, but first they go to this place called Makkedah. They find out in verse 16, because Joshua has put out the word, "Find these kings." And they said, "Well, they're holed up in a cave." And so he first of all isolates the ringleaders. He puts them apart by themselves so they can't influence others. You need to isolate your children or the rebel that you're dealing with from bad influences that they have. And that may be something in the media they do. It may be a friend that they have.

And he says, "I'll come back." And he wants to go and destroy anything that was inciting the rebellion. And actually, when he comes back he has the stone rolled off. He brings them out. He has his captains put their feet upon the necks of these five kings. Back then, that was kind of the Old Testament way of saying, "You're whipped." You put them on the floor and you put your feet on their neck. And then they cut off their head. And that dealt with the problem. They destroyed what was rebelling against authority.

So here's a key truth. Rebels like to hide out together. And you've got to get the ringleaders isolated. Here's another key truth. Rebellion, when reprov'd, goes into hiding. Let me tell you a little story.

²⁸ Joshua 10:19.

When I cut off those shorts and made them shorter than they should have been... the fact is, they were so short, later I became embarrassed by them. You know something? When I repented of that and finally threw those shorts away and put on some decent pants again, rebellion didn't go away from my life. It just hid for a while. And you know what? I'm still dealing with some of that. I'm still dealing with elements that I need to do. But we've got to keep looking for the seeds and get rid of it.

Now, I want you to notice one thing. Of all these cities that he went and he beat up on all these cities, four of these cities went down in a single day's attack. But they came to a city called Lachish and they had to lay siege against that city for two days. Here's an idea for you. Some of our lusts, some of our problems, some of our areas of rebellion are harder to knock down than others. And that's the truth that's there.

Lachish, Sennacherib tried to destroy Lachish. He couldn't do it. He failed to conquer it. Nebuchadnezzar, when he conquered the whole area of Judah, Lachish was one of the last two towns to go, just because they were so powerful and so strong. But you know what? You will find that a rebel may be hard to get them to submit to the will of God. But keep at it. Keep praying for them. Keep praying a hedge of protection around them. Keep interceding and keep separating from the things that cause the rebellion.

And you know what? God can overcome what man cannot.

Well, let me get to this last thing very quickly. How do you prevent rebellion in your own life? Wouldn't you like to know that you're not going to rebel against God? Let me give you some tips that will help. One is, when people are attacking you or persecuting you, thank God for it. He's using that kind of thing to help purge any fleshliness out of you, any pride out of you. And pride is the thing that rebellion comes from.

And also, he may be trying to get rid of some alliances that maybe you have with something that's not right, something he's not pleased with. And he wants to get it out of your life.

Then, encourage others. When Joshua brought those guys out of the cave and put their foot on their neck, he first of all tells them... he says, "Guess what. God is always going to give me the victory, just like you've seen it this day." He's encouraging them. People are hurt when rebellion takes place and you need to encourage them. If you've got a rebellious child, let me tell you something. Your other kids have been hurt by it. And if they're hurt by it, they need some encouragement. Otherwise, they get bitter and one day they rebel too. So give encouragement to those around.

And give God credit for the victory. Don't take the credit yourself, because if you do pride is what brings on rebellion. By the way, Romans 16:20—I love that verse. It basically says, "We win." Go look up that verse when you get home. Ultimately, my victory is in Jesus Christ.

Now here's the great one, and here's where we're going to leave it for next time, because guess what? We're going to come back to the town of Gilgal in Joshua chapter 11. But Joshua, after all this was done, he went back to Gilgal. Now Gilgal had three things that it was famous for. One is, it was where the Israelites were circumcised at the beginning of Joshua. Now when they did this, these grown men, they didn't have any will to fight. They basically became weak and basically it was a mortifying of their flesh. And it's a place to remember, to cause us to remember our own weakness and examine ourselves for any symptoms of pride and just say, "We can't win the battle on our own."

The second thing Gilgal was a place of was that this is where in Joshua chapter five they kept the Passover. They hadn't kept it the whole time they were in the wilderness. Now in Joshua five, they keep the Passover again. And there was a place of fellowship with God. And you've got to have fellowship with God to prevent rebellion. You will not rebel if you're constantly under God's authority and spending time with the one who loves you the most.

Get out from under that, and the fact is every now and then I will have a child who will demonstrate some not so Christian tendencies and I can ask that child, "Did you read your Bible today?" And every time I have to ask that question, the answer is always "no." See, when they don't spend time with God is when they rebel.

Finally, Gilgal was where in Joshua chapter six and verse six they erected the tabernacle and the tabernacle stayed for a long time. It was the presence of God. If you and I would remember our weakness, we would fellowship with God and we would get in the presence of God. It would prevent our rebellion. In Joshua chapter 11, we're going to find out what that is.

Finally, just for you parents, here's a list of things you might want to think about. Now notice the little acrostic over here, "CHILDREN". It kind of helps you remember how you need to deal with rebellion in your kids.

Number one is, there needs to be chastisement. But it needs to be biblical chastisement. By the way, if you don't know how to discipline a child biblically or what the biblical consequences are, there's a wonderful chart on our web site under the resources section that shows for about everything a child can do wrong what the Bible says, why the Bible says that behavior's wrong. It shows the... what the Bible verse is that shows what the right behavior is, and it shows the biblical consequence. You don't want to tell a lie in my house, because you get a swing full of horseradish and you get the rod applied to your backside. Lying is just about the worst thing you can do.

Rebellion is for the rod. Other things, though, are treated in other fashions. It's a great way. And when you're consistent with it—and this is why a list helps, folks—if you're consistent with it, Mama and Daddy can both be applying the same standards and kids don't play one off against the other.

H, hedge your children about with prayer. Use Psalm 91 every day and pray it with your kids.

I, isolate your child from wrong influences. So if they're around music or people that are causing them to rebel, get rid of it.

L, look for hidden causes of rebellion. It's interesting... and some of you... I had two guys here last week that heard me lecture on the olive tree up in Indianapolis. And one of the... there were three pests that affected the olive tree. And all three of them are pictures of pests that affect our children.

And it's interesting that one of the diseases that affects olive trees worst, it all starts on the underside of the leaf. And that's one of the dangers with teenagers and with other children. It's hidden sin, that Mama and Daddy aren't really aware of, but it's a hidden sin that starts attacking our children. You make sure you have a relationship with them that you can tell by looking in their eyes, when that brightness is gone, that something is wrong. You need to be that close to your kids.

And then, deal with it early. D, deal with it early. The best time to teach children not to rebel is when they're very young. From the time they're two till about the time they're six, most children's character are formed within those four years of their life.

Then, remove items that contribute to rebellion. So if there's something that's causing them to rebel, get rid of it.

Examine yourself because guess what? And I don't like this part, guys. I'll just tell you right up front. When I see a problem in my kids, it's often because I have a hole in my own spiritual umbrella. Sometimes when I see a problem in my wife, she's like the moon reflecting the sun and the problem's really with me. And I have learned, when there's a problem in my family, the first place I need to look is right here, in the mirror. The guy I shave with in the mirror every morning, that's who I need to look at.

And then finally, get your kids near to the heart of God. Give them some opportunities to memorize Scripture. Give them some opportunities to spend time with the Lord. Now I know I went overtime, but the mill is still here. But... and for those of you who don't get enough tryptophan from the turkey, you'll go to sleep, maybe I've done that for you.

But this is such an important message. Because how many of you parents have ever had to deal with rebellion? How many of you have ever had to deal with it in yourself? Then there was something here you needed. I want to ask Richard to come lead us in a song, and...