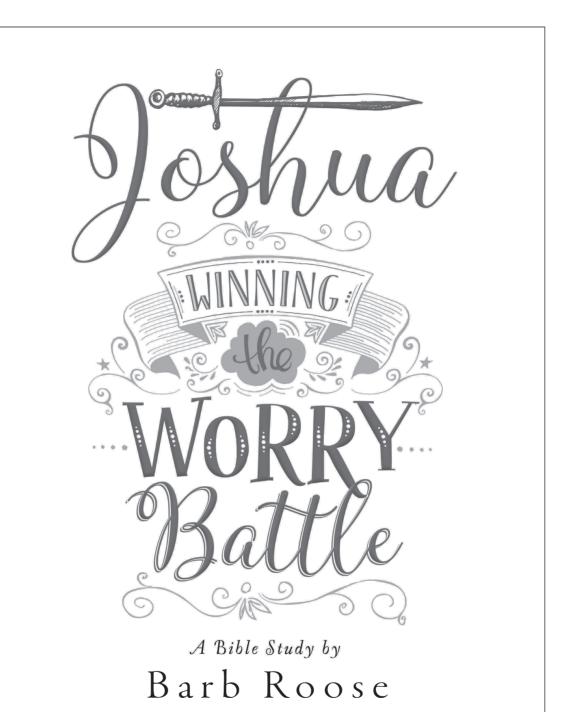


A Bible Study by Barb Roose



Abingdon Women Nashville

JoshuaWinning the Worry Battle

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CONTENTS

About the Author
Introduction to This Study
Introduction to the Book of Joshua
On the Map: The Land of Canaan
Week 1: On the Edge of Uncertainty
Week 2: God, Knock Down My Worry Walls!
Week 3: Fighting Friends to Help Us
Week 4: Defeating the Kings of Worry
Week 5: Claiming Our Inheritance
Week 6: Amen!
Notes
Video Viewer Guide Answers





ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Barb Roose is a popular speaker and author who is passionate about connecting women to one another and to God, helping them apply the truths of God's Word to the practical realities and challenges they face as women in today's culture. Barb enjoys teaching and encouraging

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INTRODUCTION TO THIS STUDY

Have you ever found yourself worrying about the bad things that could happen—whether they involve your family, your job, your finances, your health, or your future? Me, too! Have you ever spent a sleepless night worrying about the state of our nation or world? You aren't alone. If I had a dime for every time I've worried about something in my life, I might be tempted to start worrying about where to store all of those dimes!

As Christians, we know that we shouldn't worry, but the reality is that we all do at times. And when we try to fight worry with faith, often we feel that we're losing the battle. In those moments, well-intentioned comments like "God's got this!" or "Just pray about it" can leave us feeling even more burdened. Whether it's personal worries or broader concerns, we long for something more than clichés that will help us put real feet to our faith and win the worry battle.

There was a time in my life when I was losing the worry battle. In a fallen world filled with bad news, bad people, and bad decisions, worry felt like a handy strategy to keep me on my toes. I thought that if I could answer all of the "what if's," then maybe I could prevent some unknown inconvenience, pain, or tragedy in the future. (Have you ever felt that way?) Those "what if" questions popped up in every area of my life, and it seemed to make sense to try to find answers to them. Oh, the hours I spent thinking, rethinking, and overthinking all of the uncertainties in my life! What would happen if...

But then something changed.

What changed? Well, I wish that I could tell you that I prayed for God to take away my worry and, suddenly, it disappeared and never came back. That hasn't happened, but something even more amazing has! Over the years, God has equipped me to block, battle, and beat back worry from my life. Worry will always be a threat, but I'm not powerless against it. And neither are you! We can and must fight the worry battle, but we won't be able to win on our own. God will give us victory!

My worry battle is one of the reasons I was drawn to the Book of Joshua. Imagine the "what if" questions in the minds of millions of Israelites who'd traveled for many years to

a place where they had never been before. They faced the kind of worries that you might be facing right now, such as what they would encounter next, where they would live, and how they would survive. They faced a battle not only with worry but also with very real enemies.

In this six-week study on the Book of Joshua, we will join God's people as they arrive in the hostile territory of Canaan and are surrounded by great uncertainty and formidable foes. Even though God gave the land to the Israelites over four hundred years before, they had to fight for and claim it. We'll see how God promised and paved the way to victory for His people when they showed up and fought in faith.

Along the way, we'll get to know the man Joshua, who led the Israelites in this fight. Joshua has been a hero of mine for many years, even inspiring me to jump out of an airplane (more about that later)! He almost seemed invincible to me; but as I studied how God communicated with Joshua, I realized that he likely fought his own worry battle. How encouraging it is to know that one of the Bible's most faithful heroes had to battle worry, too.

So, I invite you to join me on the battlefield as we learn to overcome a struggle that so many of us face each day. Whether you have worried, panicked, or even had a massive meltdown over friendship, family, financial, or future-related issues, God has a new path for you to follow. Joshua and the Israelites will show us the way, teaching us how to join forces with God and win over worry!

Getting Started

As we dig into the twenty-four chapters of the Book of Joshua, we will be exploring a six-step plan or approach for winning the worry battle, which involves 1) Facing Our Fears, 2) Letting God Fight for Us, 3) Getting into Position, 4) Attacking the Roots of Our Worries, 5) Receiving Our Victory, and 6) Living in Victory. Each week there are five readings or lessons combining study of Scripture with reflection and application. Space is provided for recording your responses and completing exercises. At the end of each day's lesson, you'll find one of five different "Apply It" experiences. They are titled according to the days of the week for some fun alliteration, but obviously you can do them on any day according to when you plan your study time:

- Motivation Monday: A motivating challenge for the day or week
- Tool Tuesday: A helpful tool to equip you to battle worry
- Wisdom Wednesday: An inspirational quote or verse
- Temperature Check Thursday: A time to reflect on how you are doing
- Freedom Friday: A prompt to celebrate how God has given you victory during your worry battle this week

Following this personal application, you'll find a prayer that you can read or personalize, leading you into a time of talking with God about what you've learned. Finally, at the end of each lesson, you'll find a takeaway for the day in the margin—a key learning you can meditate on throughout the day. Each daily lesson should take 20-30 minutes.

Whenever we think about a commitment of time such as this, we tend to think about all of the other obligations and responsibilities that are pressing in upon us. So, I want to

offer you some incentive. In this Bible study, your investment of time will directly impact how far you get in your battle against worry.

We spend tremendous amounts of time worrying. Time and energy are fuel for worry. So, to fight worry, we need to divert that time and energy into a different place. Every minute you spend on this Bible study will be a minute that you block or battle worry. What's more, you'll discover that God will exponentially multiply the effectiveness of each minute you devote to doing your lessons and use the time you used to spend worrying time you now can devote to the life-giving thoughts and activities God desires for you.

Although you can do this study individually and reap benefits, it is designed to be done with a group for encouragement, support, and accountability. So, I encourage you to gather once a week with a group of women to watch the weekly video teaching, discuss what you are learning, and pray together. Each video message is designed to follow and compliment the content that you have studied during that week. Whether or not your group watches the video, it's so helpful for you to share your struggles and victories in your battle against worry. As you do, you'll encourage one another and find strength to complete the study and put into practice all that you're learning.

Special Features

God's waiting to give you victory over worry, but you need to get equipped in order to follow His way. So, scattered throughout the study you'll find some special features that will help you implement God's battle plan, including a map of the land of Canaan (page 11) and three extra tools for battling worry. In addition, I have identified many additional Scripture verses on worry and peace that I was unable to include in the study due to space limitations, and I would love to text/e-mail you one beautifully designed Scripture card for each day of your study (seven each week, forty-two in all). These verses are designed to share on social media as well as be used as inspirational desktop or cellphone wallpaper. Go to barbroose.com/scripturecards/.

A Final Word

Though I don't know your name or the specifics of your worry battle, God does. He was thinking of you as I was writing, my friend, and He's got a victory with your name on it. Are you ready to claim that victory over worry in Jesus' name? I hope so!

There's a message that God repeats several times to Joshua in chapter 1, and the full expression of this message is the final word that I want to leave with you: "Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9 ESV).

May this verse serve as a strong shield for you throughout our study. During the next six weeks, you're likely to battle not only worry but also circumstances that might tempt you to give up on this study. Don't give up, my friend! Winning against worry may be hard work, but you are not on your own. We are in this together, and our mighty, unfailing God is on our side!



INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

When I began studying the Book of Joshua, it was overwhelming trying to take in all of the unique names and places. If you've ever watched a superhero or fantasy movie, it takes a few scenes before you're able to acclimate your mind to an unknown world with new names and places. But once you do, you're fully able to embrace and immerse yourself in the story.

Studying the Book of Joshua has been one of the greatest learning experiences of my life, and it is my prayer that you'll feel the same. To help you on your way, I want to introduce you to some key background information as well as important people and places you'll need to become familiar with in order to get the most from this study.

Background

The Book of Joshua is the sixth book in the Old Testament and the first book in a section of historical books. While the book shares the same name as the Israelites' leader who succeeded Moses, it is a historical narrative of their campaign into the Promised Land. It begins forty years after the Israelites escaped from slavery in Egypt. During those forty years, the Israelites traveled around the wilderness of Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, a low-population desert region that is the only strip of land connecting Africa and Asia. Key events in the wilderness shaped Joshua's future as the Israelites' leader.

One important feature to note about the Book of Joshua is that many of the events are tied to events in the first five books of the Bible (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy). Part of your in-depth study experience includes learning how so many biblical details are divinely woven together. Even as you read how humans made mistakes, turned away from God, or even opposed God, you'll be encouraged by how God still brought together hundreds of years of promises and plans for His glory.

Five Key Themes

There are many themes in the Book of Joshua, but for the puroses of our study, we will be focusing on five that relate to winning the worry battle:

- 1. God is our source of courage and strength in uncertain or undesired circumstances
- 2. God fights for us.
- 3. Failure to follow God leads to pain for us and can create unpleasant consequences for others.
- 4. God never loses track of His promises to us.
- 5. God gives us the choice of how we want to live, but we must live with the consequences of our choice.

Four Phases

The Book of Joshua consists of twenty-four chapters that commentarians group into four sections representing the four phases within the book:

- 1. Chapters 1–5: The Israelites arrive on the eastern side of the Jordan and cross into the land. (Arrival)
- 2. Chapters 6–12: The Israelites battle Canaanite kings and inhabitants to take the land. (Acquisition)
- 3. Chapters 13–21: Joshua oversees the division of the land to individual tribes. (Allotment)
- 4. Chapters 22–24: The Israelites receive instructions about serving God in the Promised Land. (Allegiance)

People to Know

There are a few groups of people who are key players in the story we will be studying.

Israelites: Hebrew descendants of Abraham and a people specially favored by God as a result of God's promise to Abraham centuries before.

Twelve Tribes of Israel: The Israelites, who are named after Abraham's grandson Jacob, whom God renamed Israel, are divided into twelve tribes descending from the sons of Jacob (Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Joseph, and Benjamin; see Genesis 49:1-28). However, on his deathbed Jacob adopted Joseph's two sons, Manesseh and Ephraim, as his own so that he could give Joseph's descendants a double blessing (see Genesis 48:5-22). Often lists of the twelve tribes replace Joseph with Manesseh and Ephraim and omit Levi, the priestly tribe that did not receive territory (we will learn more about that in our study):

Reuben	Simeon	Judah	Zebulun
Issachar	Dan	Gad	Asher
Naphtali	Benjamin	Manesseh	Ephraim

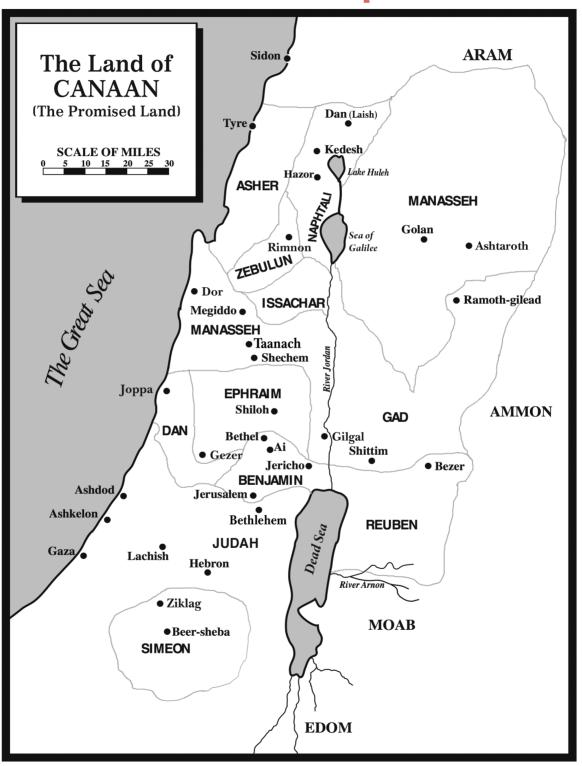
Canaanites: These are the people already inhabiting the land of Canaan. There are many different tribes of Canaanites, including the Amorites, Hittites, Hivites, Perrizites, Iebusites, and others.

The Geographic Area

Since the Book of Joshua captures the story of the Israelites' entry into the land of Canaan as well as their campaign to capture the land, it's important to understand the geographic area. Canaan, also known as the Israelites' Promised Land, is the land God promised to give Abraham and his descendants. God first made this promise to Abraham (Genesis 15:18-21) and then confirmed it to Abraham's son Isaac (Genesis 26:3) and finally to Isaac's son Jacob (Genesis 28:13). This land included the territory "from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean Sea, and from the eastern wilderness to the Euphrates River" (Exodus 23:31). Canaan was "the land bridge between Mesopotamia and Egypt and between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea."

As mentioned in the introduction, a map of the land of Canaan is provided on the following page. Each week you'll use the map to match people and events. In my own experience, when I became familiar with certain cities on the map, I could better visualize the sequence of events as I studied them. I want you to have that same benefit.

On the Map





ON THE EDGE OF UNCERTAINTY

Facing Our Fears

Joshua 1

MEMORY VERSE

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

(Joshua 1:9 ESV)



On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your current level of worry? One article reported that the average person spends 55 minutes per day worrying, and that persons struggling with generalized anxiety disorder worry about 310 minutes per day.1

For years, I felt like I was buried underneath the oppressive weight of worry. King Solomon's observation in Proverbs 12:25 described my life then so well! He wrote, "Worry weighs a person down; / [but] an encouraging word cheers a person up." I was truly weighed down by worry. Many people live with this reality every day. One woman told me that she has had to manage anxiety all of her life and is now seeing a medical doctor about it because she is having panic attacks in her sleep that are waking her up at night. Most of her worry, she says, is unfounded. She is not alone in that regard. In fact, five hundred years ago Michel de Montaigne said, "My life has been full of terrible misfortunes most of which never happened."2

I can relate. One day I stood in my kitchen, swiping at the tears rolling down my face. Was I worried after a difficult phone call or a fight with a friend? No, I was sobbing over a horrible "mental movie" playing in my mind about one of my girls getting into a car accident while driving to her friend's house.

Have you ever cried over a horrible mental movie that you made up in your mind? In my case, the mental imagery seemed so real! I could see the accident scene and myself running and screaming toward a mangled car with hazy smoke rising from the wreckage. In my mind's eye, I could see the EMTs pulling me away from my child as they said, "Ma'am, she's gone. Let her go, ma'am." I could hear my screams and feel my heart pounding as tears streamed down my face. Then, I snapped back to reality.

Do you ever get caught up in a mental movie of a worst case scario? Perhaps right now you're worried about a family member, a friend, or your job situation. Whenever we're not sure what will happen or we're afraid of what might happen, it's easy for us to jump to the worst case scenario and let it play in our minds over and over again. Each time we play that mental movie, we end up worn out and drained.

Maybe mental movies aren't your issue, but you spend your days on pins-and-needles, believing that bad news is around every corner. Most of us have spent time worrying about the bad things that could happen—whether they involve our families, jobs, finances, health, or futures. By definition, the word worry means to torment yourself with, or suffer from, disturbing thoughts. This week we will explore the "what if" game we all play and how the first step toward victory over worry is facing our fears and turning our focus to God and His promises. And by the end of the week, you'll have a three-step plan that will help to jump-start you toward your own personal victory!



DAY 1: EIGHT-LEGGED WORRY

I've spent most of my life being afraid of spiders—big ones, little ones, hairy ones, even fake ones that people post on my Facebook page because they think it's funny to share them with me. Haters.

When I was nine years old, I saw a spider in my parents' bathroom while brushing my teeth. I called for one of my parents to come and get it for me. Even now, I remember that it was a little black spider on a wall not bothering anyone at all. My parents told me that I needed to kill it, and they wouldn't let me run away from the challenge. I knew that spider was going to get me, but it never did. It was probably laughing at the scared little girl wearing pop bottle glasses and holding a toothbrush.

Through the years, I've battled the persistent worry that any spider that sees me will try to chase me and bite me. In fact, even a contained spider makes me jittery. Two of my children had the same teacher when they were in second grade, and this teacher kept a tarantula as a classroom pet. Though the furry creature lived in a glass enclosure with a lid on the top, that wasn't enough to keep the lid on my rampant imagination.

What if one of the kids left the lid ajar?

What if the spider pushes the lid off on its own?

What if the spider gets out, crawls into my daughter's backpack, and makes it to my house?

What if my girl volunteers to bring the spider home for the weekend? And that's only a few of the "what if" worries that were on my list.

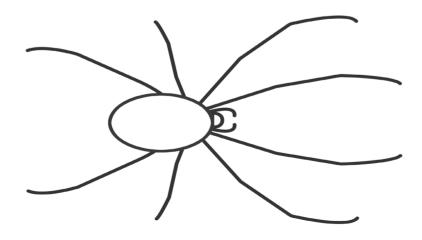
Do you have your own "eight-legged worry"? What are you afraid of, and what are the related "what if" worries that you're struggling to deal with?

Write one of your fears inside the spider and some of the related "what if" worries on the legs.

Extra Insight

One report indicates that 38 percent of people worry every day, most often in the early morning or late evening.³





I'm embarrassed to admit that I avoided the girls' classroom for both of those school years. And, of course, nothing that I worried about actually came true!

The origin of the word worry is an Old English word meaning "strangle." Have you ever felt that a worry was strangling the life right out of you? Another word for "worry" is "anxiety," which is derived from a word related to a tightening feeling in the chest or throat.⁴ Notice how the words themselves indicate that a thought in your mind can create real physical reactions in your body. So, it's not just your mind that worries; your body worries, too.

Circle the physical symptoms that tend to accompany your worries:

Headache	Short temper	Nausea/ fluttery stomach
Racing heartbeat	Trembling	Inability to concentrate
Sleep Issues	Over/Under eating	Excessive crying

I've never met a person who says, "I'm so glad that I'm a worrier. Being a worrier is the best thing that has ever happened to me!" In fact, the question that I'm asked most often is, "How can I stop worrying so much?"

But before we get to that question, I want to ask a different question: How does worrying begin?

Worrying begins when you face unpredictable situations and you don't know what will happen next. I don't like it when I can't see what's coming. I'm not comfortable when I can't name or prevent the dangers that lurk down the street and around the corner. All of those unknown events in my life and yours are what we call uncertainty.

Uncertainty is defined by "what if" questions. Uncertainty invites insecurity. When we are uncertain, our hope is that if we can fill in the answers to the "what if" questions, then we'll feel safe and stable.

Are you dealing with an area of uncertainty in your life? If so, what feels open-ended and unknown?

Over the next six weeks, you're going to learn from the Israelites how God will empower you to win over worry, and you don't have to be a chronic worrier to benefit from our study. There's a Chinese proverb that advises, "Dig the well before you are thirsty." If you don't have many worries, then use this time to dig your well. Uncertainty can find us at anytime, so now is the time to prepare for it.

To prime the pump, let's look at Jesus' words in Matthew 6. This is one of the best known teachings on worry and a great place to begin our study. Jesus'



²⁵ "That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn't life more than food, and your body more than clothing? ²⁶Look at the birds. They don't plant or harvest or store food in barns. for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren't you far more valuable to him than they are? ²⁷ Can all your worries add a single moment to your life?" (Matthew 6:25-27) timeless words are relevant to our lives today and would have encouraged the Israelites during Joshua's time, too, if they could have heard them.

Read Matthew 6:25-27 in the margin. What three things does Jesus tell us not to worry about?

1. _____

2._____

3._____

What do His words about the birds tell us about God's desire to take care of us?

Look at verse 27. How productive is worry?

How do Jesus' words apply to your life right now?

You don't have to worry because God will take care of you, no matter where you are or what you are going through. Jesus taught on a hillside to a crowd of people from all walks of life. But everyone in the crowd had something in common: they worried. How do we know they worried? Because Jesus was teaching on it!

If you've been feeling guilty because you worry too much, I encourage you to let go of that guilt. Jesus taught on worry because He knew that it would be a struggle for us. You aren't alone in your struggle.

In the remaining verses of Matthew 6, Jesus continues talking about worry as well as the solution for worry. We'll talk about that solution throughout the weeks of our study. Today I just want to reassure you that you don't have to worry because God will take care of you, no matter where you are or what you are going through.

Now, are you ready for more encouragement?

Apply It: Monday Motivation

Today you may have a long list of items on your to-do list or a lot on your mind. Regardless of your personal schedule, begin working to memorize this week's memory verse. You'll encounter the main message of this verse in many ways throughout our study, but I hope this message will encourage you today.



Look up the verse and fill in the blanks:

"Have I not commanded you? Be_____ and _____. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the ______ your _____ is with you vou ao." (Joshua 1:9 ESV) 2. Repeat this verse aloud two times, letting it settle into your heart. 3. Rewrite the verse substituting your name for every you: "Have I not commanded ? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with

4. If God is with you wherever you go, how should that change your perspective on the unknowns and uncertainties of your life today?

(Joshua 1:9 ESV)

5. What hope does this verse bring to your life this week?

wherever______ qo[es]."

Prayer

Dear God, I am grateful that I can be strong and courageous with You by my side. There is nothing that I will encounter today on my own, because You are with me. I pray that the words of Joshua 1:9 will sink deep into my heart and mind. Remind me of these words if I begin to worry today. Thank You for being with me wherever I go. In Jesus' name, Amen.

DAY 2: ARE WE THERE YET?

Imagine that you're flying to a foreign country you've never visited before. You have a lot of excitement while you're planning, applying for passports,



Even if today is unknown, I know that God is with me.



and packing bags. Even parking in the long-term parking lot brings a sense of adventure as you head toward the terminal and your destination. Hours later, all of that excitement shifts to uncertainty when you hear the captain announce in multiple languages that the aircraft is making its final descent. When you look out the window while still thousands of feet in the air, everything across your visual landscape seems strange and new. Maybe the homes and highways look different. It's then that you lean over to your traveling companion to start making guesses about what things will be like in this unfamiliar place.

Write below a few things you would wonder or worry about the first time you visited a foreign country:

¹ After the death of Moses the Lord's servant, the Lord spoke to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' assistant. ² "Moses my servant is dead. Therefore, the time has come for you to lead these people, the Israelites, across the Jordan River into the land I am giving them."

(Joshua 1:1-2)

Read Joshua 1:1-2 in the margin. What does God tell Joshua about Moses?

What does God instruct Joshua to do?

As the Book of Joshua opens, millions of Israelite men, women, and children stand clustered together east of the Jordan River. Before his death, their leader Moses had gathered all the people to tell them what to expect, what to do, and how to live. Even with all of that new knowledge, I'm sure there were a few people with some lingering worries or concerns. Now Moses has died, and their new leader, Joshua, stands before the people.

The Israelites have wandered in the desert for forty years, and a new home awaits them just on the other side of the Jordan River. Any journey that takes forty years is sure to be a fascinating story. In fact, the books of Exodus, Numbers, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy convey the lively events of the Israelites' extended sojourn in the wilderness. We are going to dip into a few verses within these books in order to gather some important details that we should know as the Israelites finally arrive at the entrance of their new homeland.

Read Deuteronomy 1:1-5. How many days should it have taken for the Israelites to make their journey to the Promised Land?



After the Israelites fled from Egypt and Pharaoh's army through the Red Sea, they journeyed around and through the wilderness. Early in their journey, Moses received the Ten Commandments from God on Mount Sinai, bringing them down to the people before they reached the edge of Canaan, the Promised Land, for the first time. Yes, the Israelites actually made it to the Promised Land decades before they finally were able to enter it. Unfortunately, they allowed uncontrolled fear and worry to control their actions and ultimately rob them of receiving God's promised blessing at that time.

We read in Numbers 13 and 14 that when they reached Canaan this first time. Moses sent twelve men out with a list of questions to answer as they checked out the land. The men returned after forty days to give their report. Ten spies told scary stories about giants in the land, but Joshua and a man named Caleb told a different story. Ioshua countered the fear-inducing report of the other ten spies with a favorable report. In the following verses we see a powerful picture of who Joshua was and what he believed.

Read Numbers 14:6-9. What did Joshua and Caleb beg the people not to do in verse 9?

Now read verse 10. How did the people respond to the plea of these two men?

In the remaining verses of chapter 14, there's a pretty intense scene going down. Moses begs God not to destroy the people for their rebellion, and God doesn't destroy them but instead changes the trajectory of their lives. He does not change the promise but only the time line for receiving what was promised.

Read Numbers 14:29-34 and answer the following questions.

Why was God angry with the Israelites?

Who would die in the wilderness? Who were the two exceptions?

On the Map

The Israelites were gathered in Shittim (shi-teem) by the Jordan River across from the city of Jericho. Locate Shittim and circle it (page 11).



Who would God carry safely into the Promised Land?

Instead of a short journey, how long did God sentence the Israelites to stay in the wilderness?

The Israelites had justified their rebellion because they feared for their children's lives. "Our wives and our little ones will be carried off as plunder!" they had cried (Numbers 14:3). In a sense, they were blaming their fear on their concern for their families. So, it's ironic that God would promise to carry their children safely into Canaan while allowing anyone older than twenty, except for Caleb and Joshua, to die in the wilderness over the next forty years.

I used to blame my problem with worry on certain issues in my life, especially motherhood. For many years, I felt trapped in worry because I was a mom. This meant that I was a pro at answering every "what if" question with a worst-case scenario. Author and journalist Lenore Skenazy calls it "'worst first' thinking." Instead of taking responsibility for my lack of trust in God when it came to my kids' lives, I blamed my worry on the media, rising crime, or any other handy issue that concerned me as a mother looking out for her kids.

What do you blame for your tendency to worry in one or more areas of your life?

"Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine."

(Luke 22:42)

What consequences to your worrying can you identify? In other words, how has worry impacted your faith, health, or relationships?

In Luke 22, Jesus is preparing to be crucified. After celebrating a final Passover with the disciples, He walks to the Mount of Olives overlooking Jerusalem. It's in this moment that Jesus prays to God about what is to come.

Read Luke 22:42 in the margin. Circle the word *if*. Then underline the word *Father*.



Uncertainty beckons us to ask "what if," but Jesus doesn't worry about the what. At the point of great stress and fear, He focuses on the Who. Jesus knew what was to come and didn't want to go through with it, yet notice His final words: "Yet I want your will to be done, not mine." Jesus was victorious because He kept His focus on God, not His circumtances.

Take a moment for a quick self-inventory.

Why do you want to claim victory over worry?

How will your life be different if you stop worrying?

Why do you think that God wants you to be victorious over worry?

When I contrast Jesus' "Father, if..." to my usual "What if...," I realize that worry weakens when I remember God is with me. It's true for me and it's true for you, too. You can't worry and trust God at the same time. When you say "Father, if ...," you acknowledge that even if bad people make bad decisions that hurt or harm you, God is still with you. Likewise, when you say "Father, if..." and then bad situations break your heart or kill your dreams, you've already invited God's power to bring about blessing in the midst of brokenness and pain.

As you enter into the worry battle, cast a broader vision than just wanting to stop worrying so much. Yes, you can be victorious over worry; but that's not the main victory. The greatest victory in triumphing over worry is that you can more clearly and closely see God being active in your life and circumstances. Worry may obscure our vision and our route to the Promised Land God has for us, but God is with us and will show us how to win the battle!

Apply It: Tool Tuesday

When we talk about our worries, we're guaranteed to focus on our worries. So, let's shift our focus away from our worries and end today by immersing ourselves in a hefty dose of God's wisdom. Throughout our study, I will be introducing several tools and techniques inspired by the Book of Joshua that I've used personally with great results. Today I'd like to share a technique that **Worry weakens** when I remember that God is with me.



Today's Takeaway

God's wisdom always triumphs over my worry.

will enable you to fight worry with wisdom. God's wisdom is always more effective than your worry, so let's apply His wisdom to your worry battle today.

Wisdom Over Worry

1. In the first blank, write one area of your life that you are worried about today, and in the second blank, write the outcomes that you fear, such as harm, loss, pain, regret, shame/embarrassment, abandonment, disconnection, or even death.

Today, I am worried about	
because I fear	•

2. Though you can use any Scripture verse in this step, today let's use this week's memory verse, Joshua 1:9, as we practice the technique together. This step rephrases the words of the verse to bring your worry under the authority of God's wisdom, allowing God's wisdom to swallow up your worry.

God, help me to be strong and courageous as I deal with		
(situation or area of your life)	·	
I will not be frightened of feeling/experiencing		

(feared negative outcome)

because I know that You are with me all the way.

(Based on Joshua 1:9)

3. Use this technique whenever you start thinking about this area of your life. I suggest writing the statement on a sticky note or a note in your phone. The faster you speak God's wisdom over your worry, the sooner God can crush your worry before it begins to make you miserable.

Reflect: How does it feel to submit your worry to God's wisdom?



Prayer

God, just as the Israelites were afraid of the giants in the land of Canaan, sometimes I am overwhelmed by the giant worries in my life. Yet because You are with me, I don't have to worry or fear. Today I am worried about ______, and I need to give that worry to You. I can't do anything about it, but You can! In Jesus' name, Amen.

DAY 3: JOSHUA

When I was fourteen years old, my parents announced that we were traveling from our home in Ohio to Oklahoma to visit my grandfather and his wife. Not only had I never been to Oklahoma, but I'd also never met my mother's biological father. My grandparents divorced when my mother was young, and she and my grandmother moved across the country. After that, my mother stayed in touch with her father through mail and phone calls but was able to visit in person only a few times. Then years later, this opportunity arose for my parents to take us kids to meet and connect with our grandfather for the first time.

I don't know how many times my eleven-year-old sister, seven-year-old brother, and I asked our parents "Are we there yet?" during the eighteen-hour drive, but I do remember that we were about an hour away from my grandfather's home when my dad whipped the van into a parking lot. My patient father never raised his voice during our cross-country drive, but after listening to three kids bicker and complain across five states in the heat and traffic, he needed a break. Dad jumped out and ordered us out of the vehicle. Then one at a time he lifted each of us, positioning us on top of a different corner of the van. From my corner, I could see my dad stalking off across the hot pavement. Alone.

By the time the Israelites reached the edge of Canaan, I'm pretty sure there were a few parents who felt tired and weary like my dad. They had spent decades packing and unpacking, listening to whining children or spouses, and wondering when their long journey was really coming to an end.

One of the major themes in the Book of Joshua is that God always keeps His promises. Canaan wasn't just an idea that God came up with while the Israelites were wandering around. God wasn't panicked, thinking that maybe He should get them off the road and settled because they'd been adrift for too long. In fact, God was about to bring a promise to pass that He'd made many centuries before. Long before the Israelites arrived at the eastern edge of the Jordan, God had made a promise to a man named Abram, later renamed Abraham.

Read Genesis 12:1-3. What did God promise Abram?



At the time of the promise, Abram didn't even have any kids. In fact, he and his wife, Sarai, later renamed Sarah, were childless, which was devastating to a woman in that society. Yet, since God always keeps His promises, eventually the beloved Abraham and Sarah had a son named Isaac. And one day their son Issac had twin sons named Jacob and Esau. Jacob would become the father of twelve sons, who would become the ancestors of the twelve tribes of Israel. It was the descendants of those sons who were gathered on east of the Jordan with Joshua, standing on the edge of a promise that was finally coming true.

Read Joshua 1:3. What has God promised Joshua?

God repeated to Joshua the same words He spoke to Moses in Deuteronomy 11:24. This promise was very personal to Joshua, for as you learned yesterday, years ago Joshua had toured the beautiful land that God was now about to give to the Israelites. He knew the bounty of the land, but he also knew the uncertainty and dangers that awaited them there, too.

Read Joshua 1:4-5. What are the next promises that God makes to Joshua?

Joshua had been a warrior, and God knew that his military leadership experience would be needed once the Israelites crossed over the Jordan River into Canaan. Though Joshua may have seen the land, he didn't know what it would take to capture the land. All he knew was that God promised to be with him every step of the way and to deliver victory.

This is a good time for us to find out a little more about Joshua. While the book is named after him, it's more of a narrative of the Israelites than it is of their leader. In Scripture we see that he is a powerful and pivotal influence long before the full-length historical book bearing his name begins. In fact, Joshua appears in the books of Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, allowing us to assemble a composite picture of this man of faith.

Joshua was born in Egypt during the Hebrew captivity. He lived through the plagues, the first Passover, and the great escape from Pharaoh through the Red Sea. We know he was at least twenty years old when the Israelites fled from Egypt because, as we saw yesterday, he and Caleb were exempted from God's curse on the rebellious people following the spies' expedition into the Promised Land (Numbers 14:29-30). Like the other Israelites, Joshua had an eyewitness perspective on seeing God protect and provide for His people, as



well as discipline them. He served in many important roles before God called him to the biggest leadership challenge of his life.

Read the following verses, and draw a line to match each of Joshua's earlier roles with the appropriate Scripture.

Exodus 17:9 Assistant Numbers 13:1-16 Warrior **Exodus 24:13** Spy/Explorer/Scout

Joshua's name itself gives us some insight into his ultimate role or calling. Interestingly, this name by which he is remembered was not his original name.

Read Numbers 13:8, 16. What was Joshua's original name?

The name Hoshea means "salvation" in Hebrew. But later Moses renamed him Joshua, which is translated Yehoshua, or Jehoshua, meaning "the LORD is salvation."8 Scholars have suggested different reasons for this name change, with some indicating that it was a common practice when appointing a second-in-command (see Genesis 41:44-45 and Daniel 4:8). Perhaps Moses recognized that Joshua would save many. Whatever the reason, there is even deeper meaning to be found here. Like much of the Old Testament, the Book of Joshua contains symbolism that is fully revealed in the New Testament, and one of the most prevalent symbols is Joshua as a type for Jesus. In fact, Jesus' name means Ioshua in Hebrew.

Read the following passages of Scripture, noting the parallels between Joshua and Jesus:

Joshua 1:10-11	Joshua was the of the people.
Hebrews 2:10	Jesus was the leader (captain/pioneer) to bring people to
Joshua 1:11	Joshua will lead the people across the Jordan to take possession of the
	that God was giving to them.



Whenever we're not sure about what we're facing, the most important thing that we can do is look up.

Though we can clearly see these parallels from our vantage point, to Moses and the Israelites Joshua was simply a strong leader. And so it was that after forty years in the wilderness, Joshua became Moses's successor around the age of sixty years old. Taking on the leadership of an entire nation was a big deal. However, Joshua had dug his well before he needed it. Not only had he practiced a lifetime of faith, but he also had been mentored and prepared for this role for many years by Moses. While Moses's mission was to lead the Israelites out of captivity and through the wilderness, Joshua had a different mission.

Read Deuteronomy 1:38. What does God tell Moses about Joshua's future?

I'm not sure if Joshua knew in advance that he'd lead the Israelites into the Promised Land. But if he did, I imagine that despite years of preparation, the weight of that impeding role still would have felt heavy on his shoulders.

We're no different. With every new opportunity comes an unknown frontier. So, whenever we're not sure about what we're facing, the most important thing that we can do is look up.



When have you felt the weight of an unknown frontier or new responsibility?

In what ways did you "look up" during that time?

Now, let's move to the final chapters of Deuteronomy where Moses addresses Joshua directly in front of the Israelite people.

Read Deuteronomy 31:7-8. What are the first four words that Moses speaks to Joshua?

What would Joshua's two responsibilities be?

- 1.
- 2.

What guarantee does Moses give Joshua regarding God's help?

Now read Deuteronomy 34:9. What happens when Moses places his hands on Joshua?

What's important for us to remember is that the same God who promised to be with Joshua promises His presence to us, too. Whatever you're wondering or worried about today, God is present with you right now. You aren't facing that situation alone.

Read Hebrews 13:6 in the margin. Why do we not need to fear?

So we can say with confidence.

> "The Lord is my helper, so I will have no fear What can mere people do to me?" (Hebrews 13:6)

Joshua's early life is a reminder that every role and responsibility we are assigned matters. Moses wouldn't pick just anyone to be his assistant. He must have discerned something special in Joshua before choosing to work closely



with him. Each time we read about Joshua in Scripture, he gets the job done. He is a man of deep faith who isn't swayed by his powerful access to Moses, and he doesn't use his military influence for selfish means.

Throughout this study, you'll see Joshua as a leader who isn't perfect but who loves and trusts God—a God who makes bold promises and removes all uncertainty about the future. Essentially God says, "Joshua, I will make sure that whatever you see will be yours," and this promise is a reflection of God's faithfulness and power. You'll also see how Joshua responds by making bold decisions as well as learning from his mistakes.

Joshua knows that the Canaanites aren't going to give up their land without a fight. Likewise, the Israelites have to do more than just announce, "We're here!" They actually have to go into the land and fight for it.

The Bible is filled with promises for those who are God's daughters and sons—those who trust and follow Him. Do you know what God has promised you? More important, have you claimed those promises for yourself? We could spend an entire week or more exploring the verses in Scripture that convey what God says He will do for us, but for now let's just look at a short list

Look up each verse and write a summary of what God has promised. (If you want to read more of God's promises, check out the additional verses in the sidebar.)

Exodus 14:14 Philippians 4:19 Isaiah 41:10 James 1:5 1 John 1:9

As you reflect on this list of promises, which ones are the hardest for you to believe or claim for yourself?

Additional Verses: God's Promises

Psalm 27:1, Psalm 34:17, Psalm 86:5, Isaiah 40:29, Jeremiah 29:11, Malachi 3:10, Mark 11:24, John 3:16, John 3:36, John 8:36



What are some things that get in the way of you believing these promises for you? Circle the ones that might be true for you:

Shame **Fear** Doubt Guilt Pride

Now pick one of the promises in the chart on page 28. Consider choosing a promise that might be difficult for you to believe at this time. How will you apply that promise to a situation or worry that you are facing today?

God's promises are so precious! At the point when your knowledge of God's promises outweighs the number of your fears, you'll be on your way to victory over worry.

Apply It: Wisdom Wednesday

"Sometimes in our pain or in our panic we forget God, we forget His promises."9 -Sheila Walsh

Prayer

Dear God, thank You for being a God who keeps His promises! You have been faithful to Your people throughout all the generations. God, You know the places of uncertainty in my life today; and instead of panicking about them, I choose now to embrace the truth of Your promises. In Jesus' name, Amen.

DAY 4: BE A WARRIOR, **NOT A WORRIER**

My oldest daughter is an officer in the army and a graduate of the United States Military Academy. She reported to boot camp at West Point less than a month after graduating from high school.

I wish that I could tell you that I was all celebration and smiles before she left for six weeks of arduous training. Frankly, I was a worried wreck. It didn't matter that I knew all of the information about how long training would last and when we could expect phone calls. I still had more questions—questions that the army couldn't answer for me. I had loud, booming questions that demanded to be heard over and over again until I couldn't sleep but only cry.

What if I missed her call? What if she got hurt?

Today's Takeaway

There's no need to panic when I focus on God's presence.

