

An Unlikely Faith

June 7, 2020



Daily Devotions

As an individual or as a family, use these daily devotionals and reflection questions to connect with Jesus each day this week.

Each day, there will be a thought stemming from our Scripture passage along with 2-3 questions. Our hope is that as we journey together through the book of Joshua, we'll be able to come out the other side knowing how God wants to take new ground in and through our lives, groups, and church.

Be sure to prayerfully consider each day's truth, passages, and each of the questions. If you are a part of a life group, let these devotionals stir your thinking and be the foundation for your group conversation.

Additionally, we've added a section to each day called "Evening Reflection + Prayer." This section of the daily devotionals is intended to help you reflect on your day with God in prayer to notice where he was active in your life.

Our prayer is that these devotionals, questions, and reflections will help you love God, love people, and make disciples.

Day One // God can still use you

Read Joshua 2:1-7

"I am unlovable."

"I am gross."

"If anyone knew what I was really like, they wouldn't like me."

There are probably parts of our stories that have led us to utter similar lines like the ones above. Our past can haunt us relentlessly, if we allow it to, and our present actions can reinforce those statements when they seemingly come out of nowhere.

These automatic thoughts that skew our identity in Christ can negatively affect our relationships with others and our relationship with God. We feel immoral. We belittle ourselves. We think God is disappointed. We think we need to get our act together for a certain amount of time and *THEN* we can talk with God again. We think God can't use us because we are so bad. Ultimately, we feel shame.

When we look at Rahab's story, it's a wonder she allowed herself to be used by God. There was no hiding her profession. The text clearly states she was a prostitute (of course, whether that was her chosen profession or whether it was forced upon her as the only profitable way to make a living, we don't know). Everyone would have known who she was and what she did. You can imagine the looks she would have gotten from the other ladies in her town.

Despite all this, God used her. And the reality is this: he can use you too.

Here are a couple reflection questions for you based off of that short devotion on Rahab:

- When is a moment in your life when you experienced shame? How did shame affect your relationship with God and others?
- What are you carrying that you feel like could not be used by God?
- What parts of your story when telling it to someone else do you tend to hide or minimize?

Evening Reflection + Prayer

As your day comes to a close, quiet yourself. Ask God to make his presence known around you. Remind yourself of his goodness and grace to you.

Pray: God, fill me with your merciful love. Guide me as I review my day with you.

Hour by hour, review your day, lingering in the important moments—thanking God for the good gifts you find throughout your day and asking God’s forgiveness for the times when you weren’t the person he has called you to be.

- As you reflect on your day, was there any moment when you felt shame, inadequacy, or insecurities—like you weren’t enough or like you wanted to hide or minimize something?

Hold this feeling and this moment out to Jesus. See the loving kindness in his eyes. Sense his healing mercy wash over you as he reminds you that he died to redeem *all* of you. What do you want to say to him? Say it.

Consider the day ahead of you and how God’s grace will be with you, to remind you of your confidence in Christ.

Day Two // Fear of the Lord

Proverbs 9:10 says, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom...”

When the writer of Proverbs issues that statement, what he means is that putting God first, revering him, and making him the most important thing in our lives, is where truly living well begins. It's a *wise* thing to make God your #1 in life. This is what Rahab quickly came to realize.

Read Joshua 2:8-11.

Rahab's world was saturated with gods. The people of Jericho had multiple gods they would worship. They had several deities they would go to for things like protection, food, or water. That's how Rahab would have grown up. Her parents would have taught her that. Her neighbors would have invited her to worship these false gods.

For Rahab, however, she got wind that the God of the Israelites had done some pretty great things – freed them from slavery, won them victories, helped them cross bodies of water on dry land. For her, she saw evidence all around that the Lord was real. He was active. He was powerful.

She was beginning to realize that Yahweh > all those other gods. They simply *paled* in comparison (something we'll touch on more tomorrow).

For now, spend some time reflecting on the following questions:

- What specific things in this text showcased God's power for Rahab? What affect did it have on her?
- What are 2-3 specific ways you have seen God's power in your lifetime? What affect did it have on you?
- How did Rahab's reverence (fear) of the Lord lead her to living wisely? How might this play itself out for you?

Evening Reflection + Prayer

Quiet yourself. Ask God to make his presence known around you. Remind yourself of his goodness and grace to you.

Pray: God, fill me with your merciful love. Guide me as I review my day with you.

Hour by hour, review your day, lingering in the important moments—thanking God for the good gifts you find throughout your day and asking God's forgiveness for the times when you weren't the person he has called you to be. Slow...sense his healing mercy wash over you.

- As you reflect on your day, was there a place you experienced or saw the evidence of God's power? If so, how does that bolster your faith? If not, are you willing to ask the true and living God to give you the eyes and heart to be emboldened by him?

Consider the day ahead of you. Ask for God's grace to help you notice the awe and wonder of God.

Day Three // False gods

As we talked about yesterday, Rahab grew up believing in false gods. Her family would have worshipped them. Her friends would have worshipped them. Even the other nations around her would have worshipped other gods. It was only when she heard about the God of Israel that her “heart melted” and realized this God is the God “in the heavens above and on the earth beneath” (another way of saying, “He’s the real deal!”).

While we may not have gods quite like Rahab had in her day, we, too, have idols—things we substitute for God to bring us meaning or to fulfill us. These can either be bad things we shouldn’t idolize OR they can be good things we give too much credence.

For example, money in and of itself is neutral, but we know that it’s wrong to *idolize* money (even though people do it all the time). Family, in and of itself, is a *good thing*. But family can also be an idol, leading us to harm the very relationships we value so much.

The list could go on.

All of these things we idolize pale in comparison to the one true God because only the one true God can bear the weight of truly bringing us meaning, purpose, belonging, relationship, joy, and peace. Our idols are worthless.

We’d do well to heed John’s words in **1 John 5:21** where he exhorts us saying, “Dear children, keep yourselves from idols.”

Read through all of **Joshua 2** and reflect on the following questions:

- Put yourself in Rahab’s shoes. How hard would it have been to give up her attachment to the gods she grew up believing in? What’s something you’ve been idolizing that might be difficult for you to give up?
- Reflect for a moment on any idols (or God “substitutes”) you are drawn to. Why are you drawn to these specific ones? Do these same ones manifest themselves in your parents or other family members? In what ways do these idols pale in comparison to the one true God?
- In what ways might you be able to remind yourself of who God is help to “melt your heart” regularly? In what ways can you remind yourself that this God is the God “in the heavens above and on the earth beneath”?

Evening Reflection + Prayer

Quiet yourself. Ask God to make his presence known around you. Remind yourself of his goodness and grace to you.

Pray: *God, fill me with your merciful love. Guide me as I review my day with you.*

Hour by hour, review your day, lingering in the important moments—thanking God for the good gifts you find throughout your day and asking God’s forgiveness for the times when you weren’t the person he has called you to be. Slow...sense his healing mercy wash over you.

- As you reflect on your day, in what ways did you worship God—letting him know your love for him? As you look at these moments with God, how do you feel?
- In what ways did you love others, either people or things, more than God? Hold these people or things out to him, asking him if these have become idols—idols that you put your hope and trust in above him.

Consider the day ahead of you. Ask for God’s grace to desire him above all things.

Day Four // God's story and our story

Over the past couple of days, we have gone on a mini journey.

On Monday, we reflected on what might be keeping us from allowing God to use us. Those parts we feel to be shameful aspects of our stories might actually be places God wants to pour his grace into, redeem, and use for his glory.

On Tuesday and Wednesday, we discussed how we need to acknowledge that he is the one, true God. There is none like him. He is in control of all things. He is Creator. He is Ruler. He is Redeemer. Compared to him, all other "gods" pale in comparison. There's absolutely no contest.

But what about when God actually enters into our story? Or, better yet, what happens when our story intersects with the story God is writing?

For Rahab, this meant putting her life on the line. For Rahab, this meant protecting her people's "enemies." For Rahab, this meant choosing faithfulness to God over faithfulness to her local authorities.

While we may never engage in espionage on behalf of the gospel, we are invited by God to allow our story to be molded by him. This requires courage, trust, and surrender.

As you think about how God invited Rahab into his story, here are some questions to help you think through how God might be inviting you into his story:

- In some ways, Rahab's involvement with God's story of redemption was extraordinary. In other ways, it was *extra* ordinary in the sense that she woke up, had people come into her business, and was faced with a decision to help or not (a pattern we have each day, too). How might God be inviting you into his story in "ordinary" ways?
- On a scale from 1-10, how much would you say you've allowed God to have control over your story? What feelings do you have about entering *fully* into God's story?
- What would it look like for you to fully surrender your story to God? What would it look like for you to *not* have surrendered your story fully to God?

Evening Reflection + Prayer

Quiet yourself. Ask God to make his presence known around you. Remind yourself of his goodness and grace to you.

Pray: *God, fill me with your merciful love. Guide me as I review my day with you.*

Hour by hour, review your day, lingering in the important moments—thanking God for the good gifts you find throughout your day and asking God’s forgiveness for the times when you weren’t the person he has called you to be. Slow...sense his healing mercy wash over you.

- As you reflect on your day, was there any place that God showed up in a surprising way? How would your day have been different if you had lived fully surrendered to him throughout? Was there anything you wanted to hold back from him today? Look to God. Open your heart to him.

Consider the day ahead. Invite God for the grace to let him intersect with and rewrite your story.

Day Five // Living without fear

This week we read how the Israelites sent spies into the land of Canaan to get a lay of the land. Upon entering Jericho, these two spies lodged in the home of a prostitute named Rahab who ended up protecting them (despite it potentially costing her everything!) because of God's invitation to her to envelop her story into his.

To be honest, that takes great courage to do. Joshua and the Israelites weren't the only ones who needed the words "Be strong and courageous" (**Joshua 1:6**) spoken over them.

But something happens when we realize our story is intertwining with God's. Suddenly fear, self-preservation, worry, inadequacy, competency, and insignificance begin to dissipate. We can trust putting ourselves in the hands of a God we know knows everything, is in full control, and is working "for the good of those who love him" (**Romans 8:28**).

Rahab realized this. When she made her deal with the spies to spare her life and the life of her family, she was banking on the fact that God was in control of her future. Her fear of "what if people find out I'm helping the enemy" or "what if these spies forget to tell their leader about me" were limited because she knew God was now in control of her story.

And she had a scarlet cord to prove it over her door (just like the blood of Jesus does for us).

Read **Joshua 2:15-24** and consider the questions below:

- How does fear manifest itself in your life today? What specific characteristic of God might you need to press into to counter that fear?
- Describe a time when you experienced fear or anxiety, but pursuing something bigger than yourself (i.e. parenting, receiving an education, etc.) gave you courage to press on? How might this same reality play itself out in how you allow your story to be fully surrendered to God's?
- How might continual faithfulness to living out of God's story compound the courage you have to follow Jesus each day?

Evening Reflection + Prayer

Ask God to make his presence known around you. Remind yourself of his goodness and grace to you.

Pray: God, fill me with your merciful love. Guide me as I review my day with you.

Hour by hour, review your day, lingering in the important moments—thanking God for the good gifts you find throughout your day and asking God's forgiveness for the times when you weren't the person he has called you to be. Slow...sense his healing mercy wash over you.

- As you reflect on your day, were there moments when you felt distant from God—not seen or forgotten by him? Ask God where he was in those moments.

- Were there moments when you sensed the assurance of God's presence? Linger in these moments with God, letting him strengthen your faith, reminding you that he will never leave you.

Consider the day ahead of you. Ask for God's grace to notice the power, comfort, and presence of the Holy Spirit in your life.