

Accepting the Challenges of a New Year

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

- A. Joshua 3:1-17
- B. Joshua chapter 3 tells us that Nation of Israel crossed the flooded river of Jordan. These people had a one major goal in their mind. To capture the city of Jericho that will prepare the way to conquer the promise land. There was a challenge however. The current of the Jordan is very swift at Jericho. Besides it was the harvest season and the melting snows in the Lebanon Mountains caused the river to overflow.
 - 1. They had to face a challenge before they could face the challenge
 - 2. Obstacles before overcoming obstacles
 - 3. I need to plant the garden, but before I do that, I need to till it; but, the tiller's broken and I need to repair it; but, I can't repair it until I clear a space in the garage and find the tools my son-in-law borrowed
- C. Sometimes it feels like someone is complicating our lives unfairly.
 - 1. How do we handle the challenges of the new year when we are still dealing with issues from last year?

I. TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION

- A. Joshua's task wasn't easy. The flooded river was nearly a mile wide. Joshua was responsible for taking two million people safely across.
- B. He could have waited and complained or felt sorry for himself. Instead he took immediate action
 - 1. Joshua 3:1
 - 2. Many, when confronted with difficult or unpleasant tasks, put them off as long as possible. It only makes it worse.
- C. This year when you are faced with a challenging situation, don't procrastinate.
 - 1. Trust in God's strength and wisdom and pray for some for yourself.
 - 2. Then get up "early in the morning" and go to it. At the end of the day you will be glad you did.

II. FOLLOW THE COUNSEL OF WISE LEADERS

- A. The leaders announced God's order to follow the Levite priests - Joshua 3:2-3
 - 1. The previous generation died in the desert because they despised Moses' instructions.
 - 2. God appointed leadership in the church, the home, and the government for a reason. Leaders are to take the responsibility to guide others in God's will
 - a. Disobeying their authority is rebellion against God - Rom. 13:1-4
- B. This year consider your fellowship.

III. WAIT ON THE LORD

- A. The Israelites didn't know where to go because they had never passed that way before - Joshua 3:4
 - 1. They needed to be patient and carefully follow the Lord

B. Psalm 27:14, 37:9, 34; Isa. 40:31

1. Spend time patiently in prayer and be diligent in His word

IV. PURSUE SANCTIFICATION DAILY

A. The people were ordered to put away anything displeasing to God -Joshua 3:5

B. Sin will keep us from victory in Jesus every time

1. 1John 1:7-9

2. Ask God to help you avoid the same self-defeating mistakes you made last year.

V. TRUST GOD'S PROMISES

A. God promised that they will overcome the nations that occupied the land He promised them - Joshua 3:9-13

B. What has He promised? Less important than Who did the promising

1. Heb. 6:17-19

VI. WORK YOUR FAITH

A. The river parted only after the people lined up and the priests waded into the water - Joshua 3:14-17

1. Faith without work is dead - James 2:14-18

2. Some lay back passively waiting for their faith to begin working. Take the initiative!

B. Practical faith involves risk. We dislike risk; we want assurances of success and safety before we begin. It's our right as Americans!. Nonsense!

1. We want the way opened before we move out for God. A risk is only a risk if God isn't going with us. Step out and trust God.

2. Remember God's track record of bringing you this far and step out into the Jordan of 2012 and get your feet wet.

Conclusion: Psalms 103:1-18