

*Hebrews 11:6 NLT - 6 And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.*

*What two things must we believe to demonstrate faith?*

Our faith grows as we exercise it.

We are probably convinced that God exists, but we may have trouble believing He will reward us if we sincerely seek him. When we do believe that, we are more likely to take a step of faith and expectantly await God's response. But exercising even a little faith develops even greater faith. So, don't hesitate to seek God in the little things, it will prepare you for the greater challenges in your future.

*In what ways has God rewarded your faith?*

## **WRAP-UP**

God had given the Promised Land to the nation of Israel. He would be present with them and drive out the enemy. But before they entered, God gave them specific instructions they had to obey in faith, even though it made no sense. The priests, the representatives of each tribe and all the people worked together to get across the Jordan. In response to their faith, God performed a miracle! He can do the same for us. We can do the impossible and fulfill our destiny when we place our faith in the Lord of the whole earth.

## **Memory Verse**

*No one will be able to stand against you as long as you live. For I will be with you as I was with Moses. I will not fail you or abandon you.*

*-Joshua 1:5 NLT*

## **PRAYER (20 MIN)**

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: \_\_\_\_\_

Pray for your group members' needs: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Challenge- Take some time this week to reflect on how God has responded as you stepped out in faith. Is there an area He is challenging you to step into now?*

## **“Step out by Faith”**

**Pastor Billy Graham Paulose- Sept 8, 2019**

## **INTRODUCTION**

As we live out our faith journey, God sometimes challenges us to follow Him into unknown territory. And when we choose to follow, we may find there are obstacles in our way. The children of Israel faced obstacles that appeared insurmountable. But God was leading them to the promised land and calling them to step out in faith and follow Him. Today God calls His followers to places that may seem impossible. But if He is leading, then He will make a way, even if it requires a miracle.

## **Ice Breaker (Optional—8 min)**

What is the greatest adventure you've ever undertaken?

## **STUDY QUESTIONS (45 MIN)**

### **1. His Presence Leads the Way**

*Joshua 3:10-11 NLT - 10 Today you will know that the living God is among you. He will surely drive out the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites, and Jebusites ahead of you. 11 Look, the Ark of the Covenant, which belongs to the Lord of the whole earth, will lead you across the Jordan River!*

After Moses died, Joshua led the children of Israel out of the wilderness and into the Promised Land. But before they could enter, they had to overcome opposition that lay ahead. The bad news was that there were seven nations that had to be removed from the land.

*What was the good news of Joshua 3:10 that made this impossible task possible?*

There was yet another obstacle that stood between Israel and the Promised Land – the Jordan River. But they had with them the Ark of the Covenant, which belonged to the Lord of the whole earth. And it was the Lord who would lead them across the Jordan if they trusted and kept their focus on Him.

*What situations have you faced in life in which God has fought for you and led you through? Are you facing an insurmountable obstacle now that only God can lead you through?*

Taking hold of God's promises may require us to overcome opposition, but just as He did for Israel, God fights for us and leads us as we look to Him.

## 2. God Calls Us to Work Together

*Joshua 3:12-14 NLT - 12 Now choose twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one from each tribe. 13 The priests will carry the Ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth. As soon as their feet touch the water, the flow of water will be cut off upstream, and the river will stand up like a wall." 14 So the people left their camp to cross the Jordan, and the priests who were carrying the Ark of the Covenant went ahead of them.*

All of the Israelites stood on one side of the Jordan and the Promised Land was on the other side. They may have expected a path to appear for them, because when their fathers left Egypt, God had Moses lift his staff and part the Red Sea. But God was developing a new relationship with His people; one based on faith. They would cross together, but each had a role to play. So, first He had each tribe select a representative.

*What did the twelve men do after the people had crossed the river?*

*Joshua 4:3-7 NLT - 3 Tell them, 'Take twelve stones from the very place where the priests are standing in the middle of the Jordan. Carry them out and pile them up at the place where you will camp tonight.'" 4 So Joshua called together the twelve men he had chosen--one from each of the tribes of Israel. 5 He told them, "Go into the middle of the Jordan, in front of the Ark of the LORD your God. Each of you must pick up one stone and carry it out on your shoulder--twelve stones in all, one for each of the twelve tribes of Israel. 6 We will use these stones to build a memorial. In the future your children will ask you, 'What do these stones mean?' 7 Then you can tell them, 'They remind us that the Jordan River stopped flowing when the Ark of the LORD's Covenant went across.' These stones will stand as a memorial among the people of Israel forever."*

*Who was the memorial built for? If you were asked by your children why you follow God, what can you point back to in your life that stands as a memorial to God's faithfulness?*

Altogether the nation of Israel crossed over the Jordan, but the first to enter the river were the priests carrying the Ark. The people followed the priests and the twelve representatives gathered stones to build a memorial. Together they crossed the Jordan, each playing a different role.

*We are stronger together than we are separately. How might your group tap into your collective strength? Have you considered undertaking an area of ministry as a team? It could be simply taking a collection of non-perishables to donate to the Lord's Pantry, or perhaps agreeing to sponsor one child in need in a foreign country. What would it take to make a difference for Christ together?*

## 3. Fully Obedient

*Joshua 3:15-16 NLT - 15 It was the harvest season, and the Jordan was overflowing its banks. But as soon as the feet of the priests who were carrying the Ark touched the water at the river's edge, 16 the water above that point began backing up a great distance away at a town called Adam, which is near Zarethan. And the water below that point flowed on to the Dead Sea until the riverbed was dry. Then all the people crossed over near the town of Jericho.*

God's instructions to Joshua had been very specific. The priests were to carry the Ark, and when their feet touched the water it would stop flowing. But this was not a gentle stream they were stepping into. It was a raging torrent. And the water didn't stop where they stood, but a great distance upstream. So obeying God meant overcoming fear and doing something that didn't make sense. Not only did they take a step of faith, they stood on that faith until they saw God's promise reach them where they stood.

*God didn't dry up the Jordan and then have the priests enter, only after a step of faith did the waters begin to back up. Has God ever asked you to take a step of faith that didn't make sense? What was your experience like?*

## 4. Miracles Can Happen If We Believe

*Joshua 3:17-18 NLT - 17 Meanwhile, the priests who were carrying the Ark of the LORD's Covenant stood on dry ground in the middle of the riverbed as the people passed by. They waited there until the whole nation of Israel had crossed the Jordan on dry ground.*

Just as He had parted the Red Sea, God gave Israel a miracle and a path through the water. God responded not only to their need, but to the faith they demonstrated by stepping into the river at flood stage. We are told in Hebrews it is impossible to please God without faith.