

Practical Application Questions - Joshua 10

1. What's the most audacious (daring) prayer you have ever prayed and received an answer for?
2. The scriptures talk a lot about people hearing from God (Joshua did in verse 8). Have you ever had that experience? What did God say and how'd you hear him? How do you discern your voice from the Holy Spirit's?
3. What promises has God made to you in recent months or years? Perhaps through a sermon you heard, a bible passage you read, an impression you received as you were praying, or a prophetic word from a man or woman of God?
4. How can you discern if a promise is truly from God and not your own personal agenda?
5. What are some action steps you can begin taking to demonstrate your faith in response to a promise God has made?
6. What are some hindrances to praying great prayers? Are there any in your life that need to be addressed right away?
7. What's your sun stand still prayer for 2011?
8. Are you willing to join us in our Thursday fasting and prayer for the ministry?



Questions for Further Study

digging deeper into the biblical text.

1. If Gibeon was such an important city with such great fighters, why didn't they put up a fight against the Israelites? Why weasel out by signing a peace treaty? (Verse 1)
2. Why did the five kings form an alliance? Why did they attack Gibeon? Why not go after Israel (the real enemy)? (Verse 5)
3. Where was Gilgal and why were the Israelites camped there? How far was it from Gilgal? (Verse 9)
4. According to verse 8, God guaranteed Joshua that the Amorite kings wouldn't stand a chance against Israel. What was the sin of the Amorites and why did God "give them into Joshua's hands?"
5. What does it mean that the Lord threw the Amorite army "into confusion"? Where else is that expression used of God in the bible?
6. What are some theories you have concerning why Joshua would ask God to still the sun?
7. Verse 14 says, "there has never been a day like it before or since, when the Lord listened to a human being." But there are other accounts in the bible where God listened to incredible prayers and answered. So is the author wrong? What point do you think the author was trying to make?

THEREMIXMINISTRY

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theREMIX is the college and 20something ministry of Grace the church on the Mount.

As part of a church-wide vision to raise up a generation of families that are built to last, our goal is to prepare young adults to engage in healthy relationships at every level of their lives. Hence, our worship gatherings are designed to equip young adults with biblical truths so that they in turn influence the people in their lives for Jesus Christ

MATTHEW 22:37-39



Part one: 'Joshua 10:1-21' series: 'SUN STAND STILL'

One of the reasons we are beginning this year with a message series on prayer is because we want to make this first month of the year a month of prayer. Throughout the scriptures, God always seems interested in the offering our first fruits to Him, and so, as we enter into 2011, what better way to launch the year off than to dedicate the first month to seeking Him in prayer?

I'll give you details on how we'll go about this a little later, but to get us started with tonight's message, I want to ask a question that you'll get a chance to answer a little later in your small groups session. What's the

bigest, most daring, and audacious prayer you've ever prayed and received an answer for?

There are a few personal prayers that come to mind, but the one that stands out the most is the very first time I dared to ask God for something that seemed impossible. It was 1995 and I was a recent high school graduate in Nigeria. My plan was to travel to the United States to further my education, but the odds of traveling overseas were stacked against me. First of all, the cost of a plane ticket was more than my parents could afford at the time. Secondly, my older brother was

in the marines, hence I had no place to stay when I stay if I came. Thirdly, though I am an American citizen, my passport had expired and renewing it in Nigeria at the time was tantamount to trying to apply to be president.

It became obvious pretty quickly that the only way I was ever going to leave Nigeria for the United States was through divine intervention. So I did what most new Christians do at least once during the first few years of being a believer, I made a deal with God. I began a 21day period of fasting and prayer, during which I asked for those three things

aforementioned. I also told God that if He opened this door of opportunity for me by the end of my fast, I would bring Him the biggest offering I'd ever brought Him.

Now I'm almost certain I didn't follow all the right fasting protocols if there ever was one, besides I think my 21-day fast lasted till day 18 because I got really hungry. But all of that didn't matter because on day 21, I woke up with great expectations, in fact I washed all my clothes and packed my suitcase incase I needed a quick ride to the airport. And so I waited all day for some angel or stranger to walk in with my renewed American passport, a plane ticket, and a place in the United States to stay.

Unfortunately, nothing happened that day or that week for that matter. But I wasn't too fazed by it, in fact I decided I was going to hold up my end of the deal and bring the offering I promised God anyway, just incase there was a time delay between heaven and earth or my delivery angel had been intercepted by the demon prince of Nigeria. So, I took a very expensive pair of jeans my brother had given to me, sold it to a friend of mine for a profit, then took the money and purchased a ton of fruits to use as an offering. (In the church I was a part of at the time, your offering didn't always have to be cash, it could be a food item, which would in turn be distributed to the whole congregation to share). I remember dancing with my heavy basket of fruits all the way to the front of the church, thinking, "man, God is going to be so pleased with me!"

And you know what? I think HE was! Up till that moment, my parents had tried for almost 2 years to find a way for me to travel, but to now avail. But within 3 months of my prayer and fasting, things began to unfold faster than I could say amen. Within a month or two of my prayers, I suddenly received a package in the mail from the U.S embassy – my passport was renewed! Within a few weeks of that, my mum secured a cash loan from her company, an incredible amount that had previously been unattainable. I finally had enough to buy a plane ticket! Within a few days of that event, my mum's best friend came to Nigeria from the States and just so happened to be in need of someone who would return to the states with her to watch a her grandkids while she worked. I ended up traveling with her and the



family I ended up moving in with in 1996 just so happened to live in Ledgewood, New Jersey, and was the only Nigerian family at Grace church at the time. And that's how I ended up here with you.

Now, I've seen God do even greater things in my life since then, but that one always stands out to me because though I was a fairly new believer at the time, I dared to trust God for something others had written off as impossible.

Now let me ask you this, in light of that kind of experience do you think I'm ever prone to pray small prayers or trust God for anything less than that? Why? BECAUSE MY VIEW OF GOD HAS CHANGED. God was (and is) no longer small to me because I have seen Him do the impossible.

This entire message series is all about audacious prayer! It's about praying the kind of kingdom-focused prayers that would probably cause some people to laugh at you. My desire and hope is that you will begin believing God for greater things outside your control. The way we're going to do this is by looking at four or five different accounts of men in the bible who dared to ask God for the impossible. We'll start off tonight by looking at an account in the life of Joshua where he prayed for something so incredible, no one till this date has thought to ask of it.

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JOSHUA 10:1-6 (COALITION TROUBLES)

Through Moses, God had delivered the Israelites out of 400 years of slavery in Egypt. From there, they were led into Canaanite territory, a land God had promised their forefathers they would inherit. However, Moses dies before this happens and the leadership mantle is passed on to a young military general named Joshua. The task of defeating all the inhabitants of Canaan and the neighboring cities is now on his shoulder. Except for one small defeat in the city of Ai, Joshua and the Israelites, through God's help have successfully won every battle they've fought.

By the time we get to the 9th chapter of the book of Joshua, word had spread around the countryside that the Israelite army and their God were not to be fooled with. In fact, the citizens of a city called Gibeon were so terrified of being destroyed by Israelites that they deceived them into signing a peace treaty; a decision which they (Israelites) agreed to without first consulting the LORD.

Unfortunately, that peace treaty would backfire on the Israelites because it drew unwanted attention from neighboring Amorite cities. As a result, five Amorite kings and their armies formed a coalition and decided it would be in their best interest if they attacked the Gibeonites

who were now allies with Israel, and that's where we begin this story.

Joshua 1:1-6; “Now Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem heard that Joshua had taken Ai and totally destroyed it, doing to Ai and its king as he had done to Jericho and its king, and that the people of Gibeon had made a treaty of peace with Israel and had become their allies. 2 He and his people were very much alarmed at this, because Gibeon was an important city, like one of the royal cities; it was larger than Ai, and all its men were good fighters. 3 So Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem appealed to Hoham king of Hebron, Piram king of Jarmuth, Japhia king of Lachish and Debir king of Eglon. 4 “Come up and help me attack Gibeon,” he said, “because it has made peace with Joshua and the Israelites.”⁵ Then the five kings of the Amorites—the kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish and Eglon—joined forces. They moved up with all their troops and took up positions against Gibeon and attacked it. 6 The Gibeonites then sent word to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal: “Do not abandon your servants. Come up to us quickly and save us! Help us, because all the Amorite kings from the hill country have joined forces against us.”

You need to get a sense of the magnitude of this conflict because both the Gibeonites and five Amorite armies are all enemies of Israel. If circumstances had been different, all six kings and their armies would have joined forces to destroy the Israelites. But the Gibeonites cut their losses pretty early and decided it would be smarter if they sided with God's people. That's the tantamount to one of the current Arab nations in the Middle East deciding they no longer want to be a Muslim nation, but would rather take sides with the United States. You only can imagine how disastrous that will end for them; half the Muslim world would turn against them in an instant.

Furthermore, consider how large this Amorite military coalition would have been. If Gibeon was a large prominent city as verse 2 claims, and it had some of the best fighters in the region, then imagine the size of the army it would take to intimidate them and cause them to cry out to the Israelites for help.

So the battle lines are clearly drawn. On one side are the Gibeonites, who are

probably already battle weary from fighting all day, and the Israelite army slowly making its way 20 miles uphill to provide them with support. On the other side is a coalition of five armies, no doubt with a larger military force, better battle equipment, and strategic location advantage (they would have been more familiar with the terrain than the Israelites would have been). Any military personnel looking at this would say it's a lost cause for Israel and Gibeon.

Even if you throw in the whole “God is on our side” argument, you also have to consider that in previous chapters where God helped the Israelites defeat their



Sun Stand Still Prayer:

a metaphor for the seemingly impossible things God can do in your life through prayer.

enemies, they were for the most part fighting one army at any given point. This is the first time they have to face five large armies at once, and worse still is the fact that they are doing it on behalf of an enemy that deceived them into forming a peace alliance. From a human perspective, the Israelites and Gibeonites don't stand a chance in this battle.

But this story isn't about fighting from a human perspective is it? It's about daring to ask God to do the impossible. It's about praying the kind of big prayers that only God can take credit for when it's answered.

One of the things we will encourage you to do during this series and throughout this prayer month of January is for each

one of you to pray a personal sun stand still prayer. As we make our way through this story, you will find out exactly how the sun stood still, but at this juncture, I am using the term “sun stand still prayers” as a metaphor for the seemingly impossible things God can do in your life through prayer. It's not something you can accomplish in your own power even if you exerted yourself to the max; it takes an extraordinary miracle and move of God to accomplish it.

For Joshua, defeating the five Amorite kings would require a sun stand still prayer. What's your sun stand still prayer? What impossible prayers do the five Amorite kings represent in your life? What unanswered prayer burden has weighed your heart down in this last year? What prayerful dreams and desires have seemed unattainable to you?

Now I have to be careful here in clarifying what I mean. I am not talking about vain conceit or selfish prayers that help your further your own kingdom & agenda on earth, I am referring to a genuine prayerful desire that is not in contradiction to any biblical truth or biblical principle. Pastor of Elevation church in North Carolina, Steven Furtick, has written a book with the same title as this series, and in it he writes about praying the right kind of sun stand still prayers. He says, “Your vision (or sun stand still prayer) will probably flow from something you're already doing – relationships you've already established, priorities you're already passionate about. The kind of vision that makes you bold enough to ask God for the impossible can come from many sources. It can materialize in a million ways. And it will mature over time, not in the blink of an eye. But the bottom line is this: if you're going to ask God to do something impossible in your life, you've got to have some clarity about what you're asking for. You've got to know you're not just spinning a fantasy or going on a delusional ego trip. That's not the kind of unlimited potential we're talking about here. Far too many well meaning Christians have wrecked their lives because they chased after a far-fetched idea that they sincerely thought came from God.... If the dream (or prayer) in your heart isn't biblically based, focused on Jesus, affirmed by key people in your life, and tethered to your passions, gifts, and life experiences, chances are you're way off prompt.”

What he's really saying there is the same thing 1 John 5:14-15 says, "this is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us-whatever we ask-we know that we have what we asked of him."

For Joshua and the Israelites, their "sun stand still" prayer would literally be a prayer for the sun to stand still, and God's going to grant it. So what's yours?

This month, we're going to ask you all to put your faith to action by prayerfully fasting with us once a week, on Thursdays. You can choose how long you'll be fasting and what you'll be fasting from. If you need some more insight on what fasting is, we have some great resources on our website (www.remixnj.com) that will help you.

There are two things we are asking you to pray for. The first one is what we already talked about, your own personal sun stand still prayer. It can be a career or ministry opportunity, a relationship, a character issue, or just a very personal desire. As long as it is not in contradiction to any biblical truth or principle, then ask because Jesus Himself said, "Have faith in God... Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them. 24

Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. 25 And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins." Mark 11:22-26

The second thing we're going to ask you to pray for is the ministry. Pray that starting this year, we would begin to see God draw young adults into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ in ways we can't even comprehend. Pray that God would move throughout all 21 counties in this state stirring the hearts of young adults so that they begin seeking Him, and as they interact with remixers and this ministry, we would see hundreds putting their faith in Jesus Christ on a monthly basis.

One of the advantages of doing this fast on Thursdays is that all our small groups and prayer meetings have been moved to Thursday evenings at 6:00PM. So, if you



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have spent some time during the day fasting, you can join us at 6:00P.M end the fast by praying with us.

All of that however is still only part of the story, Joshua still has to get his army to Gibeon and fight this great coalition. So let's pick up where we left off.

VERSE 7-11 (FIGHTING ALONGSIDE GOD).

"So Joshua marched up from Gilgal with his entire army, including all the best fighting men. 8 The LORD said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid of them; I have given them into your hand. Not one of them will be able to withstand you."9 After an all-night march from Gilgal, Joshua took them by surprise. 10 The LORD threw them into confusion before Israel, so Joshua and the Israelites defeated them completely at Gibeon. Israel pursued them along the road going up to Beth Horon and cut them down all the way to Azekah and Makkedah. 11 As they fled before Israel on the road down from Beth Horon to Azekah, the LORD hurled large hailstones down on them, and more of them died from the hail than were killed by the swords of the Israelites."

The story concludes by saying, with the help of God, the Israelites defeated an army five times their size. But what we mustn't miss in this text is that fact that

prior to the battle, God personally met with and revealed to Joshua that he was guaranteed success in this battle. In my mind, that's where the battle was won, and is in fact the key to the sun stand still prayer Joshua is going to pray a few later verses.

So here's the deal, before you can pray great sun stand still prayers, you need to have a personal relationship with the God who created the sun and put the earth in its rotation cycle around it. Common sense right? By "knowing HIM", I don't mean a verbal acknowledgement that HE exists and is powerful, heck the demons know that and they shudder at that truth. For us today, having that kind of close relationship with God requires that we not only put our faith in Jesus Christ as our Lord and savior, but it entails a daily walk with Him in complete surrender and obedience to His will and direction. It's out of that growing relationship that you're able to discern how to pray sun stand still prayers.

That was true of Joshua's relationship with God. In Joshua chapter one at the very beginning of his career as commander, God met with him one on one and told him to "be strong and courageous because he was going to lead the Israelites to inherit the Promised Land." God reminded him to "never let the Book of the Law depart from his

mouth, but to meditate on it day and night and to be careful to do everything written in it so he would be prosperous and successful in everything he did.”

So, hearing from and communicating with God wasn't something new to Joshua. In fact the open relationship between God and Joshua is clearly seen in the constant interplay between God's role in this particular battle and the Israelite army's role. Here's what I mean, in verse 7, it starts off by saying; Joshua marched to Gibeon with his entire army including his Special Forces unit, which is supposed to make us feel confident about their chances in battle, but the very next verse (8) says right before the battle, God privately told Joshua, “dude, don't even sweat this fight man, I'm going to make them melt like butter on hot toast when they get in the fight with you” Then in verse 9, it says at some point during the night, Joshua takes the 5 kings by surprise getting an upper hand on them, however verse 10 says it was actually God who threw the Amorites into confusion. It doesn't end there though because the latter part of verse 10 says Joshua and the Israelites beat them up so bad that they began to run, but while they were running, it was God who dropped down some man-sized hailstones on them, killing more of them than were killed in the actual battle.

So wait a minute, who won the fight? But who fought the fight?

Here's where I'm getting at with this, though God still does the supernatural, you will find that He has chosen to demonstrate that great power through the actual efforts of his people who step out in faith and trust Him to do what others have written off as impossible. Though God was ultimately the one who routed the enemy, confused them, and destroyed them; Joshua was still responsible for rallying the troops to march all night and fight all day.

What's incredible about this account is that we haven't even hit the best part yet. The first 10 verses give us an overview of the entire battle, but starting in verse 11 till the end, we are given the details of what actually happened and that's where we read of one of the most insane sun stand still prayer requests ever made by a man.

VERSE 12-15 (DARING TO ASK GOD FOR THE IMPOSSIBLE)

“On the day the LORD gave the Amorites over to Israel, Joshua said to the LORD in the presence of Israel: “Sun, stand still over Gibeon, and you, moon, over the Valley of Aijalon.”

13 So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, till the nation avenged itself on its enemies, as it is written in the Book of Jashar. The sun stopped in the middle of the sky and delayed going down about a full day. 14 There has never been a day like it before or since, a day when the LORD listened



GREAT PRAYERS:

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to a human being. Surely the LORD was fighting for Israel! 15 Then Joshua returned with all Israel to the camp at Gilgal.”

Everything in the text points to the fact that this was an actual historical event where the earth paused in its rotation around the sun, that's why verse 14 says; “There has never been a day like it before or since...” What I find more incredible than the miracle itself is the fact that Joshua came up with such a daring outrageous prayer request. You have to admit, it takes some guts and great faith to ask God for something like that, especially in the presence of your entire army (v.12)

Let me draw the picture for you so you have some understanding why he would ask for something so incredible. The assumption from the text is that while they were in the heat of battle and swords were clashing, the Amorites were starting to flee because God had thrown them into confusion. However, in the process of trying to evade the Israelites, God rains down hailstones on them killing most of the army. But apparently, some still managed to slip away. If they completely escaped, that could end up badly for the Israelites because the enemy could regroup and mount a counter attack, especially if they had the cover of nightfall to hide them. So Joshua is left with a few options. If I were in his shoes, a very practical prayer request in that moment would be to ask God to rain down some more hailstones, or a firestorm, or maybe even a swarm of bees to stop them, right?

But Joshua doesn't ask for any of that, he still wants to fight – God had promised Him victory, and there was no way he was going to allow that blessing pass him by. So instead of asking for a free handout, he asks God to allow them the opportunity to participate in the defeat of their enemies.

Did you catch that point? By praying and asking for the sun to stand still, Joshua was essentially asking God to put the daylight on hold for 24 more hours so the Israelites could clearly see the enemy and defeat them. He wasn't asking for a freebie, he was asking the creator of heaven and earth, and sun and moon to allow them the opportunity to partner with Him in experiencing a miracle.

When all was said and done, the Amorites were captured and defeated, the five kings were captured and beheaded, the sun did eventually go down and God's name was honored among all the people, and verse 21 says, “no one dared uttered a word against the Israelites”

However, I have to return to Joshua's prayer request for a moment. It is an incredible insightful prayer, and it leads me to another observation. If you are going to pray and ask God to make the sun stand still, then you better get out your swords and be ready to fight all day because it's going to be a long day. Can you imagine if Joshua had made that request of God, only to later complain,

"ahhhh man! It's been over 20 hours and it's still hot out here!" That would be ridiculous, right?

Which really should give you and I a brief moment of pause about whatever our sun stand still prayer is. If God were to answer your great prayer tomorrow, are you prepared for whatever changes it would bring? What are you willing to do today to even make that happen? Are you ready to march all night and if need be, fight all day?

In his book, Steven Furtick (the guy I quoted earlier), writes this concerning people who'll often say, "all we can do is just pray"; He says, "prayer is rarely all we can do. We can pray and we can prepare. We can ask God to intervene and we can initiate changes in our lives to make it happen. We can ask the Lord to fight for us and we can pull out our swords and start fighting in his strength. Sun Stand Still prayers are integrated prayers: they join our faith-filled prayer with our faith-filled action. Joshua had the audacity to ask and the persistence to pursue. If you you're going to ask God to make the sun stand still, you'd better be ready to march all night!"

For some of you, your "all-night-march" or "all-day-fight" might simply be a need to be persistence in faith filled prayer and fasting. And for others, there very well could be some practical action steps of faith you need to take as God begins to provide opportunities. Joshua had the best of both worlds. During this season at REMIX, we believe that our "all night march" and "all day fight" is

call to enter into a time of prayer and fasting for young adults who don't know Jesus, that's where we're going to be exerting ourselves.

The truth is, if we spent a little more money, advertised correctly, hired some great bands and got the right lights; we can probably fill this building up with people on some weekends. **But it would take a 'Holy-Spirit-filled-sun-stand-still' prayer to reach 'new believers' weekly who are putting their faith in Jesus Christ for the first time, (that's the key for us).** No man can plan that kind of spiritual revival unless God allows it, and that's what we're asking God for, because none of us will ever be able to take credit for it.

Though we are focusing heavily on prayer, there are other things we are doing by faith as we prepare for a harvest of souls. On Sunday evenings (starting tonight), we will end the message with a time of small group discussions because we're trusting that in interacting with one another in those smaller settings, the Holy Spirit will make the gospel message even clearer to those involved.

Another step of faith we're taking as we call upon God to draw the lost is our Thursday night community groups. On those evenings, prayer will start at 6:00PM and last for an hour. Afterwards you'll break off into same gender bible study small groups where you have a chance to learn more about Christ.

We're doing this not because we believe it's the key to a spiritual

awakening, but because we want to be faithful stewards who are well prepared for whomever God leads to Himself through the ministry, amen?

On a very personal level, I have my own private sun stand still prayer I will be fasting and praying for in 2011 alongside all of you, as well as my prayers for REMIX. But one of the things I have been asking through all of this is that God would work so powerfully in REMIX that there would be a reverence for the name of Jesus Christ in secular meeting places in this state. My sun stand still prayer is that God would change lives so dramatically and so swiftly through this ministry that the peers and family members of those being saved are in awe of the power of JESUS CHRIST. In my mind, that will be the full measure of the success of all our prayer and fasting. So I ask you to join me as we dare to ask God to do what some would call impossible.

As you break off into your small groups, let me read to you the prayers of one man in the bible who prayed his own sun stand still prayer. His prayer has infact become my prayer for my family and this ministry in 2011. You might have heard of him, his name is Jabez. He prayed, "... Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, "Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain." And God granted his request." (1 Chronicles 4:10).

WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN?

theREMIX meets on Sunday nights at 6:00PM (year round).

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