

**FORWARD: Claiming The Life God Gave You**  
**The Way To Win**  
**Joshua 10:1-11:23**

**Introduction:** A bad game plan can be overcome by a winning culture, but the greatest game plan in the world can never equip a team with a losing culture to win.

There are a variety of cultural characteristics that would describe a losing culture, but perhaps none is worse than fear. Interestingly, coaches who coach their teams not to lose, not only tend to have game plans that fall short of what it takes to win, but worse, they develop a culture of fear among their athletes. Their motivation is the fear of losing rather than the joy of winning.

People motivated by fear tend to panic and react rather than stay focused and intentional. They tend to quickly abandon their training and planning, rather than adapt and adjust based on their training and plan. People motivated by fear tend to opt for whatever seems right in the moment rather than what has been proven to last.

What's even more interesting is it that people who fear failure ironically tend to concede defeat as soon as they think failure is a potential. They convince themselves that conceding defeat is not only less painful than suffering it, but also a way of claiming a victory because they controlled their own destiny, even though that destiny is now guaranteed to be defeat!

However, the most consequential reality of teams motivated by fear is that they tend to give up on others and as such cause division. Rather than inspire others towards unity and perseverance, they blame others in fear that somebody will blame them (failure). Instead of rallying together to try and defeat their opposition, they begin to oppose one another while they try to keep from losing to the team that's already opposing them! There is no more rapid path to failure than division, so how ironic is it that people who are scared to death of failure tend to be the very ones who create the most likely scenario for it!

On the other hand, coaches are far more likely to win games if they coach their team to win rather than coach their team not to lose. Coaches who motivate their team to practice the consistent excellent execution of all the things that it takes to win, will develop a habit of doing what it takes to win in every detail and circumstance of competition.

Furthermore, coaches who motivate their players to be focused on winning, train their players to beat their own temptations to quit, and as such, convince their players that they can push their mind and body beyond what their circumstances are telling them. Winning coaches build the confidence within their athletes that keeps them from fearing the feelings of exhaustion and fatigue so that they can stay focused on winning instead of trying not to quit!

The point is that coaches who constantly train their athletes on how to win, develop a culture that not only consistently strives for it, but confidently anticipates it. The results of this kind of coaching are a team of athletes who in the heat of competition, don't have the

mental or emotional space to even consider being afraid of losing because they are so focused on winning. No matter how hard they get hit, and no matter how big a mess things become, their entire focus and effort is on what they need to do win.

To no surprise then, a constant theme of how God coached Joshua to lead Israel has been to focus on winning. He has certainly given Joshua warnings about things that will cause them to lose, but from the very start of the book, God has coached Joshua to win, not only in the battle strategies He's given Joshua, but also in how He coached Joshua to face each battle. In teaching Joshua to be strong and courageous God was posturing Joshua to aim for victory instead of running from defeat. This was such a coaching point of God in Joshua's life that we not only see it repeated to Joshua in the beginning of his leadership of Israel, but we see it as the primary rebuke of God following the defeat of Ai (Joshua 7:10). When Joshua and the leaders are freaking out after the loss at Ai, God first confronts their fear of failure, then he tells them what to do. Faith makes no room for fear of failure, and ironically a fear of failure eventually makes no room for faith! No matter what it is you want to accomplish in life, your first battle is to defeat the fear of failure.

Now up to this point the lessons given to have a winning attitude have mostly been from God to Joshua, but in Joshua chapters ten and eleven, we are going to see how Joshua not only led Israel from that perspective himself, but also how Joshua used the coaching God had given him to inspire the Jewish nation to do the same thing! Joshua took the coaching the Lord had given him, and continued to give him, and transferred it to the people so that they could persevere through an extended period of war and accomplish the victory that God had prepared for them! Specifically,

**Proposition: In Joshua 10 and 11 we see 3 ways Joshua motivated the people of Israel to fight to win rather than not to lose.**

**The first way Joshua motivated the people of Israel to fight to win rather than not to lose was that,**

**(1) Joshua publicly demonstrated complete confidence in the Lord. (10:1-15)**

- A. 1 As soon as Adoni-zedek, king of Jerusalem, heard how Joshua had captured Ai and had devoted it to destruction, doing to Ai and its king as he had done to Jericho and its king, and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel and were among them, 2 he feared greatly, because Gibeon was a great city, like one of the royal cities, and because it was greater than Ai, and all its men were warriors. 3 So Adoni-zedek king of Jerusalem sent to Hoham king of Hebron, to Piram king of Jarmuth, to Japhia king of Lachish, and to Debir king of Eglon, saying, 4 "Come up to me and help me, and let us strike Gibeon. For it has made peace with Joshua and with the people of Israel." 5 Then the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon, gathered their forces and went up with all their armies and encamped against Gibeon and made war against it.**

1. "Adoni-zedek, whose name means "lord of righteousness," was king of Jerusalem. Earlier (around 2085 B.C.), when Abraham had returned from the slaughter of the kings of the East (Genesis 14), he met a man named Melchizedek (meaning "king of righteousness") who was king in Salem (Jerusalem). The difference in the meaning of their names is very slight, leading us to believe that "Adoni-zedek" may have become a titular title like "Pharaoh" in Egypt."<sup>1</sup>
2. "**10:1 Adoni-Zedek** Means "My Lord is Righteous," with "righteous" translating the Hebrew word *tsedeq* (compare Gen 14:18). *Tsedeq* was a Canaanite deity known in Jerusalem."<sup>2</sup>
3. "Gibeon was a great city, comparable in size and strength to one of the "royal" cities. And Gibeon was only six miles from Jerusalem."<sup>3</sup>
4. "**Hebron** Hebron was formerly called Kiriath-Arba, which was the city of the Anakim giant clan in Num 13:22, 32–33 (the population that caused Israel to doubt God, leading to the 40 years of wilderness wandering; compare Josh 14:13–15). **10:4 it has made peace with Joshua** See ch. 9. **10:5 the five kings of the Amorites** The term "Amorites" was occasionally used with reference to giant clans (see vv. 3; Deut 1:4; 2:22–24; 3:10–13; 4:47; 31:4). The Israelite southern campaign is heading directly into the territory of the enemies they feared 40 years earlier."<sup>4</sup>
5. Adoni-zedek not only feared Israel because of what he heard about Joshua leading them to conquer Jericho and Ai, but now Israel also had an alliance with a group of people whose entire male population were warriors! Therefore, because Adoni-zedek understood the severity of the threat Israel and Gibeon posed, he made the strategic decision to form an alliance and attack Gibeon before Israel could use it as a place to launch attacks against them. In addition, if Adoni-zedek could take the city first, he could then use it and its resources as a strategy against Israel. However, the men of Gibeon defended their city leaving the confederacy of the south outside its gates in a stalemate laying siege. The Bible says Gibeon then called upon its covenant relationship with Israel.

**B. 6 And the men of Gibeon sent to Joshua at the camp in Gilgal, saying, "Do not relax your hand from your servants. Come up to us quickly and save us and help us, for all the kings of the Amorites who dwell in the hill country**

<sup>1</sup> Barber, C. J. (2006). *Joshua: A Devotional Exposition* (p. 115). Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers.

<sup>2</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Jos 10:1–2). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

<sup>3</sup> Barber, C. J. (2006). *Joshua: A Devotional Exposition* (p. 116). Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers.

<sup>4</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Jos 10:3–5). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

**are gathered against us." 7 So Joshua went up from Gilgal, he and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valor.**

1. Remember what we talked about in Joshua six when it came to defeating a walled city. You can either attack its gates or lay siege to it. Attacking the gates was the least effective means to overtake a city so it appears they laid siege to it. However, when you lay siege to a city your biggest threat is the attack of that city's allies, who in this case are the Israelites, the army that, minus the first battle with Ai, has utterly destroyed everybody that it went against, both on the east side and the west side of Jordan.
2. It should also be noted that Joshua doesn't hesitate to uphold his word with Gibeon. He made a covenant with them in chapter nine and in so doing made it clear that there was no way he and Israel could break it. It wasn't a business contract for Gibeon to serve Israel so they won't be killed by Israel, but rather, a covenant that bound them together. Therefore, as Joshua made clear in the previous chapter, he would not go against the vow they made before the Lord, and as such, he immediately mobilized the army to leave Gilgal and head to Gibeon.
  - a. **"10:3** The cities of this five-king coalition are situated southwest of Jerusalem. This suggests the current coalition is different from the one in 9:1-2, where the kings are said to be from various locations in Canaan."<sup>5</sup>
  - b. "They certainly did not want to take on the five kings of the Amorites, but realized that they had an obligation to do so. They had given their word in the name of the Lord, and they could not go back on their vow."<sup>6</sup>
  - c. "He is said to have marched during the whole night, and thus could not have proceeded with greater haste had the safety of the whole people been at stake. Had the same sincerity always been evinced by profane nations, they would rather have assisted their allies in due time than avenged their disasters after they had suffered them. The term *suddenly* ought not, however, to be confined to a single day, as if Joshua had accomplished three days' journey in a single night, and made his appearance among the Gibeonites next morning. All that is meant to be expressed is his great speed, and his not delaying his departure till next day. Though the Israelites moved their camp from Ai or that

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<sup>5</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (Jos 10:3). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

<sup>6</sup> Barber, C. J. (2006). [Joshua: A Devotional Exposition](#) (pp. 116-117). Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers.

neighborhood, it was the third day before they entered the confines of the Gibeonites.<sup>7</sup>

3. So, Joshua has now pulled his army together to go fight the very army he had feared fighting in Joshua 7 when they first lost to Ai. After his army fearfully ran from Ai, Joshua was convinced the southern Kingdoms would form an alliance to fight them and such they would end up being totally wiped off the face of the earth as a people (Joshua 7:9). But remember what happened while Joshua and the leaders of Israel were spouting out all this faithless nonsense, God confronted them, told them to get up, deal with the sin in the camp, then go back and attack Ai.
4. Since that moment Joshua has been leading Israel from a place of confidence to do what God told him to do. He's not leading them out of a fear of failure, but strength and courage to conquer and claim the land God has given them, and as such, there is no reason to hesitate when Gibeon calls for help. However, that also doesn't mean he wasn't fighting back fear! The text doesn't tell us Joshua was dealing with doubt, but nonetheless, it's safe to assume that as an experienced military leader he knows what he's up against. Five Kings have got their armies together to try and defeat Israel.
5. So, what does a good coach do with a player whose dealing with some fear? A coach can threaten the player with things they might find more fearful than not playing against their opponent (e.g., I'll kick you off the team and never let you play again if you don't get in there and fight!) or the coach can give them reasons why they should be confident they can win! Being fear is the surefire way to fail, it shouldn't be surprising then that God again motivates Joshua with confidence! Joshua records,

**C. 8And the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not fear them, for I have given them into your hands. Not a man of them shall stand before you."**

1. Once again God coaches Joshua to focus on attacking for victory and not worrying about defeat! The reason why God tells Joshua he doesn't need to fear is because He has already given them into Joshua's hands, that is, God has already decided the outcome is going to be that Israel wins and the southern Canaanite confederacy is going to lose. This victory is already done, therefore Joshua just has to be faithful to lead the people to go and claim it!
2. Now listen, when God said I have given them into your hands, He truly meant it in every way, that is, He had not only determined the outcome, but was also going to work to guarantee it. Here's how it went down.

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<sup>7</sup> Calvin, J., & Beveridge, H. (2010). [\*Commentary on the Book of Joshua\*](#) (pp. 148–150). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

**D. 9 So Joshua came upon them suddenly, having marched up all night from Gilgal. 10 And the LORD threw them into a panic before Israel, who struck them with a great blow at Gibeon and chased them by the way of the ascent of Beth-horon and struck them as far as Azekah and Makkedah. 11 And as they fled before Israel, while they were going down the ascent of Beth-horon, the LORD threw down large stones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died. There were more who died because of the hailstones than the sons of Israel killed with the sword.**

1. Seeing this totally inspired Joshua's faith to a whole different level. Joshua was so convinced that when God said I have given the Kings of the south to you, Joshua confidently believed God meant that they were going to defeat them today! As such, Joshua commanded something to happen that people have debated for thousands of years since!
2. Watch what Joshua did in the sight of all of Israel! Talk about no fear! Shouting at the walls and expecting them to come down was one thing, but this was next level!

**E. 12 At that time Joshua spoke to the LORD in the day when the LORD gave the Amorites over to the sons of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, "Sun, stand still at Gibeon, and moon, in the Valley of Aijalon." 13 And the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, until the nation took vengeance on their enemies. Is this not written in the Book of Jashar? The sun stopped in the midst of heaven and did not hurry to set for about a whole day. 14 There has been no day like it before or since, when the LORD heeded the voice of a man, for the LORD fought for Israel. 15 So Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal.**

1. The reason God did it was not because He was bowing down to Joshua, but rather because He was fighting "for Israel!" God told Joshua to go conquer what He had already given them, which gave Joshua the green light to confidently invade with the full expectation God was going to do whatever Joshua needed to win the battle. Personally, I would have asked God to send more hail, but nonetheless, Joshua cried out for more time. He didn't want darkness to give the enemy a chance to get away, so he cried out for the sun and moon to stand still, and God heard Joshua and did exactly what he wanted—the opportunity to finish what God sent him there to do!
2. I've included some really good stuff in my notes for those who want to dig deeper into this miracle. But what's most important to our context is that Joshua said this in front of all of Israel! Joshua was demonstrating total confidence in God and as such total confidence that they were going to win, but to win, he needed the lights to say on! So, he literally pulls a miraculous amazon "Alexa" miracle with the sun and moon and tells them to freeze, and

God makes it happen! His confidence had to sound utterly ridiculous to some of the people who heard him yell this command, but they soon learned that Joshua wasn't yelling this to try and boss God around, he was yelling this because God had given him the commission to win and therefore the Lord was going to do whatever Joshua needed to win! Every decision Joshua made in this story demonstrated total confidence in God to the people of Israel!

- a. "No miracle in Scripture has generated more discussion and debate. Some suggest that the Israelites' success in the battle was of such a nature that it seemed to Joshua and his soldiers that they were able to accomplish two days' work in one! Others suggest that the miracle consisted of the sun and moon not shining for a time. The idea is that Joshua was asking God to give his troops relief from the heat. The darkness that resulted would seem to go along with the hail falling. Still others think the miracle consisted of a retardation of the earth's rotation to the point that one complete rotation required forty-eight hours instead of twenty-four. Those who hold this view cite astronomical research which supposedly reports a missing day. We do not need to determine the exact nature of the miracle to know that one took place, and it took place because the sovereign God who made this world can step into it and suspend the natural laws that he himself put in place. We must not allow uncertainty about what took place on this day to obscure truths that are most certain indeed."<sup>8</sup>
- b. "Even the life of Moses has nothing so immediate and dramatic with such a direct cause-and-effect relationship."<sup>9</sup>
- c. "With verses 12–14 we come across a difficult interpretative problem. Did the earth actually stop its rotation around the sun or was there some refraction of the sun's light that prolonged daylight and enabled the Israelites to continue fighting? Is the language poetic or does the text merely describe an eclipse of the sun giving the appearance of a lengthened day when the sun reappeared from behind the moon? Scholars line up on all sides of these issues with most doubting the literal meaning of the text because of the cataclysmic consequences (tidal waves, a change in the seasons of the year, temperature increase that could wipe out all life, etc.) to the earth if its rotation around the sun was suspended. *But let us remember that the Members of the Trinity who brought worlds into existence by with a word (cf. Psalm 33:6–9) could most assuredly sustain the world in a situation that might otherwise destroy it (note Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3). Though many have*

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<sup>8</sup> Ellsworth, R. (2008). [Opening up Joshua](#) (pp. 90–91). Leominster: Day One Publications.

<sup>9</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (Jos 10:12–14). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

*quibbled about verse 12, verse 13 certainly implies such an occurrence.* Those who reject this view invariably hold to a uniformitarian approach to all reality that makes no allowance for a temporary change in the order of the universe. They point to the word *dom*, “stand still, be silent,” and inform us that an eclipse took place so that the sun was concealed. This was supposedly very beneficial, for during the eclipse the sun did not pour down its heat on the already tired Israeli soldiers. Still others believe Joshua’s words of command to the moon were for an astrological sign.<sup>14</sup> And then there are those who believe that these verses are poetic because reference is made to the Book of Jasher (*Sepher hayashar*, “Book of the Upright”), which is believed to be a collection of poems or national ballads celebrating chief events in the wars of Israel. No copy is extant through some Jewish rabbis claim to have seen it. Whichever view is adopted, daytime was prolonged so that the Israelites could achieve a great victory over their enemies.”<sup>10</sup>

**The second way Joshua motivated the people of Israel to fight to win rather than not to lose was that,**

**(2) Joshua intentionally used the five Amorite Kings as an object lesson to teach the men of Israel they had no reason to fear the fight. (10:16-27)**

**A. 16 These five kings fled and hid themselves in the cave at Makkedah. 17 And it was told to Joshua, "The five kings have been found, hidden in the cave at Makkedah." 18 And Joshua said, "Roll large stones against the mouth of the cave and set men by it to guard them, 19 but do not stay there yourselves. Pursue your enemies; attack their rear guard. Do not let them enter their cities, for the LORD your God has given them into your hand." 20 When Joshua and the sons of Israel had finished striking them with a great blow until they were wiped out, and when the remnant that remained of them had entered into the fortified cities, 21 then all the people returned safe to Joshua in the camp at Makkedah. Not a man moved his tongue against any of the people of Israel. 22 Then Joshua said, "Open the mouth of the cave and bring those five kings out to me from the cave." 23 And they did so, and brought those five kings out to him from the cave, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon. 24 And when they brought those kings out to Joshua, Joshua summoned all the men of Israel and said to the chiefs of the men of war who had gone with him, "Come near; put your feet on the necks of these kings." Then they came near and put their feet on their necks. 25 And Joshua said to them, "Do not be afraid or dismayed; be strong and courageous. For thus the LORD will do to all your enemies against whom you fight." 26 And afterward Joshua struck them and put them to death, and he hanged them on five trees. And they hung on the**

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<sup>10</sup> Barber, C. J. (2006). [\*Joshua: A Devotional Exposition\*](#) (pp. 120–121). Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers.



trees until evening. **27 But at the time of the going down of the sun, Joshua commanded, and they took them down from the trees and threw them into the cave where they had hidden themselves, and they set large stones against the mouth of the cave, which remain to this very day.**

- B. Some may view what Joshua did to these Kings as unnecessary brutality, but that would be a lack of understanding of the brutality of the type of warfare mankind engaged in for most of human history and the encouragement Joshua needed to instill in his leaders not just for this battle but the many battles to come, one of which would end up being far more intimidating than this one!
- C. **“10:21 all the people** Apparently refers to the Gibeonites. Given the victory, no one from Gibeon should complain about Israel’s loyalty to the treaty (see v. 6). **spoke against** Indicates that no one said a word against Israel. **10:24 put your feet on the necks of** A gesture of contempt for a defeated foe. **10:25 Do not be afraid** Joshua uses the victory as an object lesson. The cities of these kings were home to the Canaanites they feared most—the giant clans (see vv. 3–5).”<sup>11</sup>
- D. “There are some Bible scholars, however, who are inclined to interpret the biblical text in light of current social mores, and neglect to take into consideration either the social customs of Joshua’s times or the command of the Lord. They feel that clemency should have been extended to the five Amorite kings, and having the captains of the men of war place their feet on the necks of their enemies was degrading to these monarchs for whom defeat was sufficient humiliation. It should be pointed out that the placing one’s foot on the neck of a defeated enemy was a common practice in those days, and having the captains participate in this drama served to assure them and their men of future victories.”<sup>12</sup>
- E. The point is, Joshua could have just killed these Kings and moved on but he needed his leaders to believe God had called them to win! He needed his leaders to go forward not scared of the giants in the land, but confident they were getting ready to kill a bunch of giants because GOD was fighting for them! Therefore, Joshua brought the leaders of Israel out in front of all the men of Israel and had them put their feet on the necks of these mighty Kings as way of saying I believe that we will win because I believe GOD has won!

**The third way Joshua motivated the people of Israel to fight to win rather than not to lose was that,**

**(3) Joshua personally led Israel in a relentless campaign to dominate and destroy all the Kingdoms in Canaan. (10:28-11:23)**

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<sup>11</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (Jos 10:16–27). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

<sup>12</sup> Barber, C. J. (2006). [Joshua: A Devotional Exposition](#) (pp. 122–123). Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers.

- A. **Deon Sanders put it this way to his team, “We’re not just here to win, we’re here to dominate”<sup>13</sup>**
- B. If you were coaching a team not to lose this would be the moment that you told everybody to go back home to see their families. However, if you’re coaching your team to win, now’s the time you are going to totally ransack and dominate your enemy. Israel has just defeated the armies of five of the seven main cities in the southern part of Canaan and killed their Kings! Not only did they defeat them, they did so with clear divine intervention from God fighting for them. All of southern Canaan had to have been absolutely frozen in fear at this point. If winning was their motive, which it was, then now was not the time to prop their feet up and celebrate a victory, instead, now was the opportunity to totally crush their enemy in the south and claim what God had given them! And that’s exactly what Joshua led them to do. Joshua 10 makes it clear that Joshua and his army killed every living person in the cities listed minus one. Listen to what Joshua led them to do,
- C. **28 As for Makkedah, Joshua captured it on that day and struck it, and its king, with the edge of the sword. He devoted to destruction every person in it; he left none remaining. And he did to the king of Makkedah just as he had done to the king of Jericho. 29 Then Joshua and all Israel with him passed on from Makkedah to Libnah and fought against Libnah. 30 And the LORD gave it also and its king into the hand of Israel. And he struck it with the edge of the sword, and every person in it; he left none remaining in it. And he did to its king as he had done to the king of Jericho. 31 Then Joshua and all Israel with him passed on from Libnah to Lachish and laid siege to it and fought against it. 32 And the LORD gave Lachish into the hand of Israel, and he captured it on the second day and struck it with the edge of the sword, and every person in it, as he had done to Libnah. 33 Then Horam king of Gezer came up to help Lachish. And Joshua struck him and his people, until he left none remaining.**

Note: The King of Gezer (Horam) actually came against Joshua at Lachish and Israel killed him and his army. However, according to Joshua 16:10, after that battle Joshua never led the Israelites to go to Gezer and kill all the citizens of Gezer. In addition, according to Judges 1:29, the tribe of Ephraim, who inherited Gezer, never destroyed all the citizens of that city either.

- D. **34 Then Joshua and all Israel with him passed on from Lachish to Eglon. And they laid siege to it and fought against it. 35 And they captured it on that day, and struck it with the edge of the sword. And he devoted every person in it to destruction that day, as he had done to Lachish. 36 Then Joshua and all Israel with him went up from Eglon to Hebron. And they**

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.si.com/extra-mustard/2023/05/29/deion-sanders-hype-video-ready-to-run-through-wall>

**fought against it 37 and captured it and struck it with the edge of the sword, and its king and its towns, and every person in it. He left none remaining, as he had done to Eglon, and devoted it to destruction and every person in it.**

1. They killed everybody in the city but not everybody lived in this city. For instance, the farmers and herdsman would have lived in the countryside and thus would have been able to flee an army focused on defeating a city. This is why C.J. Barber noted,
2. “Joshua’s conquest was rapid. He passed from one city to another in rapid succession. It is evident that after their fall none of these cities were garrisoned with Israelis. That is why after Hebron had been captured, when Joshua’s army withdrew, Canaanites came and inhabited the city. This made it necessary for Caleb to conquer Hebron again (14:6–15).”<sup>14</sup>
3. We are going to discuss more on the implications of leaving people alive later in our study of Joshua but for now let’s keep going through how Joshua led the people to dominate!

**E. 38 Then Joshua and all Israel with him turned back to **Debir** and fought against it 39 and he captured it with its king and all its towns. And they struck them with the edge of the sword and devoted to destruction every person in it; he left none remaining. Just as he had done to Hebron and to Libnah and its king, so he did to Debir and to its king.**

**F.** The writer of the book then summarizes the entire southern campaign and its most significant point.

**G. 40 So Joshua struck the whole land, the hill country and the Negeb and the lowland and the slopes, and all their kings. He left none remaining, but devoted to destruction all that breathed, just as the LORD God of Israel commanded. 41 And Joshua struck them from Kadesh-barnea as far as Gaza, and all the country of Goshen, as far as Gibeon. 42 And Joshua captured all these kings and their land at one time, because the LORD God of Israel fought for Israel. 43 Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal.**

1. “**10:40 the Negev** Often refers to the territory at the southern border of Canaan (the northern Sinai), but can also refer to a desert area. ... **10:41 Goshen** Not the Goshen located in the Nile Delta in Egypt (see Gen 45:10).”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Barber, C. J. (2006). *Joshua: A Devotional Exposition* (pp. 123–125). Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers.

<sup>15</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Jos 10:30–41). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

2. The point I want to make here is that Joshua led the people on this relentless nonstop attack because they operated without fear for good reason, God was fighting FOR THEM! Why would you quit if the God of the Universe was in the fight with you against your enemy? I mean, after God brought down a hailstorm so bad it killed more of your enemy than you did, and then stopped the sun from moving so your enemy couldn't sneak away from you in the dark, how could you ever be afraid of losing?
3. Well, the history of Israel proved that they could rapidly forget the miracles and promises of God and immediately fall back into fear, even while God did miraculous things on a daily basis (i.e. manna from heaven!). So, it's truly significant that under Joshua's leadership that didn't happen! Joshua coached them to win. Joshua, who as you will see next week, is an old man, but nonetheless, he is relentlessly leading them from one city to the next, battle after battle, keeping them totally united at every turn and totally focused on one thing—winning! The text gives us no hint at anything other than a fearless pursuit of victory.
4. Now, once they finished conquering the south, this could have been a huge opportunity for complacency to take over, especially if Joshua was motivated not to lose. You now have a ton of land on the east side of the Jordan, and you've just conquered a ton of land on the west side of Jordan so why not just stay put for a while, maybe even a long while! But Joshua was all about leading the people to win, and winning was doing all that God told them to do! However, to do that, it appears Joshua first needed to bring the people back to their camp in southern Canaan to regroup and make plans on how to conquer the northern part of Canaan. Up to this point the focus has been entirely on the Kingdoms of the south.
5. But we don't know exactly what Joshua was thinking about doing when he brought them back to Gilgal because he never had a chance to tell us. People like Joshua, who are in it to win it, never pass on a chance to win, and that's exactly what happened in Joshua 11, just not in the way you might think! Not long after they got back to Gilgal, an opportunity to win came not by a weak "cupcake" team trying to beat them, but rather by the largest army Israel had ever faced forming to rid Canaan of the Israelites! Here's how it all went down,

**H. 1 When Jabin, king of Hazor, heard of this, he sent to Jobab king of Madon, and to the king of Shimron, and to the king of Achshaph, 2 and to the kings who were in the northern hill country, and in the Arabah south of Chinneroth, and in the lowland, and in Naphoth-dor on the west, 3 to the Canaanites in the east and the west, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, and the Jebusites in the hill country, and the Hivites under Hermon in the land of Mizpah. 4 And they came out with all their troops, a great horde, in number like the sand that is on the seashore, with**

**very many horses and chariots. 5 And all these kings joined their forces and came and encamped together at the waters of Merom to fight against Israel.**

1. **“11:5 the waters of Merom** Often identified as Lake Huleh.”<sup>16</sup>
2. ““Jabin” was probably a hereditary title like Ben-Hadad in Syria or Pharaoh in Egypt. The name means “one who is intelligent,” or “discerning.” The city from which Jabin ruled was located nine miles north of the Sea of Galilee at Tell el-Qedah. It was the largest city in Palestine in Old Testament times, and reached its peak in the fifteenth to fourteenth centuries B.C. Archaeologists have estimated that it may have had a population of 40,000. The city itself was divided into two parts. It consisted of a bottle-shaped mound about 130 feet high with the upper city covering 25 to 30 acres. The lower city occupied between 175 to 200 acres, and was massive when compared to Jericho (about five acres) and Megiddo (approximately 20 acres). Jabin was a powerful monarch, and it is easy to see how he exerted great influence on the city-states of northern Canaan.”<sup>17</sup>

**I. 6 And the LORD said to Joshua, “Do not be afraid of them, for tomorrow at this time I will give over all of them, slain, to Israel. You shall hamstring their horses and burn their chariots with fire.” 7 So Joshua and all his warriors came suddenly against them by the waters of Merom and fell upon them. 8 And the LORD gave them into the hand of Israel, who struck them and chased them as far as Great Sidon and Misrephoth-maim, and eastward as far as the Valley of Mizpeh. And they struck them until he left none remaining.9 And Joshua did to them just as the LORD said to him: he hamstringed their horses and burned their chariots with fire.**

1. Those who say Joshua should have kept the horses and the chariots need to remember what happened to Achan and Israel! God gave explicit instructions to do this! Furthermore, the order to hamstringing their horses and burn their chariots would mean the horses and the chariots would now be useless for battle. You can imagine the fear it struck into the cities when the horses returned to their stables bloody and limping with no chariots and no soldiers!
2. The big point I want you to see however is that being afraid would make sense. C.J. Barber noted,
3. “According to Josephus their combined strength was 300,000 armed foot soldiers, 10,000 cavalymen, and 20,000 chariots. It is possible that their

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<sup>16</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (Jos 11:5). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

<sup>17</sup> Barber, C. J. (2006). [Joshua: A Devotional Exposition](#) (pp. 129–130). Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers.

goal was to march down the Jordan River valley and attack the people of Israel on the open plain before the ruins of Jericho. As soon as Joshua learned of this alliance, he took immediate action. He was proactive. Summoning all his men, he traveled north as fast as possible.”<sup>18</sup>

4. On paper there was no way Israel could defeat an army of that size, that is until God put His own name on the paper! When Joshua learned about this massive army organizing against him, he also heard from the God fighting for Him. God told Joshua He was going to be with Him and that’s exactly what God continues to do. As such, the confidence of the news from God to Joshua far outweighed any fear of the news about Jabin and the coalition in the north.
5. You see Joshua was coaching Israel to win because God was coaching Joshua to win! That’s what God does! God has no fear of defeat because He can’t be defeated, which also means God doesn’t lead His people to live their lives in the fear of losing either. As a result, to the likely shock of Jabin, instead of running and hiding, Joshua aggressively attacked! This time however, God didn’t reign down hail stones, nor did God make the sun stand still. This time it was going to be a full-on fight, but a fight that still wasn’t fair because God Himself was still fighting for Israel. The only difference was that this time, God was going to fight the enemy through the men of Israel themselves.
6. You expect to win when your enemy is being destroyed by supernatural acts of God like giant hail falling out of the sky on your enemy but not you! However, it’s an entirely different thing to enter into man to man combat trusting that God is going to give you victory over an opponent who out numbers you and is better equipped! But Joshua had led the people the way God was leading him, and as such the men of Israel went in to battle to do the very thing God had sent them there to do—WIN! Here’s how it all wrapped up.

**J. 10 And Joshua turned back at that time and captured Hazor and struck its king with the sword, for Hazor formerly was the head of all those kingdoms. 11 And they struck with the sword all who were in it, devoting them to destruction; there was none left that breathed. And he burned Hazor with fire. 12 And all the cities of those kings, and all their kings, Joshua captured, and struck them with the edge of the sword, devoting them to destruction, just as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded. 13 But none of the cities that stood on mounds did Israel burn, except Hazor alone; that Joshua burned.**

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<sup>18</sup> Barber, C. J. (2006). [\*Joshua: A Devotional Exposition\*](#) (pp. 129–130). Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers.

1. The plan was to come back and inhabit the cities they defeated so they generally didn't burn them down, but perhaps, given Hazor was a "capital," burning it down sent a massive message to all the other cities they were going to conquer.
2. "Hazor, alone, after the siege was over, and the heat of the struggle had cooled, was destroyed by fire, because it had held forth the torch which enkindled the war."<sup>19</sup>

**K. 14 And all the spoil of these cities and the livestock, the people of Israel took for their plunder. But every man they struck with the edge of the sword until they had destroyed them, and they did not leave any who breathed. 15 Just as the LORD had commanded Moses his servant, so Moses commanded Joshua, and so Joshua did. He left nothing undone of all that the LORD had commanded Moses. 16 So Joshua took all that land, the hill country and all the Negeb and all the land of Goshen and the lowland and the Arabah and the hill country of Israel and its lowland 17 from Mount Halak, which rises toward Seir, as far as Baal-gad in the Valley of Lebanon below Mount Hermon. And he captured all their kings and struck them and put them to death. 18 Joshua made war a long time with all those kings. 19 There was not a city that made peace with the people of Israel except the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon. They took them all in battle. 20 For it was the LORD's doing to harden their hearts that they should come against Israel in battle, in order that they should be devoted to destruction and should receive no mercy but be destroyed, just as the LORD commanded Moses. 21 And Joshua came at that time and cut off the Anakim from the hill country, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the hill country of Judah, and from all the hill country of Israel. Joshua devoted them to destruction with their cities. 22 There was none of the Anakim left in the land of the people of Israel. Only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod did some remain. 23 So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD had spoken to Moses. And Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal allotments. And the land had rest from war.**

1. Notice rest didn't come until they had finished conquering the land. There were still people left alive at this point, again more on that later in our study of Joshua, but the land itself was conquered. God sent them on a mission to win and as such gave them every reason to believe if they did what He told them to do they would never have any reason to fear. If they obeyed His instructions, then all they needed to do was focus on who's next! And that's what Joshua did. As soon as they defeated one city, the only question that got asked and answered was, "who's next." They were there to win!

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<sup>19</sup> Calvin, J., & Beveridge, H. (2010). [\*Commentary on the Book of Joshua\*](#) (pp. 170–171). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

2. And here again is where the culture of winning was made evident. Joshua 11:18 tells us it took a while! Winning once or twice is one thing, but to build a dynasty requires an entirely different culture of winning. Under Joshua's leadership that's exactly what developed in Israel. Joshua led them the way God was leading Him, and that was to work for and anticipate nothing but winning. Winning meant they had to obey the law, therefore Joshua not only learned it himself, he taught it to the people to make sure they knew what to do as well (Joshua 8:30-35). He didn't just expect to win, he did the things needed to win. Furthermore, the way Joshua relentlessly led them to go from one battle to the next left no room for anything other than a focus on winning! They didn't win on accident. They won on purpose!
  
3. There are couple other points of interest that are worth covering if we have time.
  - a. Some believe verses 19-20 implies if they had repented God would have allowed them to not be destroyed (i.e. Rahab), however, it also appears that it was God's plan for them to be destroyed no matter what. At minimum their chance to repent passed once Joshua led them across the Jordan River. The following are some interesting notes on this subject.
    - 1) "The period of the Conquest lasted a **long time**. Victory did not come easily or quickly; it rarely does. Yet in all the military confrontations only one city, **Gibeon**, sought **peace**. The rest were taken **in battle**, God having **hardened their hearts** (cf. comments on Ex. 4:21; 8:15) to fight **Israel** so that they might be destroyed. The Canaanites' day of grace was gone. They had sinned against the light of God's revelation in nature (Ps. 19:1; Rom. 1:18-20), in conscience (Rom. 2:14-16), and in His recent miraculous works at the Red (Reed) Sea, the Jordan River, and Jericho. Now the sovereign God confirmed the hearts of these unrepentant people in their stubborn unbelief before judging them."<sup>20</sup>
  
    - 2) "So Joshua subdued the whole region, including the hill country, the Negev, the western foothills and the mountain slopes, together with all their kings. He left no survivors. He totally destroyed all who breathed, just as Yahweh, the God of Israel, had commanded. Joshua subdued them from Kadesh-Barnea to Gaza and from the whole region of Goshen to Gibeon. All these kings and their lands Joshua conquered in one campaign, because Yahweh, the God of Israel, fought for Israel. Then Joshua returned with all Israel to the camp at

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<sup>20</sup> Campbell, D. K. (1985). [Joshua](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 354). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.



Gilgal.” Joshua had probably received the news of the southern coalition of “city-states” with misgiving. It was one thing to take on one city at a time, but five powerful ones all at once was daunting. The Lord nevertheless spoke to reassure Joshua, and in faith Joshua made the night journey to relieve the siege of Gibeon. And not only did the Lord give Joshua the victory over the five kings, but the entire area capitulated before his army. More was accomplished in this short span of time (note 10:42, “at one stroke, at one time”), leaving Joshua free to concentrate on the northern kingdoms. But many Occidentals are upset at the thought of the Lord of glory desiring the massacre of all living beings in Canaan. To them the thought of Yahweh as a warrior is abhorrent. And when Numbers 31 is factored into their thinking it is easier for them to follow the teaching of liberal theologians and conclude that the God of the Old Testament is harsh and bloodthirsty, and only in the New Testament do we read of a God of love and grace. Such thinking develops a mind set that unwittingly concludes that only that which we approve is right. Those who reason this way forget that the Lord our God is sovereign, and the Old Testament merely prepares us for the events of the Book of Revelation when God’s wrath will be poured out on all His enemies. Of practical value is the fact that the Lord sometimes brings us face to face with seemingly insurmountable odds (as He did with Joshua and the Israelites) in order to reveal His power.”<sup>21</sup>

- 3) “The righteousness of the Lord Some are ‘put off’ by the gory details of Israel putting Canaanites to death during the conquest. We must keep in mind that these nations were utterly corrupt. They practised every perversion conceivable, even to the point of sacrificing their own children to their idols. We should also remember that these same nations were given every opportunity to turn from their wicked ways, as Rahab did (Josh. 2), but adamantly refused to do so (Gen. 15:16). The judgement of these Canaanites was a declaration that God is righteous and will ultimately judge all sin. His patience ensures that his judgement comes slowly, but his righteousness guarantees that his judgement comes surely. Instead of lamenting the judgement of ancient Canaanites, we would do well to lament the judgement that will come our way if we do not repent. Part of God’s judgement is his hardening of human hearts. Instead of surrendering to Israel and seeking mercy, the Canaanites continued to ‘come against Israel in battle’ (11:20).”<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Barber, C. J. (2006). *Joshua: A Devotional Exposition* (pp. 125–126). Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers.

<sup>22</sup> Ellsworth, R. (2008). *Opening up Joshua* (pp. 97–98). Leominster: Day One Publications.

4) “To this objection, I answer, that the Israelites, though they were forbidden to shew them any mercy, were met in a hostile manner, in order that the war might be just. And it was wonderfully arranged by the secret providence of God, that, being doomed to destruction, they should voluntarily offer themselves to it, and by provoking the Israelites be the cause of their own ruin. The Lord, therefore, besides ordering that pardon should be denied them, also incited them to blind fury, that no room might be left for mercy. And it behoved the people not to be too wise or prying in this matter. For while the Lord, on the one hand, interdicted them from entering into any covenant, and, on the other, was unwilling that they should take hostile measures without being provoked, a too anxious discussion of the procedure might have greatly unsettled their minds. Hence the only way of freeing themselves from perplexity was to lay their care on the bosom of God. And he in his incomprehensible wisdom provided that when the time for action arrived, his people should not be impeded in their course by any obstacle. Thus the kings beyond the Jordan, as they had been the first to take up arms, justly suffered the punishment of their temerity. For the Israelites did not assail them with hostile arms until they had been provoked.”<sup>23</sup>

b. The results of this long fight was peace! J. Swanson provides some interesting research on how this word “peace” is used in the Bible – “**be at rest**, be at peace, i.e., be in a favorable circumstance, implying ease, security, and satisfaction, with lack of tumult or strife (Jos 11:23); (hif) **grant relief** (Ps 94:13; Eze 16:49+); **2.** LN 14.74–14.86 (qal) **be quiet**, i.e., not make any sound, implying inaction by the object (Ps 76:9[EB 8]); (hif) **keep silent**, be hushed (Job 37:17+); **3.** LN 33.69–33.108 (qal) **be silent**, i.e., not make any communication by speech (Isa 62:1); (hif) **keep silent**, remain quiet (Job 34:29+); **4.** LN 25.167–25.178 (qal) **be calm**, i.e., cause an attitude or emotion of patience and lack of strife or anger in the midst of a provocation (Eze 16:42); (hif) **cause calm** (Pr 15:18; Isa 7:4; 30:15; 32:17; Jer 49:23+); **5.** LN 14.17–14.35 (qal) **rest**, be still, be calm, i.e., not have a liquid mass in surging, rolling, swirling motion (Jer 48:11); (hif) **rest** (Isa 57:20)”<sup>24</sup>

c. The Israelites defeated some the most renown giants in Canaan!

1) “Lastly Joshua and the Israelites attacked the cities of the Anakim (11:21–23). The Anakim were warriors of great renown. Their huge

<sup>23</sup> Calvin, J., & Beveridge, H. (2010). [\*Commentary on the Book of Joshua\*](#) (pp. 171–176). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

<sup>24</sup> Swanson, J. (1997). [\*Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains : Hebrew \(Old Testament\)\*](#) (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

size had been the primary cause of the Israelite's fearfulness in the wilderness (Numbers 13:22, 28, 32–33). As a result God's people rebelled against Moses and doubted His ability to give them the land. It is with a touch of poetic justice that this account of Joshua's victories should conclude with Israel's defeat of these greatly feared adversaries."<sup>25</sup>

- 2) "Forty years earlier, these very giants had so terrorized the Israelites that they refused to conquer the land. The giants had not shrunk when the new crop of Israelites came on the scene. The difference was that the new Israelites believed that their God was greater than giants. The same God who was sufficient for Israel then is equally sufficient for his people today, no matter what their circumstances or difficulties."<sup>26</sup>

**CHALLENGE: Are you fighting not to fail by falling into sin or fighting to succeed by living in Christ? One is motivated by a fear of failure and the other is motivated to win! One will consistently lose, and one will consistently win.**

Jesus put his foot on the neck of sin! It has no authority over all who are in Him. When Christ died on the cross, He literally paid the full penalty of my sin and as such, broke the curse it had over me! But additionally, the Bible says that because I have been set free from the penalty and power of sin I will one day also be set free from the presence of sin! The Bible promises that just as I was buried with Christ into His death, I will also one day be resurrected with Christ as well! Paul wrote,

**5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. (Romans 6:5)**

My sin free future is guaranteed! In that day I will be made new and in that newness, I will be totally free from the presence of sin! No matter how bad of a fighter I am today, I'm going to win because I'm in Christ and He's already won, therefore I don't have to go into the battle afraid of failure because Jesus has guaranteed my ultimate victory. I can instead go into the battle with my sin focused on living in what I've been given; what Christ has won for me! It's why Paul said,

**13 Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. (Romans 6:13)**

Live your life striving to have His life. The way to win the battle of sin in your life is not to live your life looking backwards at what you've been saved from, but rather consumed with what you been saved into! We certainly need to understand the fearful consequence of sin

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<sup>25</sup> Barber, C. J. (2006). *Joshua: A Devotional Exposition* (pp. 134–136). Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers.

<sup>26</sup> Ellsworth, R. (2008). *Opening up Joshua* (pp. 97–98). Leominster: Day One Publications.

in our life; there is no Biblical concept of not staying ever aware of that fact for sure. However, the motivation and winning strategy to overcome sin is not to fear the consequences of sin, but rather to be driven by the joy of the opportunity of living in His life! Its why Paul wrote,

**12 Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. 13 Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:12-13)**

Don't live your life running from sin, live it running to Christ and you'll constantly be moving away from sin! Get out of bed every day to run towards love, peace, goodness, and self-control by running towards loving being loved by Him more than anything!

If you are trying to run to life by running from death then that means you're likely running with your eyes looking behind you instead of in front of you, and that never ends well.

I ended up playing Wide Receiver in college, but I was recruited to college as a Defensive Back. In all my years of playing DB in High School I never once got beat for a touchdown, that is until the very last game of our Senior season! I was having to cover a guy that had been highly recruited by everybody in the country and was already verbally committed to Florida State University. He could flat out fly. Long story short, I was lined up on the far left side of the field locked on him in man-to-man coverage on the previous play, which ended up being a draw play to the running back. A draw play looks like a pass play but the quarterback hands the ball to the running back beside him who then takes off running it! Because I was doing my job and staying locked on FSU guy, I never saw the running back going down the opposite side of the field until it was too late. Luckily for us however, there was a penalty against the offense and the play didn't count. But this also became the stumbling block for me to break the cardinal sin of man coverage on the next play.

The first rule of man coverage is to completely lock your eyes on the man you're supposed to cover, however, in a moment of desperation to stop the bleeding (we were getting beat bad), I peeked at the quarterback to see if they were just going to run the same play all over again. To my surprise it looked like that's exactly what they were getting ready to do. The running back stay put when the ball was snapped, then he put his hands in the position to receive the handoff of the quarterback who was acting like he wanted to throw, only this time he did! This time he faked the handoff to the running back and begin to get back to reading the defense to decide where he was going to throw it, a decision my hesitation made a lot easier. The little bit of hesitation of me looking at the quarterback allowed the receiver I was in charge of covering to run right by me while I was still in my back pedal. I flipped my hips, put my head down and ran as hard as I could to catch up back up to him, which miraculously I did. I was actually back in perfect position to make a play on the ball. All I had to do was keep my eyes focused on his eyes and I would know the exact second I needed to turn my head to either go for the ball or just knock it out his hands. But instead, I made my second mistake on the same play.

Instead of locking in on his eyes to key me when the ball was going to arrive, I instead turned my head back towards the sky between me and the Quarterback to try and find the ball. What's the problem with that? Well, it is a proven fact you cannot run as fast looking backwards as you can looking forward. The ball wasn't near as close as I had hoped and with me slowing down on a perfectly thrown ball to the receiver who was in a dead sprint, it created just enough separation for the ball to drop perfectly into his hands in the endzone for a touchdown, while I pointlessly dove to knock it out his hands that were now just beyond my reach. It was the only touchdown anybody ever scored on me, and of course it came on my team's final game of my senior year in High School! What made it even worse was that it was our archrival, Hampton High School. My mom and my dad both graduated from Hampton and my dad played football for there as well. He would even wear his Hampton High School letter jacket to our games!

The point I'm making is some of you are failing to win because you won't stop looking backwards. You are either so scared of losing or so unable to forgive yourself that you won't stop living your life trying to not fail instead of living your life focused on the victory you've already won! For instance, bitterness doesn't have to be your reality, but to win you have to get your eyes off of what caused it and get your eyes on what cures it—Jesus!

Whatever the sin is that dominates you, stop focusing on not losing, and certainly don't pay attention to how you lost it in the past, but instead, press forward towards the upward call in Christ Jesus to know the Father!