
★ TAKE YOUR ★ GROUND

WEEK 1 GROUP GUIDE | MESSAGE BY CHAD BRUEGMAN

START

To get things started, let's go around the circle and answer this question:

If you could go back to school to get trained in any vocation, what would it be? Explain your answer.

SHARE

Welcome to our series, "Take Your Ground."

We have all experienced the power of our thoughts. Our thoughts have the ability to take over our entire being, our mood, and inform our actions. Take falling in love, for instance. Remember what it was like to think of nothing else but the one your heart had fallen for? Every spare moment was thinking about how to spend more time with them or the last time you were together, and the reasons why you are absolutely captivated with that person. It's overwhelming! Our thoughts don't only exist by themselves, but rather they have the ability to dictate our emotions as well.

Living in relationship with the Lord is far from predictable, safe, or easy. He is the God of this universe, and he includes us in his grandiose plans for this earth. Since Adam and Eve disobeyed the Lord in the Garden of Eden, humanity has been at war with itself. We must now constantly fight the desire to be in charge of our own lives instead of cultivating our hearts to respond to what he may be calling us to do.

We have all had those crossroads. The Lord has called us to move forward, to move in obedience, and we freeze in fear and doubt. The irony is, we so badly want to hear from the Lord that we will spend hours in prayer asking for direction, and when we finally receive it; we often resist or become fearful of what we don't understand. Yet, we must choose to focus and believe on what is set before us. We are meant to live glorious (full of glory) lives full of the destiny that the Lord placed within us before we were born. We are loved by too powerful of a God to not enlist in the life he desperately wants for us.

When you make that step toward God, when you surrender your life to him in sweet relationship, you are committing to live a life of constant intentionality. Being a Christian is not a stagnant honor. It is one that requires us to continually pursue and fight for continued closeness to the Lord, so that we may walk in the plans he has for us.

Every one of us has a story that is waiting for us. Whether you have not made the decision to follow Christ yet, or you have been following Christ for 30 years; God's story for you never ceases.

This week Chad took us to the book of Joshua, and started to walk us through Joshua's story of following in Moses' footsteps. Though both seasons and stories were incredibly powerful in their own ways, they were just that; their own stories and seasons for what the Lord was going to do.

Now let's read Joshua 1:1-3

As Chad discussed, Moses was a messenger of deliverance. Joshua on the other hand, was a messenger of victory. The Lord needed Moses to deliver his message, to bring people into awareness of who he was and to recognize his power. Think of the plagues, the Red Sea, and the manna. Those were all *saving miracles*. And now, God used Joshua to bring about another aspect of who he is: victorious.

What aspect of the Lord could he desire you to be a messenger of? Think of the unique gifts he has placed in you. Do you see the gifts and abilities he has given you as a unique reflection of some aspect of his character?

What do you feel when you think about the vastness of God's character? Which aspects do you relate to most? Which aspects make you the most uncomfortable?

GROW

If we allow it, the book of Joshua should inspire us to be victorious in our walk with the Lord. Though we will find seasons that are more challenging than others, through Christ, we are saved from a life of "stuckness."

Another beautiful aspect of the grace that the Lord offers us is that it better prepares for us for the works that the Lord has specifically planned for us. Not only has the Lord saved us, but he also desires to intricately include us in his plans. As we read in Ephesians 2:8-10, our entrance into the Kingdom is not based on our works, but because we will reside in the Kingdom, our capacity for good works is broadened, and given purpose. We are here on this earth to make heaven more crowded. Let grace be a tool that enables you to make heaven more crowded.

Let's read Peter 1:3-9

In *Battlefield of the Mind: Winning the Battle in Your Mind*, Joyce Meyer says this:

Satan frequently steals the will of God from us due to reasoning. The Lord may direct us to do a certain thing, but if it does not make sense—if it is not logical—we may be tempted to disregard it. What God leads a person to do does not always make logical sense to his mind. His spirit may affirm it and His mind reject it, especially if it would be out of the ordinary or unpleasant or if it would require personal sacrifice or discomfort.

As Joshua 1:3 tells us, God had given Joshua everything he needed to be victorious in battle. God had promised his favor and presence. Yet, in the midst of these promises, God still commanded Joshua to be courageous. Why? Joshua still had to go to battle. He still had to lead the children of Israel into the land that was promised them, defeating all the armies of the inhabitants. And some of those enemies looked pretty formidable. The Lord knew that Joshua would need to be reminded to rely on the victory that was already won.

Even though God had promised the victory, he still needed Joshua and his army to engage in battle. Joshua had a guaranteed victory, but he still had to fight. The Lord still needs each of us to actively engage in our own lives, and play our part. We have to make an *effort* in order to witness our destiny come to fruition. God will not force his plan on you; instead he patiently waits for you to walk through the door he has opened for you.

What are some of the ways that Satan creeps in and tricks your mind? How can you combat these?

Take some time to think about the insecurities, doubts, or fears that paralyze you. What is the common message? What does God's truth say about those messages?

What is a specific area in which God is calling you to step out and begin walking in courage and victory?

MOVE

As we think about walking in victory in our own lives, we need to remember that we are not alone, and we are not without cause. God does not call us to carelessly fight, carelessly dream, or carelessly be still. He calls us to keep him and his word close to our hearts so that we might accurately discern the battles he is calling us into.

Regardless of how long you have been serving the Lord, or if you are yet to make the decision to walk in relationship with him, there is always room to honestly ask God, *where am I holding back?* He wants to be in every part of your heart, your dreams, and your life. Not because he is self-centered, but because when you are wholly Christ-centered, you are not only the best version of yourself, you are the healthiest version of yourself. Taking courage, trusting God, and moving forward is the best thing for you, despite how scary it may seem!

As we have all heard before, courage does not mean you are never afraid. It means that you decide to not let your fear take the controls. God commanded Joshua to not be afraid. He would not have done this if Joshua had a valid reason to be afraid, or to let fear inform his actions. As Christians, we are not fighting for our own victories, because Christ has already won. With Christ, we have no reason to fear. The end.

What prayers have you been afraid to pray? Ask God to start giving you boldness in areas you have been avoiding, from small to large.

What are tangible ways that you can begin to walk in victory in your life, today?

What are tangible ways that you can encourage someone in your life to begin to walk in victory, today?

PRAY

Let's take some time and pray for one another. If you are in a co-ed group, consider breaking up into men and women's groups to talk more freely.

TO GO

As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Isaiah 55:9