



WORTH THE FIGHT | SHAWN JOHNSON

START

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

If money were no issue and you could start a brand new business, career or organization, what would it be?

SHARE

Welcome to our brand new series called “Battle Tested.” In the next few weeks, we are going to take a look at some stories of people in the Bible who were battle-tested. We all go through battles at different times and for different reasons. As we walk through these stories, our hope is that we can learn from each one and gain a better understanding of the wisdom, strength and sustaining power of God.

In the word of God, we find stories where God makes a promise to an individual or to a people, and then many times there is a gap between the time the promise is made and the time it is fulfilled. There are also times where God’s people received a promise, yet that was just the beginning of the fight. We can find ourselves fighting battles when times are tough; and also when we are experiencing success, we can be faced with brand new fights and pressures we never imagined.

As we go through this series, allow God to speak to you about your life and the battles you might be facing. What God calls us to is always worth the fight. Maybe your battle is working tirelessly on building a better marriage, struggling to live a life of purity, fighting to be ethical and honest at work, digging deep to forgive someone. Whatever the fight might be, we must always cling to the promises of God and remember that He can lead and sustain us.

In this week’s message, Shawn begins the series by helping us remember ... what God calls us to is always worth the fight. We looked at the life of Joshua when he took over leadership after Moses died. Joshua was tasked with leading the people into the Promised Land. It was not an easy task. Even though the land was promised by God, it didn’t come uncontested. Joshua and the people had to fight numerous times for territory. As a leader, Joshua’s faith was on display as he had to lead courageously by trusting God’s word.

Read Joshua 1:1-9

What are some of the things God is commanding Joshua to do?

Which words are repeated over and over in this text? Why is this significant?

Do you feel like there are times when you need to be strong and courageous and need God's presence and strength to help you? If so, when?

G R O W

Joshua was a powerful leader and believed God when He told him to “be strong and courageous.” It was the faith Joshua had in God’s promises that pushed him forward. Joshua sought the Lord’s counsel throughout his life, led God’s people, confronted destructive sin, and pushed out the evil kings in the land. Conflict with evil was inevitable and Joshua was ready for the battle and knew that because God called him, it was worth the fight. It is important to remember that God told him in Joshua 1:3, “I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses.” Joshua had a decision to make. The land was promised, but he had to fight for it. History shows us that he did just that; he trusted God, fought for the land, and defeated the evil kings.

Let’s read Joshua 11:21-23 and 12:7-24

In *The Holman Concise Bible Commentary*, we gain a better understanding of the scope of the fight involved as Joshua had to endure thirty-one battles in land that was promised to the people:

Counting the Kings (11:16-12:24). This summary of captured lands and their slain kings is a tribute to God’s faithfulness. The passage emphasizes that Joshua took “the entire land.” This included the lands of the Anakites, whom the Israelites had initially feared the most (Num. 13:28; Deut. 9:2). God incited Israel’s enemies to wage war, and then He destroyed them because of their sin (Josh. 11:20). This was the method God used to give the Land to Israel as He fulfilled His promise to Moses. The list of kings begins with Og and Sihon, whom Moses defeated (see Num. 21:21-35). The kings defeated by Joshua were thirty-one. This list of kings includes some kings not specifically mentioned in the narrative. This record of Israel’s acquisitions showed future generations what faith could accomplish. It also was a rebuke to those who had refused to take the land.

One of these battles was defeating the great and mighty Anakites, who in the past were a greatly feared people. In Numbers 13, we can read the account of Moses sending a group of leaders (including a younger Joshua and Caleb) to spy on the land. Despite Caleb’s efforts to convince the people that they should take possession of what God promised, the majority of the leaders were too fearful and believed their enemies were bigger, stronger, and more fortified. The people rejected God’s gift of the land out of fear and didn’t trust the promise of God. However, when Joshua took over leadership after Moses’ death, he made sure to trust the promise of God and finally took possession of the land.

When Joshua was a younger leader, he saw the pain and hardship the people experienced when they shrank back in fear and chose not to enter the land, but this time was different. What made it different?

Have you ever gotten a second opportunity to trust God and followed through with it like Joshua did? If so, what did you learn from that experience?

MOVE

Joshua experienced thirty-one battles to take possession of what God promised. One overriding theme we see is that God's promises don't go uncontested by the enemy. Just because things are difficult doesn't mean God is not present. Whether you are fighting to keep a marriage together, in the trenches praying for a prodigal son or daughter, battling to have faith in the midst of physical challenges, or trying to do the right thing in a difficult work environment; trusting God is essential.

One of the things that made Joshua successful in his battles was that he made sure to obey God's law. Joshua took seriously all that God commanded, so when he battled and fought, he was a man of ethics, integrity, and purity. He didn't fight his battles in a dishonoring way, but was careful to follow God and serve the people well.

Joshua 1:7

Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go.

As we conclude today, pick one of these questions to answer:

What does it practically look like to fight for God's plan and promises in your own life?

God was concerned with the heart condition of Joshua before any battle took place. Is there an area of your life in which you know God is asking you to be obedient?

PRAY

As a group, spend some time praying for each other and the struggles we all face. If you are in a co-ed group, consider breaking up into men and women's groups to talk more freely.

TO GO

John 10:10

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.