

# SESSION 2

## BE CONFIDENT IN GOD'S POWER



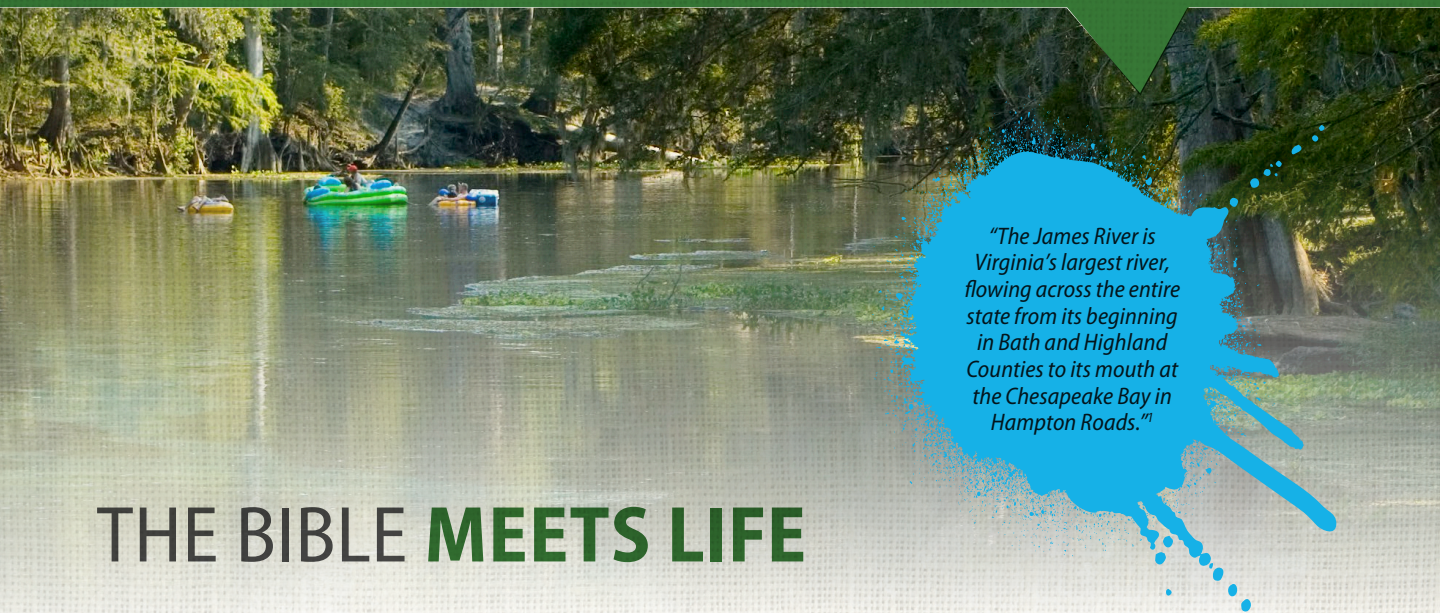


When have you  
taken a leap  
of faith?



## THE POINT

*Lead with an attitude of confidence in God.*



*"The James River is Virginia's largest river, flowing across the entire state from its beginning in Bath and Highland Counties to its mouth at the Chesapeake Bay in Hampton Roads."<sup>1</sup>*

## THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

When I was 16, my friends and I decided to go tubing down the James River. This was a tradition we never skipped. Typically our parents went with us, but this time they said we could go on our own. We packed our trucks and set off.

Between the launch and landing site there is a place nicknamed Jumping Rock. It's a massive rock formation that stands in the center of the river. As kids we were never allowed to jump from the rock, but our parents promised us that as soon as we were old enough we could take the leap. And so the time came for us to prove ourselves. Garrett jumped first, then Tom, and then it was my turn. Did I mention that I'm not a fan of heights? My hands were sweating. I had a knot in my throat. But I had to jump. I took a few steps back, rubbed my sweaty hands together, took a deep breath, sprinted forward, and leapt. I dropped through the air as my friends cheered me on and splashed into the water. Before I knew it I was back at the top and ready to jump again.

We all encounter opportunities to move outside our comfort zone. To do something we've never done before. Do you hesitate in those moments, or do you take a flying leap?

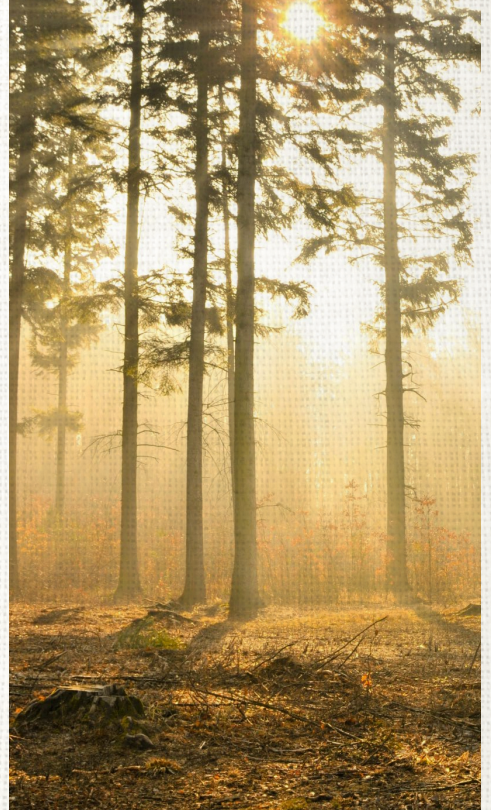
Joshua was called to a difficult challenge: to lead the people across the flooded Jordan River into the land God had promised them. This was a significant test for Joshua because he had just become the leader of God's people. He was brand new to leadership. Joshua's response teaches us how to lead well when we're outside our comfort zone.



# WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

## *Joshua 3:7-17*

<sup>7</sup> The LORD spoke to Joshua: "Today I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, so they will know that I will be with you just as I was with Moses." <sup>8</sup> Command the priests carrying the ark of the covenant: When you reach the edge of the waters, stand in the Jordan." <sup>9</sup> Then Joshua told the Israelites, "Come closer and listen to the words of the LORD your God." <sup>10</sup> He said: "You will know that the living God is among you and that He will certainly dispossess before you the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites, and Jebusites" <sup>11</sup> when the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth goes ahead of you into the Jordan. <sup>12</sup> Now choose 12 men from the tribes of Israel, one man for each tribe. <sup>13</sup> When the feet of the priests who carry the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, come to rest in the Jordan's waters, its waters will be cut off. The water flowing downstream will stand up in a mass." <sup>14</sup> When the people broke camp to cross the Jordan, the priests carried the ark of the covenant ahead of the people. <sup>15</sup> Now the Jordan overflows its banks throughout the harvest season. But as soon as the priests carrying the ark reached the Jordan, their feet touched the water at its edge <sup>16</sup> and the water flowing downstream stood still, rising up in a mass that extended as far as Adam, a city next to Zarethan. The water flowing downstream into the Sea of the Arabah (the Dead Sea) was completely cut off, and the people crossed opposite Jericho. <sup>17</sup> The priests carrying the ark of the LORD's covenant stood firmly on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan, while all Israel crossed on dry ground until the entire nation had finished crossing the Jordan.



## *The Setting*

After lengthy wilderness wanderings brought on by their forefathers' decision to fear the inhabitants of the promised land rather than to fear the Lord, the children of Israel once again stood on the brink of the land God had promised to Abraham and his descendents. Entering the land required crossing the Jordan River. As He had done for His people crossing the Red Sea on their way out of Egypt, God again gave His people passage through watery land.



## JOSHUA 3:7-8

Long ago the people followed Moses because they knew that God was with him. Now God would lift up Joshua and show that his leadership would also be marked by God's power. Joshua could lead with confidence because he had listened to what God said about him earlier: "I will be with you, just as I was with Moses" (1:9). God now was reaffirming that promise.

What makes you feel confident?

God gave Joshua instructions for the next step: "Command the priests carrying the ark of the covenant: When you reach the edge of the waters, stand in the Jordan" (v. 8). This might be a strange command if left to itself, but Joshua trusted God. Joshua knew what God could do based on the past when God parted the Red Sea (see Ex. 14:21-22). Joshua had confidence that God would once again do something marvelous.

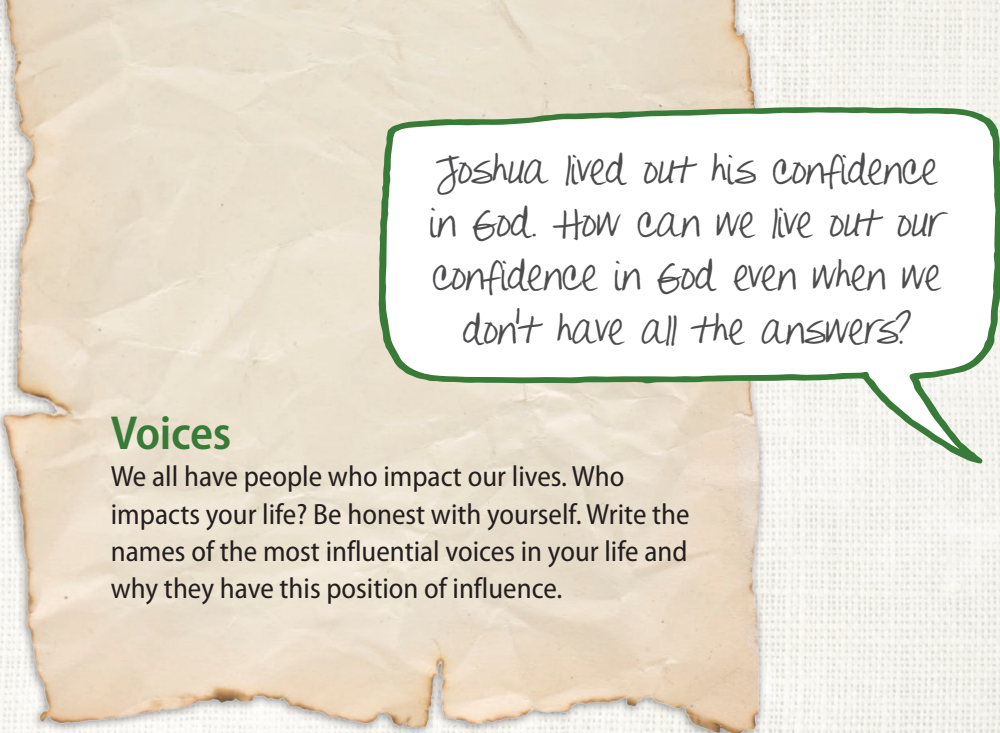
Our ability to lead is impacted by the people we listen to. Be careful who you listen to because:

- ▶ If we think too highly of our own abilities, we can become arrogant.
- ▶ If we downplay our gifts, leadership skills, or opportunities, we can end up discouraged or depressed.
- ▶ If we take to heart the comparisons or criticisms of others, we can respond pridefully or become discouraged.

Never listen to yourself or someone else more than you listen to God. God's voice is always truthful and can see everything as it really is. Listen to the words of God as they give you guidance. That's the best source of confidence.







Joshua lived out his confidence in God. How can we live out our confidence in God even when we don't have all the answers?

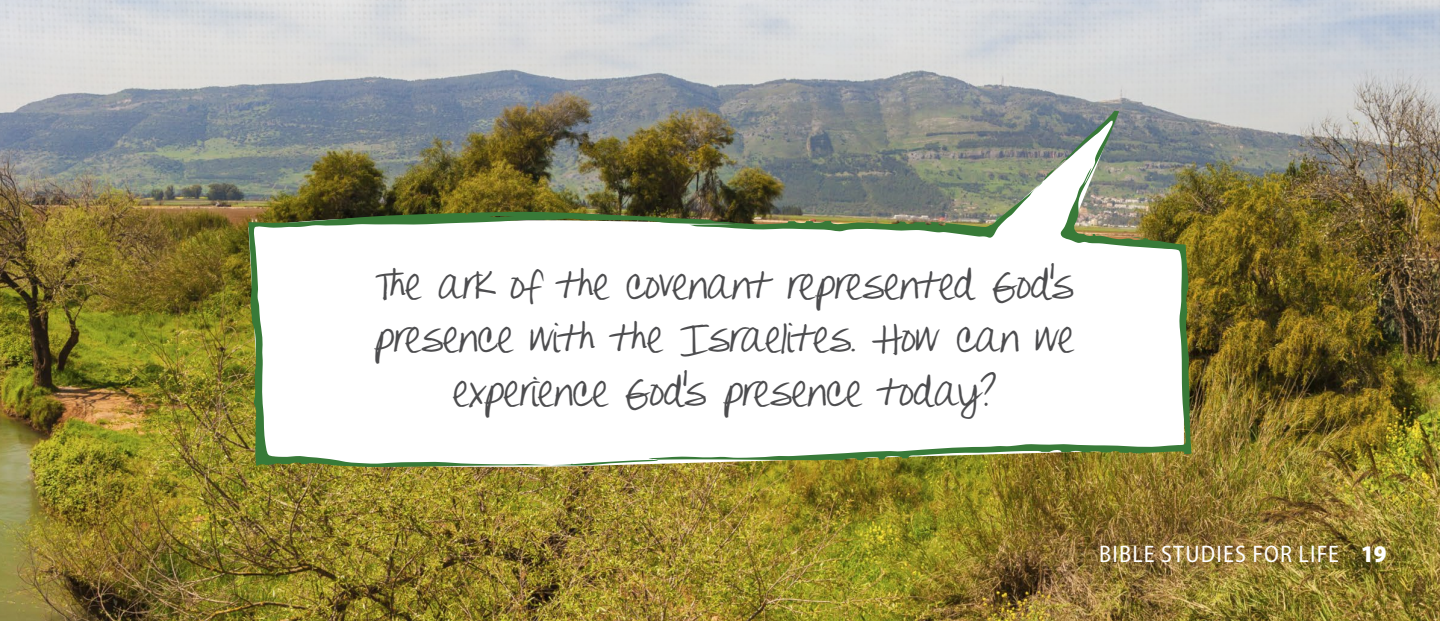
## Voices

We all have people who impact our lives. Who impacts your life? Be honest with yourself. Write the names of the most influential voices in your life and why they have this position of influence.

## JOSHUA 3:9-13

God had made it clear that nobody would be able to keep His people from entering the land He has promised them (see 1:5), and Joshua knew it. When the Israelites saw Joshua's confidence, they knew God was present and active on their behalf.

As the people reached the Jordan River, the ark of the covenant was to move ahead of the people. When the priests carrying the ark on wooden poles stepped into the water, God's power caused the rushing river to stop and "stand up in a mass" (v. 13), creating a way for the people to cross. While God's words provided a road map and instructions of where to go and what to do, God's presence provided the means to carry it out. When you are called to step out of your comfort zone, like Joshua, you can do so confidently when you trust God. God's words and God's presence create godly confidence.



The ark of the covenant represented God's presence with the Israelites. How can we experience God's presence today?





How can we demonstrate confidence in God in a way that leads others to trust Him?

## JOSHUA 3:14-17

A while back I had the privilege of coaching a boys basketball team. Part of the fun was teaching them the fundamentals of the game and how to play together as a team. In the games, they felt my presence on the sideline. I was with them, reminding them and showing them from the bench that the opening was there. The opportunity to score was right in front of them. I remember the first time it worked: our player came to the open spot in the lane just a few feet from the basket, received the pass, and put up a beautiful shot to score. The team was thrilled. With great satisfaction I shouted, "See? You did it!" They showed a belief in what their coach said simply by executing the play.

The Israelites needed to listen and obey to see God's plan work out. "As soon as the priests carrying the ark reached the Jordan, their feet touched the water at its edge and the water flowing downstream stood still" (vv. 15-16).

Obedience to what God says can feel strange. Some may have tried to influence Joshua's leadership, or he could have been tempted to have thoughts like these:

- ▶ Surely we can find another way across the river.
- ▶ Why don't we wait for the flooded river to subside?
- ▶ Let's send a team over first to see if God's plan works.

Joshua listened to God. He stepped out on the instructions God had given him and led the people to do the same. When we listen to what God has said and move forward in faith and trust, He will provide the direction we need, and He will equip us to lead confidently.

Share this

60 percent of all fears that people have never actually happen.<sup>2</sup>



"Do not strive in your own strength; cast yourself at the feet of the Lord Jesus, and wait upon Him in the sure confidence that He is with you, and works in you."<sup>13</sup>

—ANDREW MURRAY

## APPLY IT

How will you express confidence in God this week?

- **Put a foot in the water.** Identify a task you've been putting off and commit to take one small step to begin. You'll likely find that the next steps aren't as difficult as you imagined. Like the children of Israel crossing the Jordan, it all begins with putting a foot in the water.
- **Listen to the right voice.** If there is an area of your life where you are outside your comfort zone, identify whose voice you are listening to most and what it is saying. Is it your own voice of doubt, guilt, or worry? Are other voices bringing fear? Apply God's Word about who He is. Listen well and trust well.
- **Get feedback.** Ask friends and family what kind of leader they think you are. Is the leadership you're providing from the heart and Word of God or your own ideas? Feedback and reflection can help you stay on God's path for yourself and for those you lead.

When you confidently trust what God has told you, you can jump. He is with you.



## A Promise Delivered

For generations, the Israelites had remembered and trusted in God's promise to give the land of Canaan to Abraham's descendants.



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# DIVE IN

## **Matthew 14:31**

Fear is the opposite of faith. In fact, fear chokes faith. God has not called you to be a person of worry, but to be a person who trusts Him in *all* things. Everyone has areas in which it's difficult to trust God. Where do you find it difficult to trust God? Write down the three greatest fears you struggle to trust God with. These fears have the potential to stifle your faith in God. Pray about your fears. Ask God for strength to step into the water as the Israelites did. Then grab a marker and in big, bold letters write **SURRENDERED**. If you find yourself fearing again, turn back to this page and remember that you've surrendered your fears to God and are choosing to trust Him from this day forward.

Three things I  
struggle to trust  
God with:

1.

2.

3.



# BAD COMPANY

## **1 Corinthians 15:33**

Following God requires that you step out in faith and surround yourself with people who will encourage, not discourage, you. One negative influence is all it takes to cause worry, stress, and fear in your life. You will never be able to remove yourself completely from negative influences, which is why it's so important for you to know who is building you up. With that in mind, who are you listening to? Use the space below to list the positive influences in your life as well as the negative influences. Take some time this week to thank those who are positively influencing you.

*Positive influences in my life:*

*Negative influences in my life:*

*A tip:*

► **Do something kind and unexpected for the people who build you up.**



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