

SESSION 6

CALL OTHERS TO STEP FORWARD



What makes someone
a great leader?

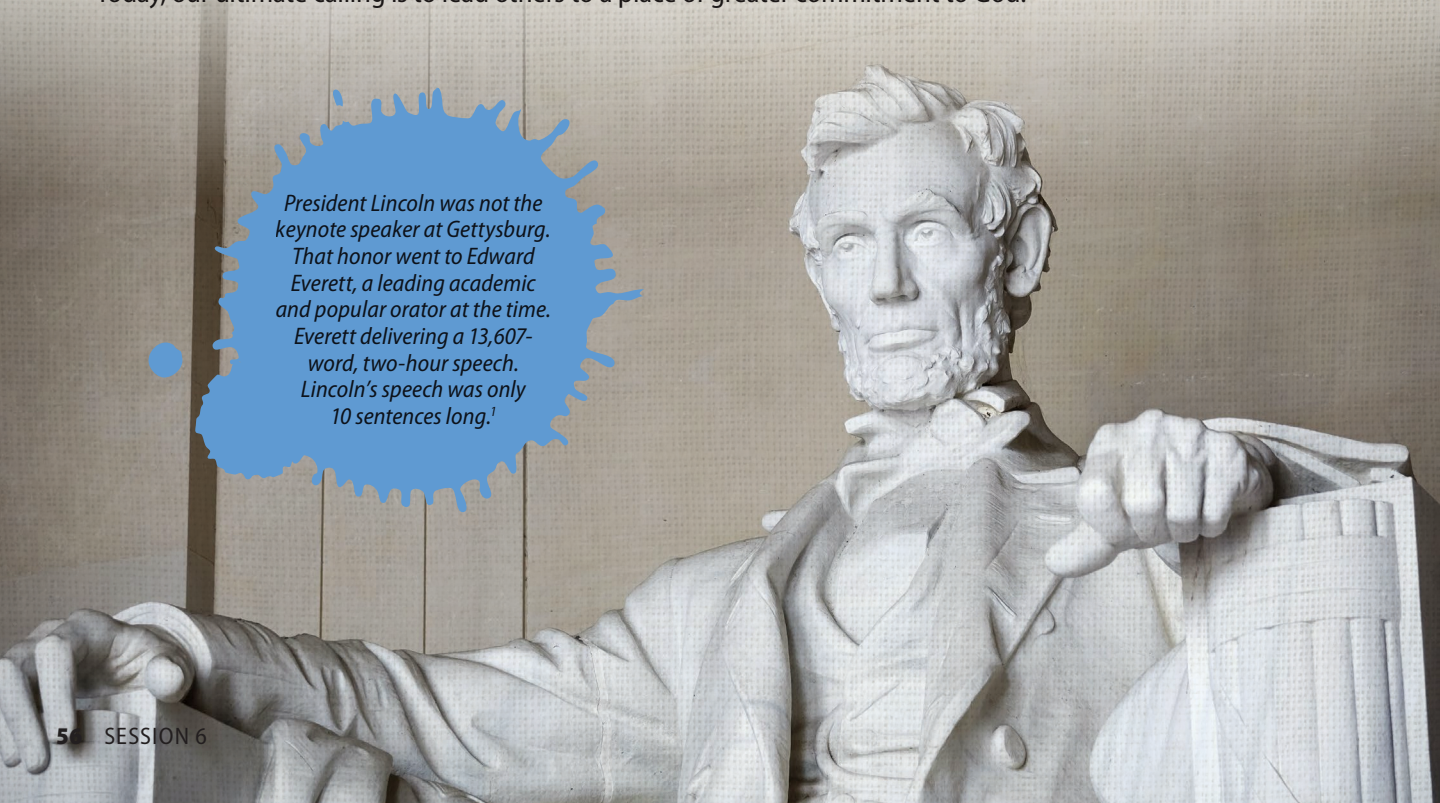
Leaders encourage others to follow God.

THE BIBLE **MEETS LIFE**

Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address was no ordinary speech. Our nation was on the verge of war and this speech was a courageous call for our nation to pull together in unity even if it cost a high price. Years later Martin Luther King, Jr., stood on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial where this famous speech is engraved and called our nation to racial equality. Dr. King stood on the legendary shoulders of Lincoln, a leader who called people to a higher and nobler ground. Now, 100 years after Lincoln's speech, the preacher from Atlanta did the same thing.

Leaders influence others, calling them to the place God desires for them to go. At the end of his life, Moses did this for Joshua. And on the shoulders of Moses, Joshua challenged the people to new heights of love and loyalty for God.

Today, our ultimate calling is to lead others to a place of greater commitment to God.



President Lincoln was not the keynote speaker at Gettysburg. That honor went to Edward Everett, a leading academic and popular orator at the time. Everett delivering a 13,607-word, two-hour speech. Lincoln's speech was only 10 sentences long.¹

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Joshua 24:14-18, 24-26

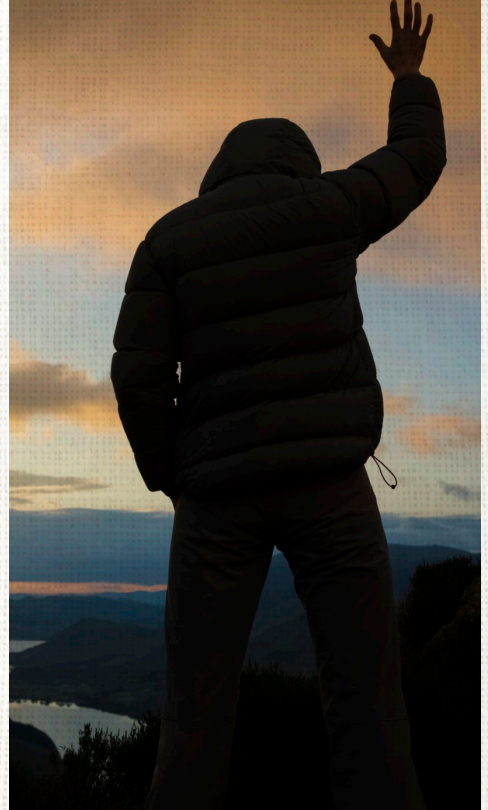
¹⁴ “Fear the LORD and worship Him in sincerity and truth. Get rid of the gods your fathers worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and worship Yahweh.

¹⁵ But if it doesn’t please you to worship Yahweh, choose for yourselves today the one you will worship: the gods your fathers worshiped beyond the Euphrates River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living. As for me and my family, we will worship Yahweh.” ¹⁶ The people replied, “We will certainly not abandon the LORD to worship other gods! ¹⁷ For the LORD our God brought us and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery, and performed these great signs before our eyes. He also protected us all along the way we went and among all the peoples whose lands we traveled through.

¹⁸ The LORD drove out before us all the peoples, including the Amorites who lived in the land. We too will worship the LORD, because He is our God.”

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²⁴ So the people said to Joshua, “We will worship the LORD our God and obey Him.” ²⁵ On that day Joshua made a covenant for the people at Shechem and established a statute and ordinance for them. ²⁶ Joshua recorded these things in the book of the law of God; he also took a large stone and set it up there under the oak next to the sanctuary of the LORD.



The Setting

Joshua had assumed the leadership of the children of Israel as they lay on the brink of moving into the land God had promised Abraham so many years before. Under Joshua's leadership Israel had entered Canaan and slowly taken control of what was becoming their national homeland. In his final act of public leadership as recorded by Scripture, Joshua challenged the nation to choose decisively whether they would follow God or follow other gods.

JOSHUA 24:14-15

Joshua led and influenced others throughout his life. Even at the end of his life, Joshua called the people to renew their loyalty to God. He began by reviewing the history of God's involvement in the lives of the people. Reflecting on God's movement in history causes us to fear and worship as only He is worthy of.

We see God fully displayed in the Person of Jesus Christ. We deserve God's wrath, but God's anger against sin was poured out on His own Son who was sinless. In sending Jesus, God displayed the deepest commitment of love to us (see John 3:16). To fear God is to be in awe of Him for how He loves us. We respond in ways that honor or respect Him through our worship, obedience, and devotion.

As we "fear the LORD," we are also to "worship Him in sincerity and truth" (v. 14). There's a connection between fear and worship. Whatever we fear or revere will become what we worship and devote our lives to serving—it will also become what we depend on. For that reason, how we choose to live is always shaped by what we fear, revere, and desire most.

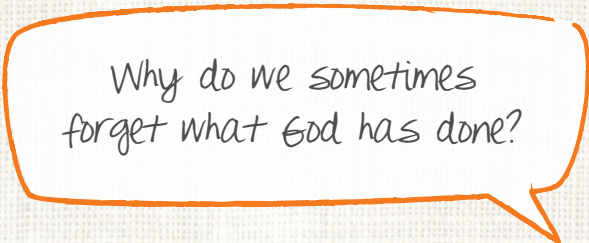
Joshua called the people to make a choice. They were free to choose whom they would fear and, as a result, whom they would serve. Joshua declared that he and his family were choosing to fear the God who had worked on their behalf. Joshua led by example.

We lead and influence others when we:

- ▶ **Examine our hearts to see whether we are growing a healthy fear of God over anything else.**
- ▶ **Communicate clearly where God has asked us to go and what He's asked us to do.**
- ▶ **Live as examples of what God has said.**

What's the value of making commitments in a public way?





Why do we sometimes forget what God has done?

JOSHUA 24:16-18

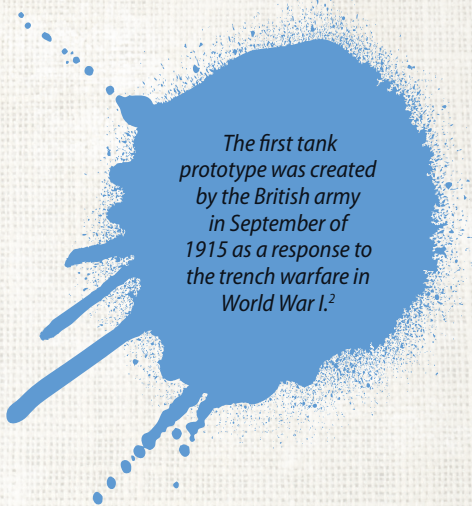
It takes courage to call people to a commitment. It takes even greater courage to put your own reputation on the line and lead by example, allowing others to see you live out what you say.

The people responded to God because of what He had done for them in the past. Joshua led the people with confidence because God had been faithful. And the people agreed with Joshua. They were filled with confidence in their decision to serve God because God had a proven track record.

My father drove a tank in the army. Life inside the tank was tight, crammed with loaders and gunners. As the driver, my father could only see through a periscope. The commander sat above him with a window that enabled him to see in every direction—front, sides, and rear. Although my father had limited vision, he knew he could trust the voice of a commander who saw it all.

Like the commander who can see all that has happened and is happening, leaders remind others that the same God who worked powerfully in the past can do mighty things today. Leaders:


- ▶ **Condition their hearts to fear God, which results in telling and showing others what He says.**
- ▶ **Train their eyes to see what our powerful God has done and can do.**




The first tank prototype was created by the British army in September of 1915 as a response to the trench warfare in World War I.²

Your Circle

As a leader, you lead others to follow after God through your example. Who in your life do you see yourself leading? Make a list of your circle of influence—whose life does your life impact? Also, list three people you hope to bring into your circle of influence—who would you like to lead that you are currently not leading?



There are over
54,000 war memorials
and monuments all
over Great Britain.³



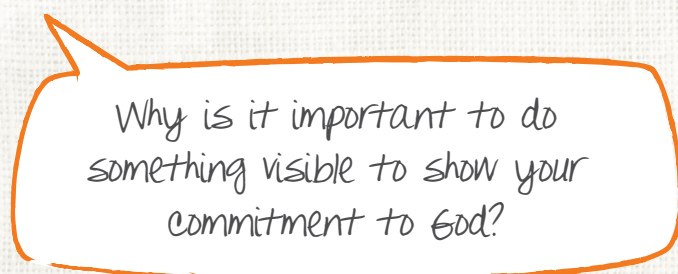
What can
we do visibly
to show our
commitment
to God?

JOSHUA 24:24-26

Monuments served as significant markers of God's provision on behalf of His people. In chapter 24, Joshua raised a monument. The Israelites made a commitment to serve the Lord, and Joshua "recorded these things in the book of the law of God" (v. 26) to remind them and guide them as they served God in the new land. Then, because this was a significant moment, Joshua raised a monument as a way to remind them of their commitment: he set a large stone next to the sanctuary. Maybe the idea was that as the people came to the sanctuary for worship, the monument would remind them of being faithful to God. The large stone represented the people's commitment to follow and obey God.

All of us can have "monuments"—ways to remember what God has done in our lives and the lives of those we lead.

- ▶ **A day.** Look back to a specific day marked on your calendar or in your journal where God did something special.
- ▶ **A place.** Remember a church, school, or camp where God spoke to you.
- ▶ **A picture.** Find and display a picture of a place where God spoke to your heart. Or a person who influenced you greatly.
- ▶ **A book.** Choose a passage from a book God used to turn your heart toward Him.



Why is it important to do
something visible to show your
commitment to God?

"If you are saved yourself,
the work is but half done
until you are employed to
bring others to Christ!"¹⁴

—CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON

APPLY IT

How will you set the example and call others to follow God this week? Consider these suggestions to get started:

- ▶ **Create a monument.** Find something tangible that can serve as a representation of God's work in your life. Display your marker someplace where you will see it and be reminded everyday.
- ▶ **Teach about monuments.** Look for opportunities to encourage others to set up their own monuments as reminders of God's faithfulness.
- ▶ **Find a mentor.** Begin praying for God to send you a mentor. When you find that positive influence, ask him or her to meet with you regularly so you can learn from this person. Be open to new influences and ideas.

There are lots of godly men and women who have come before us, led well, and done amazing things. Now it's your turn. Live your life as a monument that calls others to follow God.



A Legacy of Life

In this account of Joshua, as well as Hebrews 4:8-13, we are reminded that life apart from God is a life without rest. The Israelites wandered in their disobedience and found no shelter, until they returned to God.



To read this Essential Connection student devotion, visit Blog.LifeWay.com/

BibleStudiesForLife/Articles/Students or scan this QR code.

WHO'S LEADING YOU?

Joshua 1:1-2

Leaders encourage others to follow God. Before Joshua began leading God's people, Moses had spent years mentoring him. True leaders don't stand on their own. Every leader needs a leader. Who's your leader? This week ask God to show you the leaders in your life. Also, seek out a trusted mentor you can hang out with regularly so he or she can continually encourage you as you lead others.

▶ **Leaders in my life:**

▶ **Possible mentors:**

MY EBENEZER

Joshua 4:4-8

Joshua set up a memorial for the next generation. The 12 stacked stones stood as a testament of God's faithfulness to those coming behind Joshua and his people. Years later the prophet Samuel would do something similar. Read 1 Samuel 7:12. God is your Ebenezer. Those around you should know of God's faithfulness. You can do the same as Joshua and Samuel. What has God faithfulness helped you get through? Go outside and grab a stone large enough to write the word "Ebenezer" on. Use this stone as a reminder that God is faithful.

Things God's faithfulness has helped me get through:

Some tips:

- ▶ *Take a picture of your stone and share it with others.*
- ▶ *Always be prepared to share how God has been faithful to you.*

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