

# “Whom Will You Serve?”

Made For More Sermon Series | Week Twelve | Newbreak Church

March 27th, 2022

Newbreak’s Sermon Study Guide is an in-house resource that serves sermon-based Life Groups and/or individuals who want to reflect further on how the message contributes to our spiritual formation.

**In this week’s study, we talk about serving and how we all—whether aware of it or not—are serving someone. How do we ensure that we are serving God?**

## Icebreakers for Life Groups

- What is your favorite springtime flower? Why?
- What is the difference between willingly serving God and having a “slave” mentality? Why is this distinction important?

## Going Deeper Into the Message

### Read Joshua 24:11–23

*How can I live a life that serves God?*

### **Point 1 – Deal with the things that disrupt my focus.**

Joshua 24:23 (NLT) ... Joshua said, “destroy the idols among you, and turn your hearts to the Lord, the God of Israel.”

The timing of this command is intriguing, to say the least. Here is the end of the book of Joshua. A good enough portion of the “promised land” had been conquered, allowing the Israelites to divvy out land allotments to the tribes of people. There was still more land to be conquered and conflicts with other Canaanite nations to be resolved, but there was also enough stability to settle into a new normal.

With that said, Joshua calls on the people to “destroy the idols” among them. Idols? What would idols be doing among the Israelites? Whatever the reason... they don’t belong there.

Here's a quick refresher on idols...

Idols, historically, were figures that were carved to be copies and representatives of a deity, something that the invisible deity could animate and act through. This was not a practice that Yahweh, the God of Israel, endorsed. It was something that people of other nations practiced.

Many of us today, don't struggle with "idolatry" in that sense.

But at the core of it, idolatry is the same. **Idolatry is something that we trust in to produce what only God can give.** It not only deters our reliance away from God but also deteriorates our relationship with God. This could look like a lot of things for us: money can be an idol, so can sex, or power and status, almost anything that is not God can become an idol that tries to stand in His place. It's something we have to be wary of.

Back to Joshua and the Israelites...

It was not just that God needed to take a higher priority than idols. Nope. Idols need to be destroyed! Because if we don't deal with idols, they will turn our hearts away from God. **Your heart is not neutral in its affections. It has a gravitational pull. Your heart will either be magnetically drawn to God or away from Him—to "idols" of various kinds.** That's why we cannot be cordial with idols. We cannot coexist with something that is meant to steer us away from the Lord. And that is why Joshua is adamant that God's people—while settling into the promised land—cannot settle with their faith falling into complacency, tolerating things that are dangerous to their spiritual well-being. **Our spiritual well-being influences our holistic well-being, too.** Spiritual life is not a compartment of other aspects of life; it is the driving force of it all.

So be careful how you care for your spiritual well-being. Everything in our lives rises and falls based on those decisions.

That's Joshua's words to them and to us. But keep God's goodness in mind. Because if you remember nothing else from this section, note this: **God doesn't want our undivided loyalty to suppress us, but rather to bless us!** He is not a slave master, but a loving Father.

### Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Reflection

- What idols do you think cause the most destruction in the lives of people, today? Are there any you struggle with?

- Our hearts have a “gravitational pull” as we discussed above. How do you see this play out in your own life? What things affect your center of gravity when it comes to having the right affections?
- Discuss this quote: “God doesn’t want our undivided loyalty to suppress us, but rather to bless us.” What biblical stories demonstrate this? How have you seen this to be true in your own life?

*How can I live a life that serves God?*

### **Point 2 – Determine to make God the center of my household.**

Joshua 24:15 (NLT) “But as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord.”

#### Defining the word “Determine”...

The dictionary defines *determine* as “to discover the facts about something; to calculate something exactly.” God doesn’t want you to choose Him on a whim, or as a popular thing to do. “All my friends are doing it.” He wants you to carefully consider all He has to offer you and your families, whether they are biological, or a family made of friendships, and decide, after careful consideration, if that is what you want for yourself.

#### Joshua weighed the pros and cons of serving Yahweh.

Joshua is challenging the people of Israel to look at the facts of what the gods of Egypt did for their people versus what the God of Israel did for His people and decide who was worthy of wholehearted devotion. Joshua made his stand. He put his line in the sand, so to speak, and let the people know his choice. He had weighed all the pros of serving Yahweh against the cons of serving Him and solidified his commitment to God.

Joshua had watched God work in drawing the Israelites out of Egypt. He watched as the Egyptian gods were powerless to do anything against his God. He watched as God cared for the Israelites in the wilderness by providing manna, water from the rock and quail. He watched as Moses spoke with the Most High God as if he were talking to a friend. He watched as God forgave His people time after time when the Israelites sinned against Him. Joshua watched as God changed command from Moses to himself. He watched as God gave Jericho into their hands. He asked God to stop the movement of the sun and moon—and God answered. This was no impulsive decision for Joshua. He knew what the other life had to offer, slavery to a people and gods who could not satisfy. Or, the abundant life God had to offer; a life, not of compulsion, but of a Father’s love for His precious children.

Joshua encourages people to “determine” for themselves.

The excellent part of Joshua’s example is that he is letting the people have a choice. He is telling them what he is determining for himself and for his family and then he leaves the option to the people. God does not want us to choose Him because we are forced to. He wants to give us all of the many blessings He has for us because He loves us. He wants us to choose to love and follow Him out of our love for Him and all He has done for us. He is the only one who can save. He is the only One who gives good gifts to His children. [So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him \(Matthew 7:11, NLT\).](#)

After you discover the facts of God, after you calculate exactly all He has done for you, **determine to make God the center of your household.**

### Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Reflection

- Are you determined to make God the center of your household? If so, why? If not, what’s holding you back? What does this look like in your home?
- How do you think people will respond differently to your example of living a life devoted to God versus someone who tells them they should live devoted to God? Which way is more likely to succeed? Why?
- What is one area of your life that you need to fully devote to God? Why do you think this is? What are you determined to do about it?
- Concluding the series on Joshua... What are two or three things you are taking away from this twelve-part series?

### —FINAL CHALLENGE QUESTIONS—

How are you going to think or live differently in light of what you have read, heard, and discussed this week?

How does this week’s message shape or nurture your relationship with God?

BONUS: For those of you with kids or around kids: What is one truth from this message that you can share with your kids in a way that they would relate to or understand?