



Joshua Daily Devotionals

Week One: Holiness is Loving God and Loving Our Neighbor

Monday, 4/13

“Moses my servant is dead. Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, just as I promised to Moses. . . . Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go.” (Joshua 1:2–3, 7 ESV)

In Joshua 1:1–9, we get a summary of the man’s life: he completed the work of Moses. Joshua and Moses are forever linked. He is introduced in Exodus 17 as Moses’ assistant and military commander. When Moses dies, Joshua is installed as Israel’s leader and is told to carry out all the things that Moses did not. When the work is done, Joshua disappears.

Joshua is mentioned 168 times in the book bearing his name. He’s mentioned 6 more times in the story of his death in Judges 1–2. After that, he’s only mentioned 4 times in the rest of the Bible. For comparison, Moses is mentioned 852 times.

Outside of his role during the conquest, we don’t know much about Joshua. He is forever in the shadow of his mentor. And yet, he remained faithful to God and finished the work Moses was unable to finish.

Considering the difficulty of Joshua’s calling, what do you think it was like for him always to be in Moses’ shadow? How do you think he was able to stay faithful?

Joshua 1:1–9

Tuesday, 4/14

In *True Spirituality*, Francis Schaeffer argues that the most basic commandment is the Tenth: Thou shalt not covet. Schaeffer thought that coveting was the opposite of Jesus' two Great Commandments: love God and love others. This does not mean that all desire is sin. Desire becomes coveting when it interferes with our love for God and others. He writes:

“Does this mean that any desire is coveting and therefore sinful? The Bible makes plain that this is not so—all desire is not sin. So then the question arises, when does proper desire become coveting? I think we can put the answer down simply: desire becomes sin when it fails to include love of God or men. Further, I think there are two practical tests as to when we are coveting against God or men; first, I am to love God enough to be contented; second, I am to love men enough not to envy.” (*True Spirituality*, 8.)

Schaeffer makes an interesting connection between the Tenth Commandment and Jesus' two Great Commandments. We can measure our love for God by our contentment. We can measure our love for others by whether or not we envy them.

One way we can be more content is to remind ourselves of the ways in which God has blessed us instead of dwelling on the things we think we lack. Another way is to “rejoice with those who rejoice” (Romans 12:15)—celebrating the blessings in other people's lives rather than envying them.

How has God blessed you today? Who can you rejoice with today?

Romans 13:8–10

Wednesday, 4/15

To Schaeffer, humanity's rebellion against God began with thanklessness. He writes:

“I think we can see all this in its proper perspective if we go back to Romans 1:21: ‘Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts were darkened.’ This is the central point: They were not thankful. Instead of giving thanks they ‘became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.’ Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools. The beginning of man’s rebellion against God was, and is, the lack of a thankful heart. They did not have proper, thankful hearts—seeing themselves as creatures before the Creator and being bowed not only in their knees, but in their stubborn hearts.” (*True Spirituality*, 10).

When we recognize that everything we have is from God, we cannot help but humble ourselves before Him. When we get discontent or entitled, it is not long before we resent God or puff ourselves above Him.

How has God blessed you today? Who can you rejoice with today? (Can you think of different answers than yesterday?)

Romans 1:21

Thursday, 4/16

Having shown that covetousness can manifest itself as thanklessness toward God, Schaeffer shows us another way it can manifest itself: envy of our neighbor. He writes:

“The second test as to when proper desire becomes coveting is that we should love men enough not to envy, and this is not only envy for money; it is for everything. It can, for instance, be envy of his spiritual gifts. There is a simple test for this. Natural desires have become coveting against a fellow creature, one of our kind, a fellow man, when we have a mentality that would give us secret satisfaction at his misfortune. If a man has something, and he loses it, do we have an inward pleasure? A secret satisfaction at his loss?” (*True Spirituality*, 11)

How do we react when we see others blessed with things that we do not have? Can we rejoice with them, or do we get jealous? When we truly love our neighbor, we can delight in their blessing and share with them in their joy. When we are content with the ways in which God is blessing us, we are freed from the need to compare.

How has God blessed you today? Who can you rejoice with today? (Can you think of different answers than Tuesday and Wednesday?)

Romans 12:15

Friday, 4/17

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:37–39 ESV)

When Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment in the law was, He responded: “Love God; love your neighbor.” This has come to be known as “The Great Commandment,” the primary ethic of Christianity. When we talk about the “measurables” of spirituality, these are it. As important as things like reading your Bible, worship, and prayer are, true spirituality is not measured by those things but by the extent we love God and love our neighbors.

Spiritual disciplines like prayer, worship, and Bible reading are *means* of forming us into people who love God and love neighbor, but they are not the *ends* themselves.

Two things stand out to me about Joshua’s spirituality. First, he had unwavering trust in God during a difficult time in Israel’s history. Joshua was asked to do things most of us will never experience, and he remained faithful to the end.

Second, Joshua did not seem to have any personal agenda in leading Israel. He was thrust into his position having served under Moses. He completed the work God gave to Moses, and then he stepped aside. Having led Israel in the conquest, Joshua probably could have made himself Israel’s first king. But, he didn’t do that. He completed God’s work and then he stepped down.

What is most impressive to you about Joshua’s example?

Matthew 22:34–40

Saturday, 4/18

“Therefore, be very strong to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, turning aside from it neither to the right hand nor to the left.” (Joshua 23:6 ESV)

This week we have introduced some of the core tenets of spiritual formation found in Francis Schaeffer’s *True Spirituality* and tied those tenets to the story of Joshua.

Jesus told us that the greatest commandment is “Love God,” and the second is like it: “Love your neighbor.” These are the metrics of spiritual formation. To the extent that a model of formation helps us grow in our love for God and love for others, it is “working.”

Schaeffer wrote that the *opposite* of loving God is thanklessness and the *opposite* of loving our neighbor is envy. To him, the keys to growing in faith is learning to recognize and appreciate God’s provision and discovering the joy of celebrating with others.

To Schaeffer, the key to both of *these* things is humility—recognizing ourselves as creatures before our Creator.

Joshua certainly modeled this humility. In Joshua 23, he gave a farewell speech that epitomized his life philosophy. He reminded Israel to do two things: trust God and follow the teaching of Moses.

How can you do a better job at loving God and loving others today?

Joshua 23:1–16