

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

C O U R A G E

These questions are designed to extend the impact of the weekend message. Use them to go deeper in your personal study time, with your family, and/or with a group.

BOLDNESS IS NEEDED TO POSSESS ALL GOD IS WILLING TO GIVE. THIS STUDY OF JOSHUA WILL CALL INDIVIDUALS AND CHURCHES TO THE KIND OF COURAGE THAT CROSSES RIVERS, FACES GIANTS, AND CLAIMS THEIR FULL INHERITANCE.

- 1** Our biggest regrets are typically our “inaction regrets”. Have you found that to be true in your life? If so, share an example of how fear has kept you from going where you really wanted to go.

- 2** On a similar note, many churches allow fear to keep them where they are instead of where they ought to be. Why is that often the case? Follow up: Thankfully, The Hills does not have a track record of staying on the safe side of the river. How have you seen this to be true in the history of our church?

- 3** **“BE STRONG AND COURAGEOUS”** **Read Joshua 1:1-5.** This was a pivotal moment for Joshua and the people of Israel (they needed to find the courage to take what God had already promised to give them). What were some of the obstacles that could have stopped their forward progress? How did God seek to strengthen Joshua and give him confident hope to press forward?

- 4** **COURAGE IS...formed by vision and faith.** **Read Joshua 1:6.** Joshua never lost the vision from years earlier of what life could be like on the other side of the river even though ten of the spies saw the same thing but returned scared (Numbers 13-14). The difference is that Joshua and Caleb allowed what they saw to be shaped by what God said. Are you more prone to be swayed by “good reasons” not to do something or by “God’s promises”? How has what God says shaped the way you’ve lived most of your life?

5 COURAGE IS...fueled by the Word of God. **Read Joshua 1:7-9.** Nowhere in His instructions does God give Joshua any military advice. Instead, God’s word to Joshua was to get into God’s Word. Why was it so important for Joshua to “meditate on it day and night” and how is that still relevant to us today? Share some ways you practice this discipline on a regular basis. **Note for leaders:** after this discussion reference the Prayer Guide and encourage everyone to go through it together.

6 COURAGE IS...fanned by demonstrated unity. Reading the same Word helps God’s people to get on the same page. The greatest threat to Israelite victory would be Israelite disunity. **Read Joshua 1:12-18.** Why were the instructions to the two and half tribes so significant then and how are they relevant to our situation today?

7 We must possess courage to possess all God wants us to have. God didn’t bring us out of “Egypt” just so we could wander in the “wilderness”. Yet we often settle for life on the wrong side of the river. The Courage Campaign is about our desire to possess all God wants our church to have. What is one thing that really excites you about this campaign?

Prayer exercise: Palms Down, Palms Up. Have everyone hold their hands out with their palms down (pray sentence prayers releasing any fears you have). Then turn your palms up (pray sentence prayers receiving the courage God has for you).



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1 Read Joshua 1:9. How did this verse encourage you during the past week?

2 The strongest evidence of faith is the refusal to live an intimidated life. **Read Acts 4:13.** What was it about Peter and John that made others recognize their courage? Who are some people in your life who display a similar type of courage and what stands out about their faith?

3 GOD LOOKS FOR... courage. **Read Joshua 2:1.** It might surprise you that the two spies spent their first night in the house of a prostitute. Why do you think God chose Rahab to work His plan and purpose (see **Joshua 2:24**)? What causes some people to lose courage while other people grow in courage?

4 COURAGE KNOWS... that God has a winning record.
Read Joshua 2:8-11. Courageous faith is built on the foundation of outrageous truth. What are some of the “outrageous” truths followers of Jesus hold on to that remind us of God’s winning record? How do they give us boldness to face the future (see **2 Corinthians 5:6-8**)?

5 COURAGE KNOWS... that you have to pick a team. **Read Joshua 2:12-13.** Rahab understood that you cannot remain neutral when it comes to the future planned by the Lord of heaven and earth; so, she decided to switch sides. The people of God have always had to live with the tension of living in the world but

wearing a different jersey. How have you experienced this tension in your own life? What is one thing you can do differently this week to face this tension with courage?

6 COURAGE KNOWS... that others need to know the score.

Read Joshua 2:17-18. The spies ask Rahab to say something and to do something that would put her life at great risk. She could have easily been betrayed (it took a lot of courage to keep that scarlet cord tied to her window). But courage cannot keep the hope of salvation a secret. Share an example of someone you know who has acted with courageous obedience in order to help save others (reference the example of Private Doss from Hacksaw Ridge). What compelled them to do what they did and how can their example encourage you to have the boldness to do the same?

7 GOD LOOKS FOR... Rahab. May we never forget how much God wants to save those who are far from Him. Don’t be shocked that Rahab had an interest in God, and don’t be surprised that God was interested in Rahab. God never allows anyone’s past to keep them from His intended future. Who are the “Rahabs” in our community? What needs to change in your heart to start noticing “Rahab” like God does?

Close in Prayer: Remind your group about the symbolism of the red bracelets and the purpose of the Courage Campaign as you spend some time in prayer.



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1 Life often presents moments where one must choose to either stay where they are or attempt to go where they want to be. What makes the choice difficult is that there is a barrier between “are” and “want to be” that will require courage to cross. What are some of the barriers you’ve faced in your journey to a better future?

Read Joshua 1:9 & 1 Corinthians 16:13 How have verses like these inspired you to have the courage to cross?

2 WE ARE OFTEN PUT... in situations where timidity would stay put. Read Joshua 3:1-3, 5, 15a). The Israelites faced an immediate obstacle as the river to their new future was at flood stage (it was not an optimal time to cross). When have you been tempted to let the river make the call and “stay put” instead of listening to the call of God?

3 RIVER CROSSERS... let God lead the way. The Israelites spent three days camping beside the river before Joshua gave them these instructions. **Read Joshua 3:9-13.** Why did God have them camp beside the river for three days? What message was He giving them by mentioning the ark of the covenant?

4 RIVER CROSSERS... get ready to be amazed! Joshua was leading a nation that for the most part had no memory of the Red Sea experience. That’s one of the reasons he reminded them, “tomorrow the LORD will do amazing things among you” (Joshua 3:5). Every generation needs its own “crossing moment”. What

are some “amazing things” you’ve seen God do among His people recently and what lessons have you learned in the process?

5 RIVER CROSSERS... set their feet in the water! Read Joshua 3:15b-16a. The water did not stop flowing because they walked beside the river, but because they walked into it. They didn’t experience the miracle until they started walking (their faith moved them to get their feet wet). Share an example of how you’ve seen someone walk by faith recently. How have you experienced this in your life?

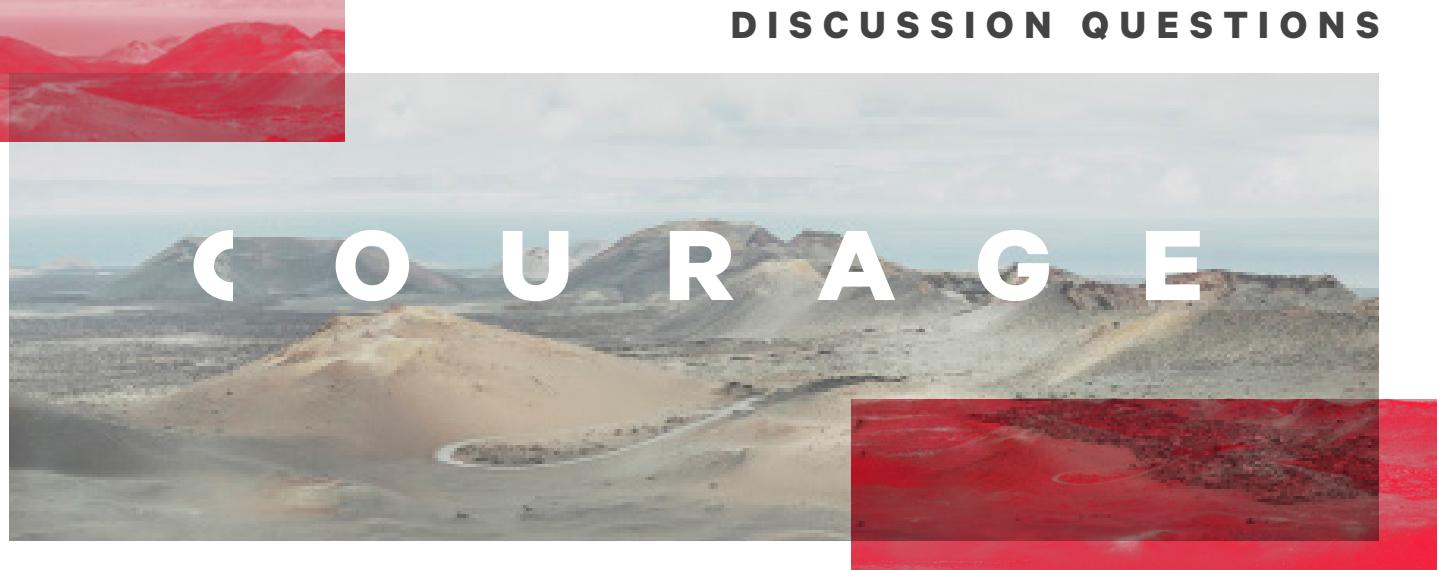
6 Faith moves toward the future in spite of the river because of its confidence that God will make a way. Rick mentioned that “*River crossers let feelings follow their obedience; they don’t allow obedience to follow their feelings.*” Sometimes you have to do things even when you don’t feel like it. Staying put may feel safer, but your soul will dry up if your feet never get wet. So, where do you need to get your feet wet?

Close in Prayer: Remember, it takes courage to go to “a cross.” Your cross is the journey you would never take if you were not following Jesus. There will always be excuses to stay put. **Read 2 Timothy 1:7** and close in prayer by praising God for being bigger than any river on our path and by remembering the we serve a mission greater than any fear we face. Ask God to give you the courage to cross...



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1 As we cross the half way point of this series take a few moments to talk about what you're learning and what you're looking forward to regarding our future together as a church. What is one thing you've learned so far and how are you applying it to your daily walk? What excites you most about the Courage Campaign?

2 FEAR NEEDS... memories of courage. Read Joshua 4:1-3, 8-9, 19-24. God wanted Israel to always recall the significance of this moment, so He had someone from each tribe pick a huge rock from the river bottom. What's the significance of having them pick stones from the middle of the Jordan? What is the purpose of memorials like this one and what are some key examples of memorials in your journey with God?

3 "BOULDER BELIEVERS"... take courage from the intentional memory of God's story. The Bible says you exist to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. But with all the other competing narratives (Hedonism says you exist to be pleased, materialism says you exist to consume, and humanism says you have no true reason to exist at all) you will forget God's story unless you intend not to. What are some important steps we can take to help us remember who we are? In addition to some of these Next Steps what are some "personal stones" you can erect to recall those times God got you "through a river"?

4 "BOULDER BELIEVERS"... make the courage of the next generation a priority. God anticipated the questions of children. Read Exodus 12:25-27. What was an important teachable moment for you when you were young, and what significant teachable moment have you had with one of your children?

5 It only takes one generation for degeneration to take place. With that in mind, what are some examples of strategic things we're doing at The Hills to develop the courage of the next generation? What is one thing you can do to help in this area?

6 COURAGE NEEDS the right kind of fear. Read Joshua 4:24. It sounds strange, but the way you conquer fear is to get a bigger and better fear. Why is that true? Read Proverbs 9:10. What does it mean to "fear God" and how is a person's life changed when they have a healthy fear of God?

Next Steps: Before you close in prayer, have everyone reflect on these two questions and briefly discuss: **1)** Where do you need to set up some stones to remind you to fear only God? and **2)** Who do you need to pass your story on to?



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ON THE EVE OF ISRAEL'S FIRST BATTLE FOR THE PROMISED LAND, GOD ASKS THEM TO DO THE UNTHINKABLE. HIS REQUEST WOULD MAKE THEM INCREDIBLY VULNERABLE TO ENEMY ATTACK. SURRENDERING TO GOD'S COMMANDS CAN SEEM CRAZY, BUT WE COME TO REALIZE THAT ONE MOMENT OF SURRENDER IS ALWAYS PART OF A BIGGER STORY.

1 Read Joshua 5:1-3. The Israelites enter enemy territory, set up camp, and put their army under the knife. When has God asked you to do something that didn't make sense from your perspective?

2 Read Joshua 5:4-9. The Israelite's surrender was part of a bigger story of grace. What is the relationship between forgiveness and obedience?

3 Read Joshua 5:10. Their surrender was part of a bigger story of rescue. The first passover was in Egypt - enemy territory. Once again the Israelites are in enemy territory remembering the exodus. Why was it significant to remember God's rescue before any battles were fought? (*Hint: Look at this week's courage verse – Psalm 56:11*)

4 Read Joshua 5:11-12. Surrender was part of a bigger story of promise. The new generation waited forty years before they could taste the fruit of the land. But they get a foretaste of what God has promised before they go to claim their inheritance. What has God promised us in Jesus? What are the moments we taste some of what's been promised?

5 Read Colossians 2:9-15. Paul uses circumcision as a metaphor to talk about baptism. How is our surrender to Jesus in baptism and in daily life part of a bigger story of grace, rescue, and redemption?



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1 It takes courage to march after God. Why does the Bible address the topic of fear so much and how has it helped you face your fears?

2 GOD'S ENEMIES... have a courage problem. **Read Joshua 5:1 and 6:1.** Jericho was in lockdown mode “because of the Israelites.” The enemy’s chief strategy has always been to lie, especially when it comes to the future. What is Satan’s aim with the lies he spreads? How have you experienced this in your life?

3 COURAGE MARCHES... from victory. **Read Joshua 6:2-5.** What’s significant about the message God gave them, “*I have delivered Jericho into your hands*”? How should the truth of living *from* victory instead of *for* victory impact the way you live for God each day (see **Colossians 2:15**)?

4 COURAGE MARCHES... in obedience. **Read Hebrews 11:30.** God often breaks with our logic so we will trust His strength. Walls don’t come down by good sense, but by obedience. What are some examples of “walls” in your life that need to come down? What is one step of obedience God might be asking you to take to trust His strength so that your “walls” will come down?

5 COURAGE MARCHES... despite walls. We march despite walls because God cares about the people trapped by them. **Read Joshua 6:20, 25.** This Courage Campaign is not ultimately about us or about building buildings. With that in mind, what is this campaign about and how can better buildings help us reach that goal?

6 GOD'S ARMIES see a will, not a wall. We are too motivated by grace to be intimidated by gates. We want to go where God sends to rescue those God loves. **Read 2 Peter 3:9.** What encouragement do those words from Peter give you? Where is God asking you to march with more courage?

PRAYER

Spend some time praying about what God is teaching you in this series. Pray for the **courage** to march after God.



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1 Looking back to last week's courage verse, "*When I am afraid, I put my trust in you*" Psalm 56:3. How did reflecting on this verse impact how you faced any challenges you had this past week?

2 We've all had some days we will never forget (good and bad). Take a moment to share some of those experiences. How was God involved in those days and what life lessons did you walk away with?

3 THE COURAGEOUS... witness the outrageous! This week's message focused on a day that Joshua would never forget (a day he asked God to do something that seemed to be outrageous). **Read Joshua 10:6-14.** What are 2-3 things that stand out to you from this passage? What amazed you the most, God's power or the fact that Joshua was bold enough to ask for something so outrageous? Why?

4 BECAUSE... they don't pray small. Prayer is a defiant act of resistance to the way things are. Through prayer we ask God to enter history on behalf of His people to accomplish His mission, and we don't ask small, for we know that our audacity can never exceed His capacity. How should this truth impact the way we pray (see **1 John 5:14**)?

5 With the last question in mind, talk about it on a personal level and then with our church family in mind: How big is the biggest prayer you have ever prayed and how did God respond? How does this relate to The Hills Church and our Courage Campaign?

6 BECAUSE... they don't stay still. Joshua didn't just present God with a wish list; he enlisted (that all night march was a 25 mile hike that ascended 4,000 feet). Joshua wasn't asking for outrageous intervention apart from courageous participation. Why are both essential and which one do you struggle with the most?

7 Our courage verse for this week is **1 John 5:14 "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us."** What is one thing you need to do today so that you can have the courage **to ask for more courage?**

PRAYER & FASTING

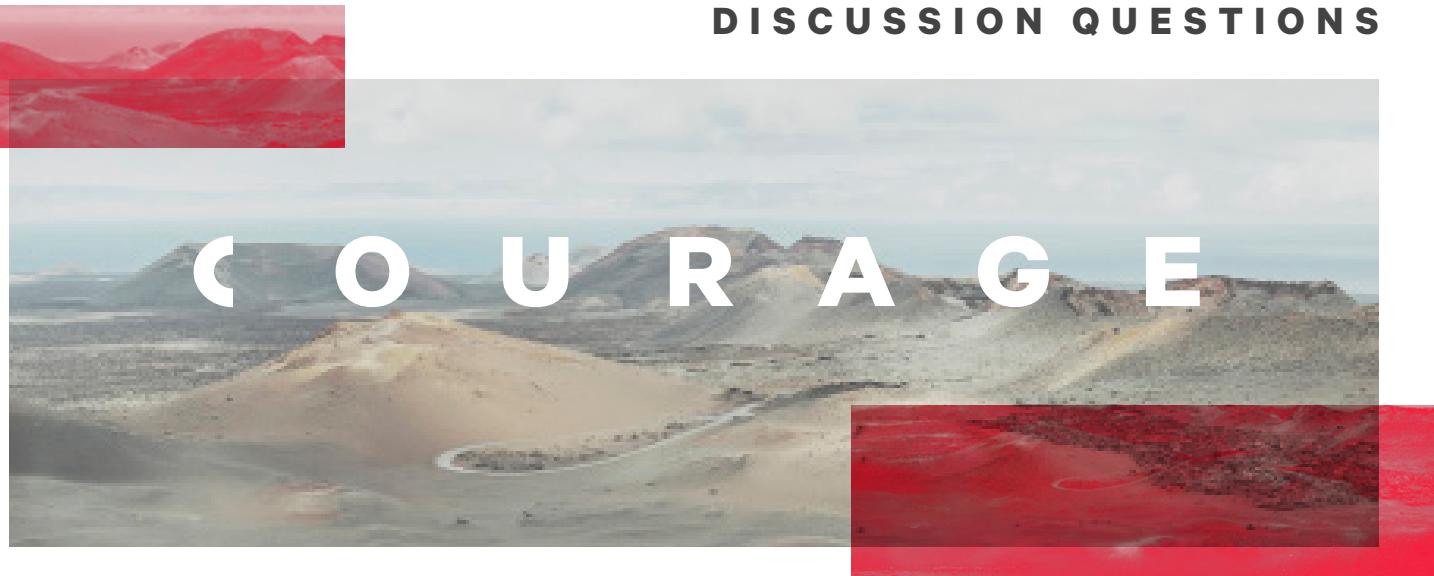
This week our leaders have asked us to take a day to pray and fast (November 8). Rick mentioned that "*through fasting we give up something good to create margin for something better—time with God.*" So, let's spend time with God this week, and let's have the courage to ask for the "outrageous".



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1 Our Courage Campaign has already been a success in many powerful ways. What is one thing that has impacted you during this series? How has God called you to a new level of courage in some area of your life?

2 COURAGE IS a decision. Courage is not being ignorant of fear; courage is being cognizant of fear and choosing to do the right thing anyway. Share an experience in your life where you decided to be courageous.

3 Joshua had led a generation of bold deciders, but courage is not hereditary. As his season of leadership nears its end, Joshua realizes it is time for the choice of a new generation. **Read Joshua 24:14-15.** What are 1-2 things that stand out to you from this passage? What encouragement do you find from it?

4 WE CHOOSE... personally — “then choose for yourselves.” No one can be devoted to God for you. Courageous faith can be modeled, but it cannot be inherited. We must each pick up our own cross (see **Luke 14:27**). What do you think Jesus meant by that and how does that impact your relationship with him?

5 WE CHOOSE... persistently — “this day...” It is easy to pick up “extra gods” along the way in the journey of life, so we must regularly and ruthlessly assess what is competing with God for

our allegiance. The choice to be courageous is a decision we make every day (see **Luke 9:23**). What is one thing you can do every day that helps you put God first?

6 WE CHOOSE... purposefully — “whom you will serve...” As a church this campaign is calling us to make some courageous choices: a) *mission over caution*, b) *unity over timidity*, and c) *faith over fear*. To be outrageously and courageously generous comes down to one question: **who or what do we trust most for our future?** How has that question impacted they way you've purposefully lived and given throughout your life?

7 WE CHOOSE... publicly — “but as for me and my household...” Joshua went public with his decision. You cannot get crucified in a closet. That is one reason Jesus told us to make disciples by baptizing. What area of you faith walk do you need to be more public with? What is one thing you can do this week to be more public with your faith?

PRAYER

As you close spend some time as a group showing your gratitude for what God has done and will continue to do through the Courage Campaign.



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1 Chapters 11 and 12 of Joshua give an account of all the Israelites had accomplished (they defeated 31 kings in all). We might assume that the conquest was quick and complete but neither was true. **Read Joshua 11:18.** Great efforts, no matter how worthy, can be exhausting, and keeping people motivated is a challenge. How have you experienced this to be true in your life?

2 WHERE WE ARE: *the enemy of victory is complacency.* Israel controlled the land but there was still lots of work to be done. Many began to get complacent and were willing to settle for what they have. **Read Joshua 18:3** to see how Joshua responded. Sometimes the biggest obstacle to a great finish is a good start. How have you seen this to be true in general and how could it be a challenge for our church at this stage of the Courage Campaign?

3 WHAT WE DO... *let's be grateful for the victories we've already had.* Joshua was a proponent of using past victories to fuel courage to pursue future victories. **Read Joshua 10:24-25.** One way to combat complacency is to remember the places where God has allowed us to set our feet. Rick mentioned a number of great victories God has given us in the last two years. Share some of the ones that stood out to you the most. How can these memories motivate us to have the courage to continue to pursue future victories?

4 WHAT WE DO... *let's be mindful of the challenges that are still ahead.* Joshua knew that Israel's enemies had been vanquished but had not vanished. We know the same thing. Our enemy will always attempt to discourage us (see **Ephesians 6:10, 12**). What are some ways Satan might try to discourage us as a church going forward? Take a moment to pray for those right now.

5 WHAT WE DO... *let's be faithful to the mission we must always pursue.* Our mission as a church is to make and grow follower of Jesus. That's why we are going to continue to do what Jesus said in **Mark 16:15, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation."** What inspires you most about our mission as a church? What is one thing you can do to be more faithful to the mission God has given us?

6 Stay courageous! For God's work to continue in this church it must continue in you. And it will. God has so many more places for us to set our feet. The gates of hell are no match for a church that is strong and courageous! What is one thing you can do to allow God's work to continue in and through you? If there is a specific area in your life where you need God to work, share that with the group and then pray for each other as you close your time together.

