

Undivided

Joshua 24:14-25

This Week's Focus

Have you ever started a project and halfway through, wished you hadn't? Or maybe you joined a club or team that demanded more time than you anticipated. Anything worth doing requires commitment—if we hope to finish, we must count the cost and be fully devoted to seeing things through.

This is why Jesus called all who wished to be His disciples to take up their crosses and follow Him (Matt. 16:24). In this session, we will look at Joshua's final charge to the people of Israel in which he makes clear that there is no middle ground when it comes to following the one true God. We are either "all in," or we are out.

Joshua 24:14-25

Begin by reading the passage through two times.

14 "Therefore, 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." **19** But Joshua told the people, "You will not be able to worship Yahweh, because He is a holy God. He is a jealous God; He will not remove your transgressions and sins. **20** If you abandon the LORD and worship foreign gods, He will turn against you, harm you, and completely destroy you, after He has been good to you." **21** "No!" the people answered Joshua. "We will worship the LORD." **22** Joshua then told the people, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you yourselves have chosen to worship Yahweh." "We are witnesses," they said. **23** "Then get rid of the foreign gods that are among you and offer your hearts to the LORD, the God of Israel." **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.

Share about a time when your actions did not match your words. What happened?

Why do we sometimes talk a big game, but fail to follow through? What does that say about us?

God has been faithful

We've marched with Joshua from the eastern side of the Jordan River, through it, over Jericho and Ai, and throughout all of Canaan. Seven years of war and twenty-three years of settling into the land have taken place. Walls have fallen, altars have been built; the sun stood still, cities were constructed, and civil war was narrowly averted. Now at approximately 110 years of age and about to pass on to his heavenly reward, Joshua gathers all Israel and their leaders at Shechem for his final words to them.

Joshua 24:14-15

What does it mean to "fear the LORD"? According to verse 15, what does that involve? What might that look like for you in your context?

Why do you think Joshua opened his challenge to the Israelites with this bold plea to choose sides? What risks did he assume by making such a bold declaration?

Joshua 24:16-18

On what basis did the Israelites make their decision to follow, worship, and serve the Lord exclusively (vv. 17-18)?

How did Joshua's public stand influence the people's response? What is the difference between "telling" something and "showing" something?

Joshua 24:19-25

How did Joshua respond in verses 20-21 to the Israelites' claim that they would serve the Lord (see also v. 22)? Does his response surprise you? Why or why not?

What did Joshua say would happen if the people turned their backs on God (v. 20)? Why did the Israelites need a reminder?

Why did Joshua continue to question the Israelites after they declared their devotion to God? What does this tell us about him? About the severity of his challenge?

Why must we be "all in" when it comes to following Jesus? What might that require of us (see Matt. 6:24)?

Now What?

What are some common idols that you and your peers may fall into worshiping (popularity, fear, acceptance, achievement, etc.)? Which are you most prone to?

Joshua, in essence, was challenging the Israelites to consider whether they loved the Lord enough to give up their idols. What idols might the Lord be calling you to part with?

What can we learn from Joshua's interactions with the people of Israel in terms of helping one another pursue Christ?

What are some practical ways we can support each other in following and worshiping Christ exclusively? How might we help one another live on mission?



Central Truth

God requires undivided loyalty—you cannot serve both God and idols.

Personal Challenge



Dwell: Have you embraced Joshua's challenge to serve the Lord alone? How can you know whether you have truly and sincerely embraced this challenge? According to Joshua, claiming we have embraced a life of exclusive devotion to God is not enough. We must demonstrate our faith with action. Set aside some time this week to take a personal inventory of your life, your priorities, desires, and focus. Where do you need to redirect your energy and focus to prioritize Christ? What is hindering you? Honestly wrestle with these questions and consider seeking out a brother or sister in Christ who will hold you accountable to strive for progress in these areas.

Memorize: Joshua 24:15

Pray: Thank God for sending Jesus to do what we could not do on our own—to live the fully devoted, righteous, mission-minded life that we have failed to live. Thank Him that His righteousness is credited to us through faith in Him such that we can live confidently for His kingdom and mission. Pray that He would help you to repent from those idols that are hindering you from loving Christ supremely and committing fully to the mission He has given you. Finally, pray that He would direct you in your efforts to commit fully to Him and to lovingly hold those around you to their commitment to do the same.

Keep on Digging

Read, meditate on, and journal about Matthew 7:15-29. As you read, consider what kind of devotion Jesus desires His disciples to have to Him. List three takeaways that you will strive to apply to your life this week. Consider the areas of your life where your loyalties are divided. Record a prayer to God in your journal, asking Him to help you grow in your love for Him such that you would willingly part with your idols in order to focus on His glory, kingdom, and mission.