

# explore

Apr-Jun 2025

For Your Daily Walk With God

*"They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, 'Hosanna!' 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!' 'Blessed is the king of Israel!'"*

**John 12:12-13**

**Acts 9 - 17**

Matthew  
Hoskinson

**Easter**

Tim  
Thornborough

**Song of Songs**

Tim  
Chester

# How to use *explore*

## Issue 110

The 91 daily readings in this issue of *Explore* are designed to help you understand and apply the Bible as you read it each day.

## It's serious!

We suggest that you allow 15 minutes each day to work through the Bible passage with the notes. It should be a meal, not a snack! Readings from other parts of the Bible can throw valuable light on the study passage. These cross-references can be skipped if you are already feeling full up, but will expand your grasp of the Bible. *Explore* uses the NIV2011 Bible translation, but you can also use it with the NIV1984 or ESV translations.

Sometimes a prayer box will encourage you to stop and pray through the lessons—but it is always important to allow time to pray for God's Spirit to bring his word to life, and to shape the way we think and live through it.

## We're serious!

All of us who work on *Explore* share a passion for getting the Bible into people's lives.

We fiercely hold to the Bible as God's word—to honour and follow, not to explain away.

1

Find a time you can read the Bible each day

2

Find a place where you can be quiet and think

3

Ask God to help you understand

4

Carefully read through the Bible passage for today

5

Study the verses with *Explore*, taking time to think

6

Pray about what you have read

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# Welcome to *explore*

Being a Christian isn't a skill you learn, nor is it a lifestyle choice. It's about having a real relationship with the living God through his Son, Jesus Christ. The Bible tells us that this relationship is like a marriage.

It's important to start with this, because it is easy to view the practice of daily Bible reading as a Christian duty, or a hard discipline that is just one more thing to get done in our busy lives.

But the Bible is God speaking to us: opening his mind to us on how he thinks, what he wants for us and what his plans are for the world. And most importantly, it tells us what he has done for us in sending his Son, Jesus Christ, into the world. It's the way that the Spirit shows Jesus to us, and changes us as we behold his glory.

Here are a few suggestions for making your time with God more of a joy than a burden:

- ☛ *Time:* Find a time when you will not be disturbed. Many people have found that the morning is the best time as it sets you up for the day. But whatever works for you is right for you.
- ☛ *Place:* Jesus says that we are not to make a great show of our religion (see Matthew 6:5-6), but rather, to pray with the door to our room shut. Some people plan to get to work a few minutes earlier and get their Bible out in an office or some other quiet corner.
- ☛ *Prayer:* Although *Explore* helps with specific prayer ideas from the passage, do try to develop your own lists to pray through. Use the flap inside the back

cover to help with this. And allow what you read in the Scriptures to shape what you pray for yourself, the world and others.

- ☛ *Feast:* You can use the "Bible in a year" line at the bottom of each page to help guide you through the entire Scriptures throughout 2025. This year, each day explores a different genre of the Bible. On Sundays, you'll read from a New Testament epistle; on Mondays, from the first five books of the Bible ("the Law"); Tuesdays cover Old Testament history books; Wednesdays enjoy the Psalms and Thursdays Old Testament poetry; Fridays focus on the prophets, and then on Saturdays you'll read through the Gospels. You can find the original version at [bible-reading.com/bible-plan/html](http://bible-reading.com/bible-plan/html).

- ☛ *Share:* As the saying goes, *expression deepens impression*. So try to cultivate the habit of sharing with others what you have learned. Why not join our Facebook group to share your encouragements, questions and prayer requests? Search for *Explore: For your daily walk with God*.

And enjoy it! As you read God's word and God's Spirit works in your mind and your heart, you are going to see Jesus, and appreciate more of his love for you and his promises to you. That's amazing!



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# JOSHUA: Promised land

*Joshua is a book about courage, strength and security. Sounds good? It's also a book about being radical, obedient and uncompromising.*

And more than that, it's a book about the God who is perfect, powerful and promise-keeping.

Since Joshua picks up the story where Deuteronomy leaves it, we begin at the end of the previous book...

## Read Deuteronomy 34

- ❓ *Where is Moses (v 1-3)?*
- ❓ *What is exciting about what he can see (v 4)?*
- ❓ *What note of tragedy is there (v 4)?*

Moses had, in God's strength, brought the Israelites out of Egypt and led them through the desert. He had, with God's guidance, given them God's law, and pleaded with God for them when they sinned. Now he was dead.

Imagine you're an Israelite standing on the edge of the land. It's full of enemies. And your great leader has died.

- ❓ *How would you feel?*
- ❓ *How might verse 4 and verse 9 give you some hope?*

## Read Joshua 1:1-5

- ❓ *What will God do (v 2, 3-4, 5)?*
- ❓ *What must Joshua do (v 2)?*

These are outrageous promises! God is describing a huge area of land, full of powerful city-kings and people groups. But God points Joshua to the fact that he'd promised this land to Moses (v 3). When he'd done

that, Israel were slaves under the boot of a superpower, Egypt (Exodus 3:7-10). Before that, he had promised it to Abraham, as he'd reminded Moses (Deuteronomy 34:4). When he'd done that, Abraham had been a childless nomad. Yet here his descendants were, numerous and free, on the edge of the promised land.

There was much to do before the land was Israel's. Yet the land was already Israel's. God had promised it to them. And, as he was reminding Moses and Joshua, God does what he says he'll do. Which is one of the themes of the book of Joshua: God keeps his promises.

## Apply

"In keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells" (2 Peter 3:13). The ultimate promised land still lies before us.

- ❓ *Does anything ever make you doubt you'll get there?*

Remember that your future relies on God's promise! Joshua could look back to God's promise-keeping rescue from Egypt through Moses—and we can look back to God's promise-keeping rescue from death through the Lord Jesus. We know that what God has promised, he does!

- ❓ *How does this expel your doubts?*

# Living by the promises

*God keeps his promises. So how will knowing this truth affect his people?*

## Read Joshua 1:6-9

### God's promises

- ❓ *What promises does God make here?*
- ❓ *Many of them are repeating what God had told Joshua in verses 1-5. Why does he repeat himself, do you think?*

### God's people

- ❓ *What is the repeated phrase here?*

Each time this phrase comes up, God gives Joshua reasons why he should, and can, act in this way.

- ❓ *What are the reasons (v 6, 9)?*
- ❓ *Between these phrases, God tells Joshua to do something else. What is it (v 7-8)?*

### Apply

- ❓ *Do verses 7-8 describe your attitude to God's word?*
- ❓ *How could you "meditate" on it more often?*
- ❓ *How could you be more "careful to do everything written in it"?*
- ❓ *What motivations do these verses give you to study, speak, remember and obey God's word?*

Verses 7-8 show us what God means by being "strong and courageous". It's not about physical strength. It isn't about never experiencing terror. It's about feeling weak and out of our

depth, and yet still remembering, loving and obeying how God tells us to live—because we know God keeps his promises.

### Looking back

#### Read Joshua 23:1-11

By now, Joshua is "a very old man" (v 1).

- ❓ *What has God done for his people under Joshua's leadership (v 1, 3, 9-10)?*
- ❓ *What will he continue to do (v 5)?*
- ❓ *How should his people respond to his promise (v 6-8, 11)?*

Throughout the book of Joshua, we'll see God's people acting with strength and courage, because they trust God to keep his promises. (We'll also see them failing to do so when they forget his promises.) Again and again, Joshua will teach us: God keeps his promises—so be strong and courageous in obeying him.

#### TIME OUT

Throughout the Scriptures, love for God (v 11) and uncompromising obedience to God (v 6-7) are two sides of the same coin. If we love God, we will obey him; because obeying God is how we love him. **Read John 14:23-24.**

- ❓ *It's worth asking ourselves: is my obedience grudging or loving? Does my love produce obedience or complacency?*

# Restful fighting

*Israel are camped east of the Jordan, ready to cross into enemy territory and make it their home. Except that some of them are already home.*

Two and a half of the twelve tribes had been allocated land east of the river. (See Numbers 32.)

## Rest

### Read Joshua 1:10-13

- ❓ *How has God given the Reubenites, Gadites and half of the Manassites “rest” (v 13)?*

Centuries later, Solomon would sum up what “rest” means: “no adversary or disaster” (1 Kings 5:4). To enjoy rest is to enjoy blessing, to experience life under God’s rule in God’s world.

- ❓ *Why might the command of Joshua 1:10-11 not seem really to apply to these tribes?*

## Fight

### Read Joshua 1:14-15

- ❓ *What does Joshua tell the men who already have “rest” to do?*
- ❓ *How long are they to do this for (v 15)?*
- ❓ *Why might it have been tempting for these men to say “no” to Joshua?*

These men were already enjoying God’s blessing in a way that their brothers weren’t. But they were still asked to “cross over ahead of your fellow Israelites”. Enjoying God’s blessing is not a reason to

retire happily to the sidelines of church life; it frees us to give all we can in service of struggling brothers and sisters. An area of life where God has made things go well for us is an area where he gives us the opportunity to help others into his blessing.

This is, of course, radically challenging to our me-first culture (and hearts). Church is not there to meet our needs; we are there to meet others’ needs. There are times when we need others to put themselves out for us, getting alongside us as we struggle; there are times we should be taking the strain for others.

## Apply

- ❓ *How does this view of church life encourage you and challenge you?*

## Be strong

### Read Joshua 1:16-18

- ❓ *How do these men respond?*
- ❓ *What is their encouragement to Joshua (end of v 18)?*

## Apply

- ❓ *When was the last time you encouraged a fellow Christian to be strong and courageous in obeying the promise-keeping God?*
- ❓ *Who needs you to encourage them in this way today?*

# The faithful prostitute

*She turns up to your church service late, straight from working in the red-light district. Meet Rahab, one of the heroines of Bible history.*

## Read Joshua 2:1-24

### Protected

We don't know why the two Israelite spies end up at a prostitute's house (v 1). But they're found out; and the king orders them to be handed over (v 3).

- ❓ *What's the obvious thing for Rahab, a citizen of Jericho, to do at this point?*
- ❓ *What does she actually do (v 4-7)? Where does her loyalty clearly lie?*

### The prostitute's God

Why would Rahab risk everything to protect two men who have come to spy out her city so they can conquer it?!

- ❓ *What answer do verses 9-13 give?*
- ❓ *Why has Rahab transferred her loyalties from the king of Jericho to the Lord of Israel?*

Rahab knows that God will win. And she knows that she lies on the wrong side, in the path of his victory.

- ❓ *What does she need (v 13)?*

### Protection

- ❓ *What do the men know God will do (v 14)?*
- ❓ *What do they promise Rahab (v 14, 17-20)?*

## Apply

- ❓ *How do we see people in this passage acting courageously because they know God keeps his promises?*
- ❓ *What comforts and security do you risk in order to live for God?*

What the spies promised to do, they did (6:20-25). Rahab trusted God's promises. She trusted God's people's promises. And she was saved to enjoy life among God's people. Not only that but God used her to further his plan to bring his Son into the world (see Matthew 1:1-17, especially verse 5).

The book of Joshua will see much death and devastation as Israel conquers Canaan. Rahab serves as a reminder that no one is beyond God's forgiveness. No one need face destruction. Anyone can recognise God, cry out for salvation, and come into his people to be used for his purposes.

#### TIME OUT

- ❓ *Would a prostitute in your area think she would find a welcome at your church on Sunday? Why/why not?*

## Apply

The spies knew God keeps his promises; and they kept their own promise to Rahab. Keeping our word is God-like.

- ❓ *Are you known as someone who will go to great lengths to keep your promises?*

# Into the land

*At a distance of over 3,000 years, it's easy to miss the significance of what happens in our section today.*

The headline, in a way, isn't so much *how* God brings his people through the River Jordan, but rather *where* he brings them to—the promised land.

## Read all of Joshua 3 – 4

- ❓ *Sum up in a couple of sentences what happens. (If you like, you could sketch it.)*
- ❓ *What particularly strikes you about God from this passage?*

Since it's a long section to read, we'll just pick out a couple of aspects of it here.

## Know the way

The “ark of the covenant” (3:3) was the gold-lined box in which God chose to live among his people.

- ❓ *What wouldn't the people be able to know, left to themselves (3:4)?*
- ❓ *So what did they need to do (v 3-4)?*

The image of God's people entering this promised land is often used as a picture of believers entering the eternal promised land. None of us have ever set foot there. The way to it is through death, and is a route we have never travelled. But, like Israel, we have simply to keep our eye on God's presence. Jesus, God himself made flesh, assures us that: “I am the way” (John 14:6). He promises to “come back and take you to be with me” (v 3).

## Pray

“When I tread the verge of Jordan,  
Bid my anxious fears subside;  
Death of death, and hell's destruction,  
Land me safe on Canaan's side.  
Songs of praises, songs of praises,  
I will ever give to thee; I will ever give to thee.”

## Prepare for God

- ❓ *What do the people need to do (Joshua 3:5)?*
- ❓ *What about the priests (v 6, 8)?*

“Consecrate” means “prepare” or “be ready”. It's not until verse 13 that we discover what God is going to do. But even before they find out, the Israelites are to be prepared, watching with anticipation to see what God will do. The priests are to be obedient to the command of God's chosen leader, even though Joshua's words must have sounded strange!

## Apply

The Christian life is not about obeying God when we can see what he's up to. It's about obeying him while we wait to see what he's up to. It's about living in anticipation that we will see God doing great things for us, in us and through us.

- ❓ *Is this how you live each day? In what ways could you do this more fully?*
- ❓ *How do the events of Joshua 3 – 4 encourage you to get on with it?*



# Neither fight nor flee

Can you recall a time when you were utterly overwhelmed by problems and could see no possible way out? What did you do?

## If I had wings...

### Read Psalm 55:1-8

❓ *What is happening?*

David was a mighty warrior who fearlessly faced down the giant Goliath. But...

❓ *What does he wish he could do (v 8)?*

## The sum of all fears

### Read Psalm 55:9-15

❓ *Where does David face danger?*

❓ *Who is his enemy here?*

The events of 9/11 were terrifying because the great skyscrapers that crumbled before our eyes were such emblems of our security. Likewise, the means of their destruction were not fighter jets but passenger planes, which we use to go on holiday, for business travel, or to see distant family. This shattering of security is what David is facing: the city was the place of safety and security in ancient times, and close friends are the people he (and we) should be able to trust above all else.

So when we read in verse 9 that there is “violence and strife in the city”, and in verses 12-13 that it is David’s “close friend” who has betrayed him, we realise that the rug really has been pulled from under his feet.

## The God I can trust

### Read Psalm 55:16-23

The verses move back and forth between God and David’s enemies.

❓ *What does David know that God will do for him if he calls on him?*

❓ *This section is bracketed by verses 16 and 23. What is David’s resolution?*

Both verses declare his commitment, his trust in God. It’s easy to overlook the little phrase at the start of verse 16—“as for me”. He has seen his closest godly friend turn away from God, but he refuses to give up on God. He will keep on trusting.

Jesus taught that the psalms pointed to his own sufferings (Luke 24:26-27, 44). So this psalm gives insight into what it felt like for Jesus to be betrayed by his “close friend” (Psalm 55:13)—**read Matthew 26:20-25, 45-50.**

❓ *How does this help you think more deeply about Jesus’ sufferings?*

## Pray

Fight or flight? When people turn against you, how do you respond? David the warrior wished he could fly away. But the right response is neither lashing out nor running off; it is calling on and trusting in the Lord.

“Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken” (Psalm 55:22).

❓ *What cares do you need to unburden yourself of today?*

