



# Sermon Notes

**Topic:** Choosing Sacrifice -  
The dangers of being  
black and white

**Bible Passage:** Joshua 5:13–15

**Preacher:** Ps Sam Toms

**Date:** 4th May 2025

## Study Guide Overview

### Main Theme

We often treat God like a power to access when needed — like a spiritual “Force” from *Star Wars*. But God is not a tool to use; He’s a holy God to submit to. The question is not “Is God on my side?” but “Am I on God’s side?”

### Key Passage

📖 Joshua 5:13–15 — “Are you for us or for our enemies?”  
“Neither... I have now come as commander of the Lord’s army.”

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## Life Group Study Guide

### PART 1 – OPENING DISCUSSION

1. What do you think people mean when they say “God is with me”?
2. In what ways have you seen people (or yourself) try to “use” God for a personal agenda?
3. How does the idea of surrender differ from control in your walk with God?

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### PART 2 – DIGGING INTO THE WORD

#### 1. THE TRAP OF CONTROL

Read: Joshua 5:13, Isaiah 55:9, James 4:6

- Joshua assumed the angel was on his side. How does this reflect our tendency to make God fit our plans?
- What does Isaiah 55:9 teach us about God's ways versus ours?
- Why does pride lead us to assume we know best? What does James say is God's response?

#### Reflection:

Have you ever planned something and then asked God to “bless it” afterward? What would it look like to ask Him *before*?

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### **2. GOD IS NOT A GOOD LUCK CHARM**

Read: Selected verses – Ephesians 2:4–5, 1 Corinthians 1:27

- How do we sometimes treat God like a genie, consultant, or lucky charm?
- What's the danger in using out-of-context promises to justify our own desires?
- What does Ephesians 2:4–5 tell us about how God actually works?

#### **Application:**

Where have you been hoping God would approve your path, instead of asking where His path is?

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### **3. POSTURE BEFORE PLAN**

Read: Joshua 5:14–15, Matthew 22:37–38, Exodus 3:5

- What was Joshua's response when he realized the Commander wasn't there to serve his plan?
- What does taking off sandals symbolize in Scripture (Exodus 3, Ruth 4)?
- How does Jesus' command to love God with heart, soul, and mind connect with posture over strategy?

#### **Key Idea:**

Before the strategy for Jericho came, Joshua needed a surrendered heart. Do we prioritize posture or planning?



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### **4. HOLY GROUND = SURRENDER GROUND**

Read: Romans 5:8, Revelation 21:5, 2 Timothy 1:9

- How does the eternal nature of God's plan give you confidence (or challenge your current mindset)?
- What does it mean that "every moment is part of a divine tapestry"?
- What area of your life do you need to "take off your sandals" — to stop being casual and start surrendering?

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### **PART 3 – PERSONAL REFLECTION & GROUP SHARING**

Journal Prompt:

Write down your upcoming plans. Then prayerfully ask:

"Lord, am I asking You to bless my will, or am I truly seeking Yours?"

**Group Discussion:**

- Where is God asking you to let go of control?
  - How can your life group encourage one another to prioritize God's purposes over personal plans?
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### PART 4 – ACTION STEPS

#### **1. Prayer Focus:**

This week, spend time each day asking not for things, but simply, “What are You doing, God? How can I join You?”

#### **2. Practical Surrender:**

Choose one area of your life (work, relationship, finances, ministry) and intentionally surrender your “strategy” for God’s guidance.

#### **3. Memorize:**

Isaiah 55:9 — “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

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