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Dear heavenly Father, we worship You this morning with our tithe and offerings. We pray for the courage to put You first in our lives. In the name of Jesus, amen.

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JANUARY 23, 2021

## When Joshua put God First

Putting God first can be difficult. What can we learn from Joshua that will help us put God first in our lives today?

Joshua had been a slave in Egypt. He was familiar with the slave master's whip tearing at his skin. Then, one day, an old man walks into Pharaoh's palace and tells him to free the Israelites. Joshua saw every Egyptian god being humiliated by Jehovah, the only true God. Soon after, he was walking across the sea on dry ground on his way to freedom.

Joshua became Moses' disciple soon after, even following him to the base of Mount Sinai when God delivered the commandments. Sometime later, Joshua was chosen by his tribe to represent them as a spy going into the land God had promised. He must have been both scared and thrilled.

Along with the other 11 spies, Joshua saw for himself the wonderful land they would inhabit. However, he would soon discover that his moment of courage was not visiting the land but arguing with his fellow spies.

Ten of the spies saw the same thing Joshua did, but disagreed with the conclusion. They were sure the Canaanites were going to destroy them. Joshua had to put God's promises first and stand up against them.

Eventually Joshua was chosen to lead the people of Israel into that same promised land, some 40 years later. It wasn't easy for him, but Joshua was certain of one thing—he would put God first, no matter what happened. Here is what Joshua said to the people of Israel, as recorded in Joshua 24:15:

“And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

Joshua put God first and God always came through. His example compels us to do the same. As the deacons collect the tithe and offerings, we are challenged to put God first.