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**Intro.** Sooner or later, everyone will face a time in their lives when their commitments will be put to the test. It may be a commitment to spouse or work or favorite sports team (you probably know my favorite conference is the Big Ten & because Indiana doesn't have a football team, I pull for any Big Ten team... except when they play Alabama. It isn't so much my allegiance to Alabama as it is allegiance to my wife, because the battle that breaks afterwards isn't worth it—I've learned the hard way!—so I pull for my wife's team, because my commitment to her is far greater than my commitment to the Big Ten Conference). But the commitment to the Lord will also be tested as Satan will do everything in his power to cause you to minimize your relationship to the Lord while serving the interests of the world. That's why it can be helpful to renew commitments, whether vows or pledges to the Lord, because they serve as a reminder of the original vow. Today we look at the last two chapters of Joshua in concluding our series on “Moving Forward: In Renewal.”

Theme: Covenant renewal

Background: See below in the narrative.

**Overview of the Narrative:**

- Joshua had certainly lived a full life—it began in bondage in Egypt & ended in peace in the Promised Land!
  - Joshua assembled the leaders at two different times, reminding them of the Lord's faithfulness & warning them of future dangers. They would also be presented with two choices: (1) obey the Lord & He would bless them & keep them in the land, the good land He had given them, or (2) disobey Him & He would judge them & remove them from the land (cf. Moses' words in Deuteronomy 28-30)
  - The secret to Joshua's success as a leader wasn't because of his military IQ or his motivational speaking, but it was directly connected to His knowledge & application of God's Word—getting to know the Word of God better will help you know God better
  - In chapter 24, Joshua recounts part of Israel's history to remind them of the gratitude to be shown to the Lord:
    - (1) God chose them as an act of grace (1-4)—God began with the moon-worshipping Abraham (24:2)—Nanna was a popular moon god in Ur from 2100 BC; Christ chose His disciples (John 15:16)
    - (2) God delivered them (5-7)—from Egyptian bondage by His power
    - (3) God guided them (8-10)—in the wilderness & brought them victory
    - (4) God gave them their land (11-13)—through power & victory
  - Joshua then renews His faith before Israel & calls on them to make a choice about whom they shall serve & when they reply with serving Yahweh, he says they aren't able to do that, but it serves as a challenge & they accept the challenge & pledge their loyalty to Yahweh
    - I want to share 3 big truths about the Lord & 3 corresponding responses to those truths in “Moving Forward: In Renewal”:
- I. The Lord is a Mighty God who fights for His people (23:3, 5, 10; cf. 22:22). Therefore, be strong & courageous in facing life's battles (23:6; cf. 1:6-7, 9, 18)**
- I don't know all you face in life, but rest assured in the greatness of God to overcome any challenge & the grace of God to minister to you through every challenge—God's greatness means He is able to do anything & when He doesn't act to overthrow your enemy (whether a person or disease or self-inflicted wound through unwise debt), He still cares & ministers His grace in your life

Illus: The greatest battle the Lord ever fought was on Mt. Calvary 2,000 years ago when Jesus defeated sin, death, the grave & Satan by dying in our place, for our sin, & rising victoriously from the dead—He fights for His people!

**II. The Lord is faithful & keeps all His promises (23:5, 10, 14-16). Therefore, trust the Lord (24:14)**

- Don't miss this—God keeps all His promises, not some of them or most of them or all but a few, but all of them—that's why we can fully trust Him

Illus: Jesus said, "If I go & prepare a place for you, I will come again & will take you to Myself, that where I am you may be also" (John 14:3)

**III. The Lord is holy & jealous (24:19). Therefore, love the Lord & serve Him (23:8, 11, 16; 24:14-27)**

- The fact Yahweh is a holy & jealous God should give us peace & comfort, because He won't be shared with other gods—you cannot say that about the 330 million gods of Hinduism, because they encourage you to worship multiple gods (Mormonism, too, believes in multiple gods to be worshipped)
- Joshua interweaves 3 admonitions to keep God's Word (23:6), cleave to the Lord (23:8) & love Him (23:11)
- Joshua 24 references the Lord 21x to underscore the importance of devotion to Him & putting Him first, but it also includes "serve" 15x, reminding us how our lives should be characterized by the One who redeemed us & blesses us
- "It is necessary for each generation to embrace the covenant as its own" (House, 211)

Illus: Can I let you in on a secret? Just because someone says they will do something doesn't mean they will. Thus, we learn not to put a lot of stock into political campaign promises because so many of them are empty words trying to garner a few more votes. Did you know the next generation of Israel did not know the Lord? Read the Book of Judges & you will find the generation alive in Joshua's day said they would pass on the faith but the rest of the story shows they failed to keep their word.

- That's why the church is always one generation away from extinction, if they fail to be faithful, but we are one generation away from explosion if we pursue the Lord with all we've got.
- Our Lord is holy & jealous. Therefore, He is worth serving & loving.

**Conc.** The makers of the current movie "War Room" also made a movie a few years ago called "Fireproof," starring Kirk Cameron. Kirk is a captain of a fire department, but his marriage had been falling apart, largely because of his own doing. He & his wife would constantly fight. Then, his father challenged him to take the Love Dare, a 40-day challenge focused on strengthening his marriage. He continually poured out love to his wife, even when she didn't want to accept it, but his love for her finally broke through & we pick it up here (show 2:40 clip). Just as the grace of God can work in a broken marriage, so it can work in your commitment to Christ. Ask yourself these questions: am I spending time in God's Word daily to grow in my relationship to Him? Do I treat the Lord's Day as a sacred day to worship Him with other believers? Do I put the Lord & His work first in my finances through tithes & offerings? Do I let others know where I stand on certain matters because of my faith in the Lord? If you are a believer but aren't living for the Lord the way you should, would you simply kneel before the Lord here in this place & renew your commitment to Him? If you haven't surrendered your life to the Lord through repentance & faith, would you do so today? With such a commitment & renewal, we can be "Moving Forward" together.