

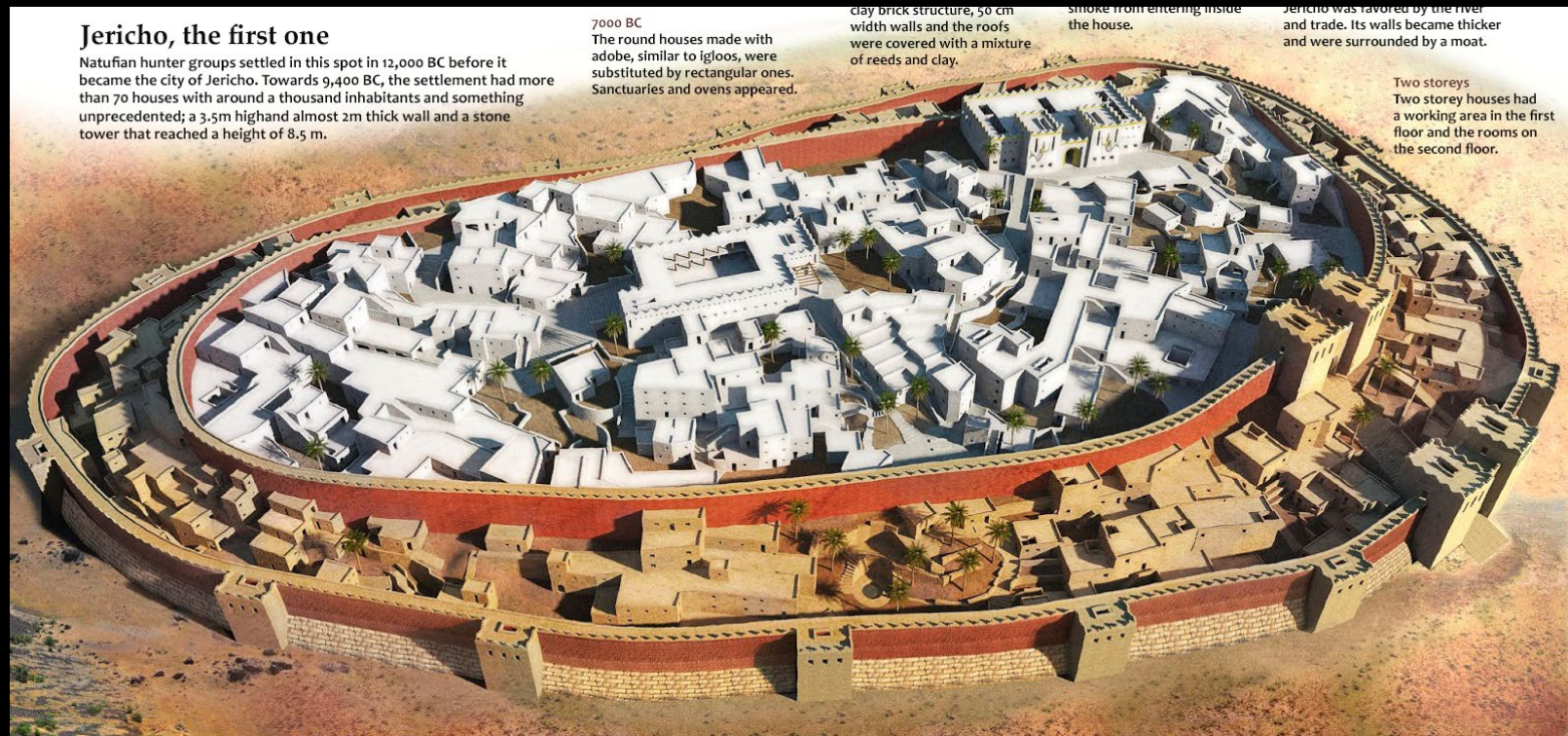
O Captain, My Captain— Joshua



Joshua 5:13–15

¹³ When Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing before him with his drawn sword in his hand. And Joshua went to him and said to him, “Are you for us, or for our adversaries?” ¹⁴ And he said, “No; but I am the commander of the army of the Lord. Now I have come.” And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped and said to him, “What does my lord say to his servant?” ¹⁵ And the commander of the Lord’s army said to Joshua, “Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy.” And Joshua did so.

Having crossed the Jordan River into the Promised Land, Joshua turned his attention to the *first major obstacle* to Israel's conquest of Canaan: the city of *Jericho*.



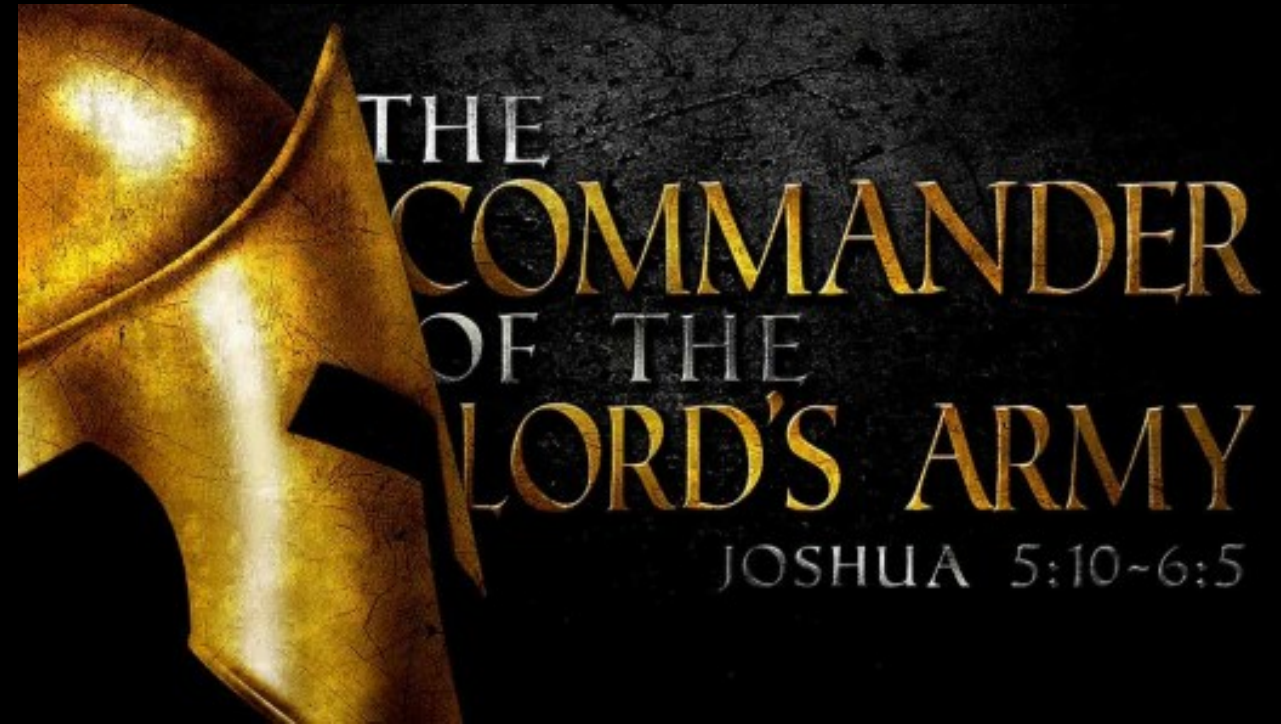
As Joshua was *surveying* the fortress of Jericho and *formulating* his plan to take the city, he suddenly found himself in the *presence of a powerful warrior* standing before him with a *drawn sword*.



Joshua asked the man to declare himself as foe or friend.

The man's response must have surprised and astonished Joshua:

"No, but as Commander of the army of the Lord I have now come".



Joshua was the human commander of the army of Israel, but he was in the presence of the true Commander—the Lord God himself!

You have a higher commander with a better plan.



1. Joshua discovered that he had a higher commander who was there to fight for him.

Though the incarnation of the New Testament Joshua (Jesus) would come 14 centuries later, this is a *theophany*, one of his pre-incarnate appearances in human form.

THEOPHANY
A VISIBLE MANIFESTATION OF GOD

Among other Old Testament theophanies are the “three men” who visit Abraham at Mamre, the “man” who wrestles with Jacob, Moses’ view of God’s “back” on Sinai, and the “fourth man” in the fire who protected Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.



The Lord
appeared to
Joshua with a
drawn sword in his
hand, signifying
that *God himself*
would be *fighting*
for Joshua and the
people of Israel.



Joshua was **going about his business**—doing the task God has assigned to him—when the Lord showed up.

God delights in doing great things in unusual ways, but he usually shows up while his people are going about the ordinary course of their duties.

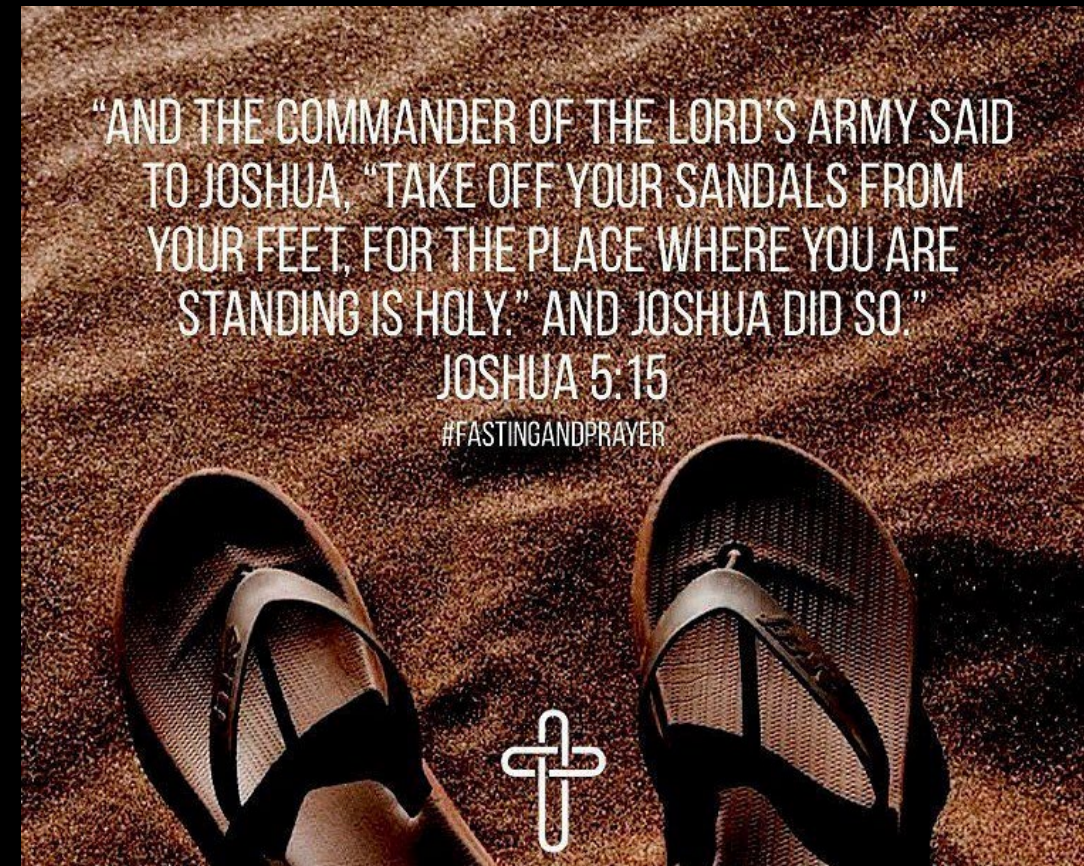


2. Joshua understood that the proper response to your commander is to listen and obey.

Joshua immediately recognized that he was in the presence of God.

As soon as the man identified himself as the commander of the army of the Lord, Joshua *fell on his face and worshipped* him.

The commander then ordered Joshua to *remove his sandals* because he was on holy ground in the presence of God, like Moses at the burning bush (Exod. 3:5).



Joshua asks his commander
the *most important question*
he could have asked:

Joshua 5:14

And Joshua fell on his face to
the earth and worshiped and
said to him, "*What does my
lord say to his servant?*"

When the Lord shows up,
our job is to *worship and
await orders.*



Every day, every believer ought to *open his Bible, be on his face in prayer* before the Lord, and be asking "*What does my Lord say to his servant?*"



3. Joshua discovered that his commander had a better plan than he did.

Joshua 6:2

² And the LORD said to Joshua, "See, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king and mighty men of valor. . . ."



The Lord did not leave it to Joshua to find a way to conquer Jericho.

Led by **seven priests** bearing trumpets and priests bearing the ark, the people of Israel were to **march around the city** once a day for **six days** (Joshua 6:3–4, 9).

On the **seventh day**, they were to march around the city **seven times**.

At the end of the marching, the seven priests were to blow their trumpets, all the people were to shout, and God himself would cause the walls of Jericho to fall (verse 5).



We don't know what Joshua's initial plan for taking the city was, but God had a better plan.

The fall of Jericho was a gracious *gift* to the Israelites for which God alone was due the glory.

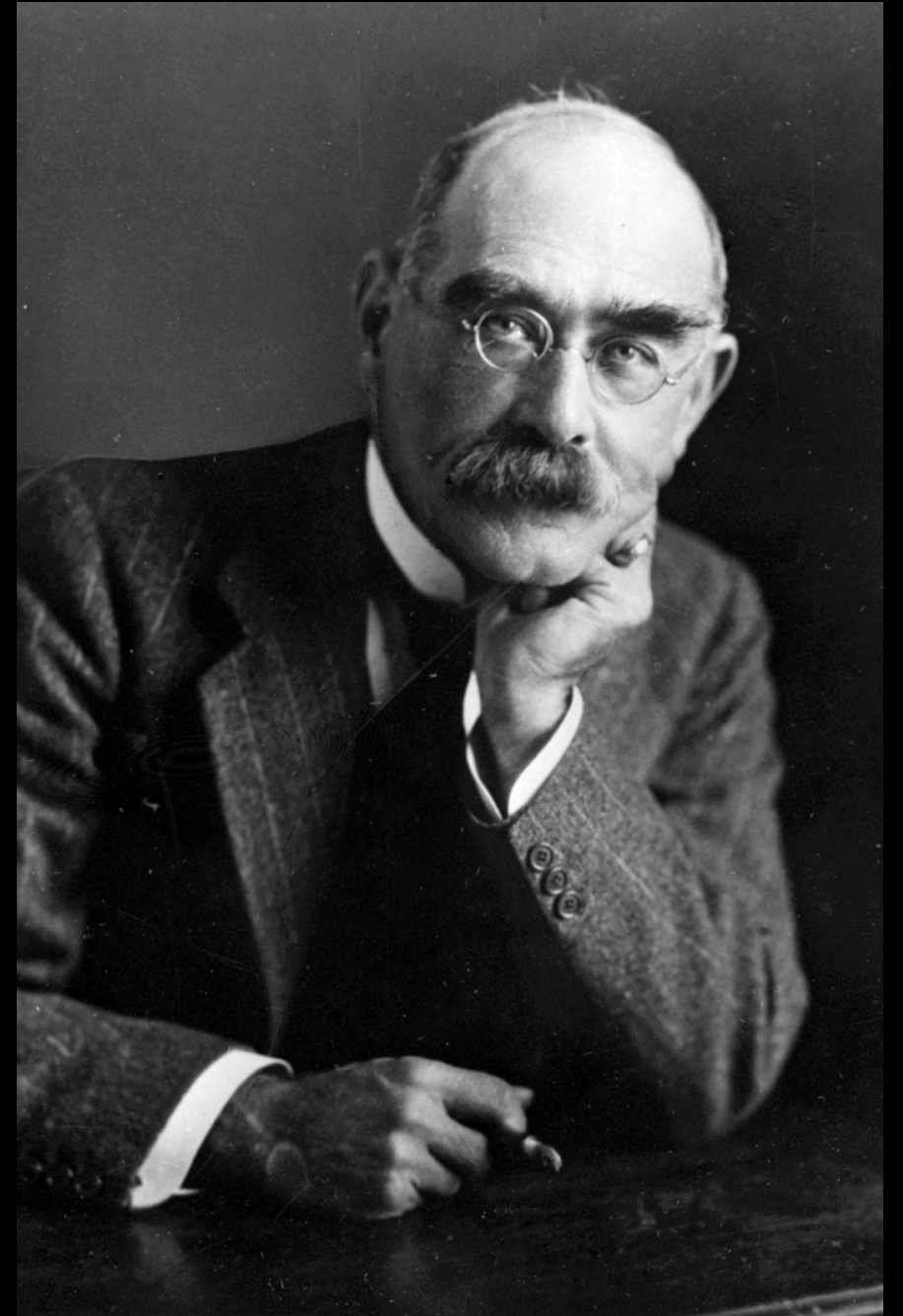
Psalm 115:1

¹ Not to us, O LORD, not to us,
but to your name give glory,
for the sake of your steadfast
love and your faithfulness!



Rudyard Kipling ends his
wonderful poem, taken from
this psalm, with this prayer:


O Power by whom we live
Creator, Judge and Friend,
Upholdingly forgive,
Nor leave us at the end.
But grant us yet to see,
In all our piteous ways,
Non Nobis, Domine,
Not unto us the praise.



Because all of us face
our Jerichos,
our impenetrable walls,
insurmountable
obstacles,
and *impossible situations,*
it is good to know the
God who has an
impressive has a history
of leading his people
over, around, or through
impossible barriers.



Joshua discovered that
it's not the size of your
army that counts; it's the
size of your God!



*Behold, I am the
LORD, the God of all
flesh: is there any thing
too hard for me?*

Jeremiah 32:27

Application

Is Christ your captain?

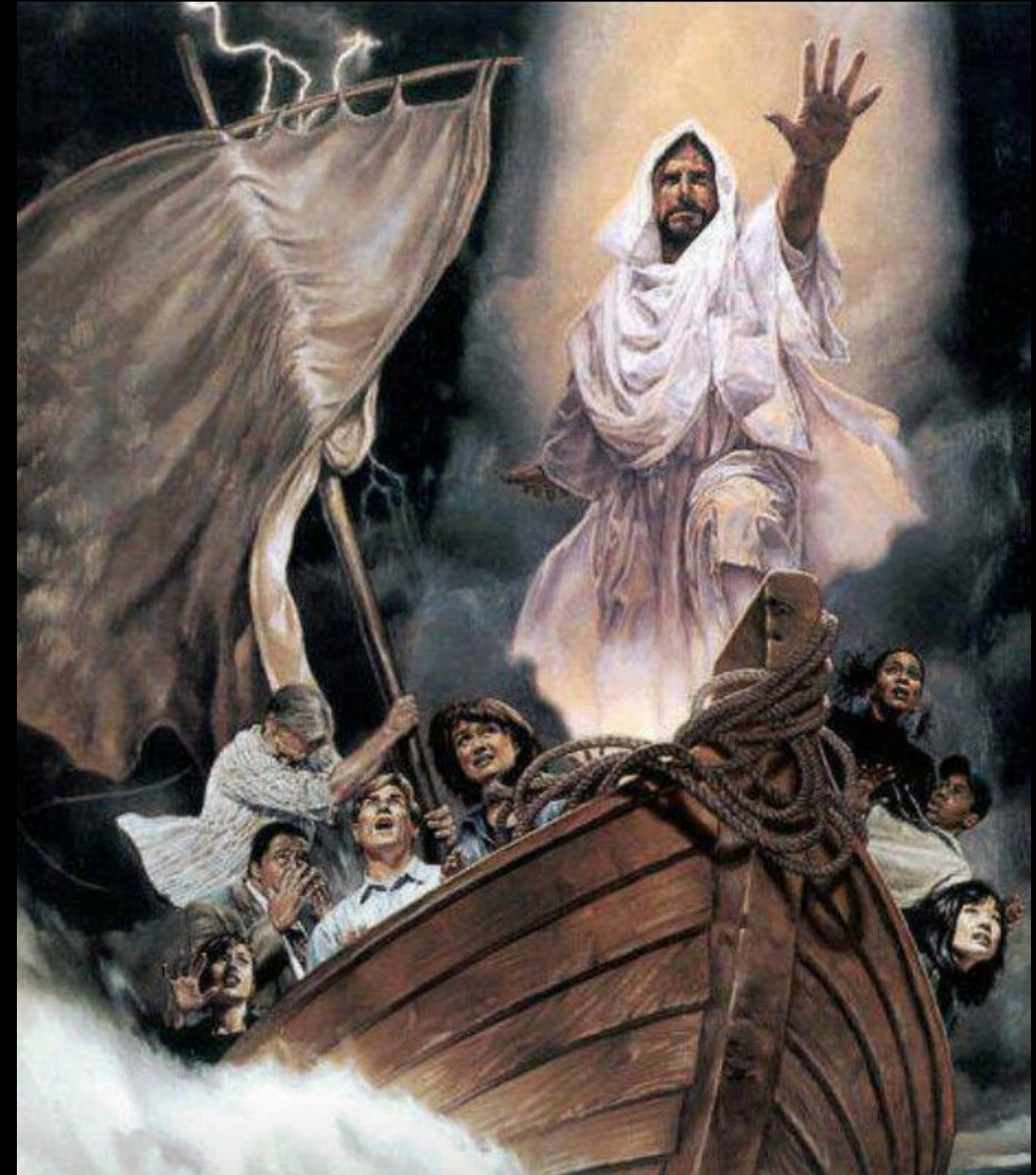
Is his word your rule?

Is his mighty arm your strength?

Is his plan your plan?

Is his glory your objective in life?

If he is, then put your *trust* in your captain. Do not fear. The unseen commander of the army of the Lord still stands with his sword drawn to fight for you.



Make it your daily habit to *quiet yourself before the Lord and his word* and *listen* for your orders.



Practicing Stillness

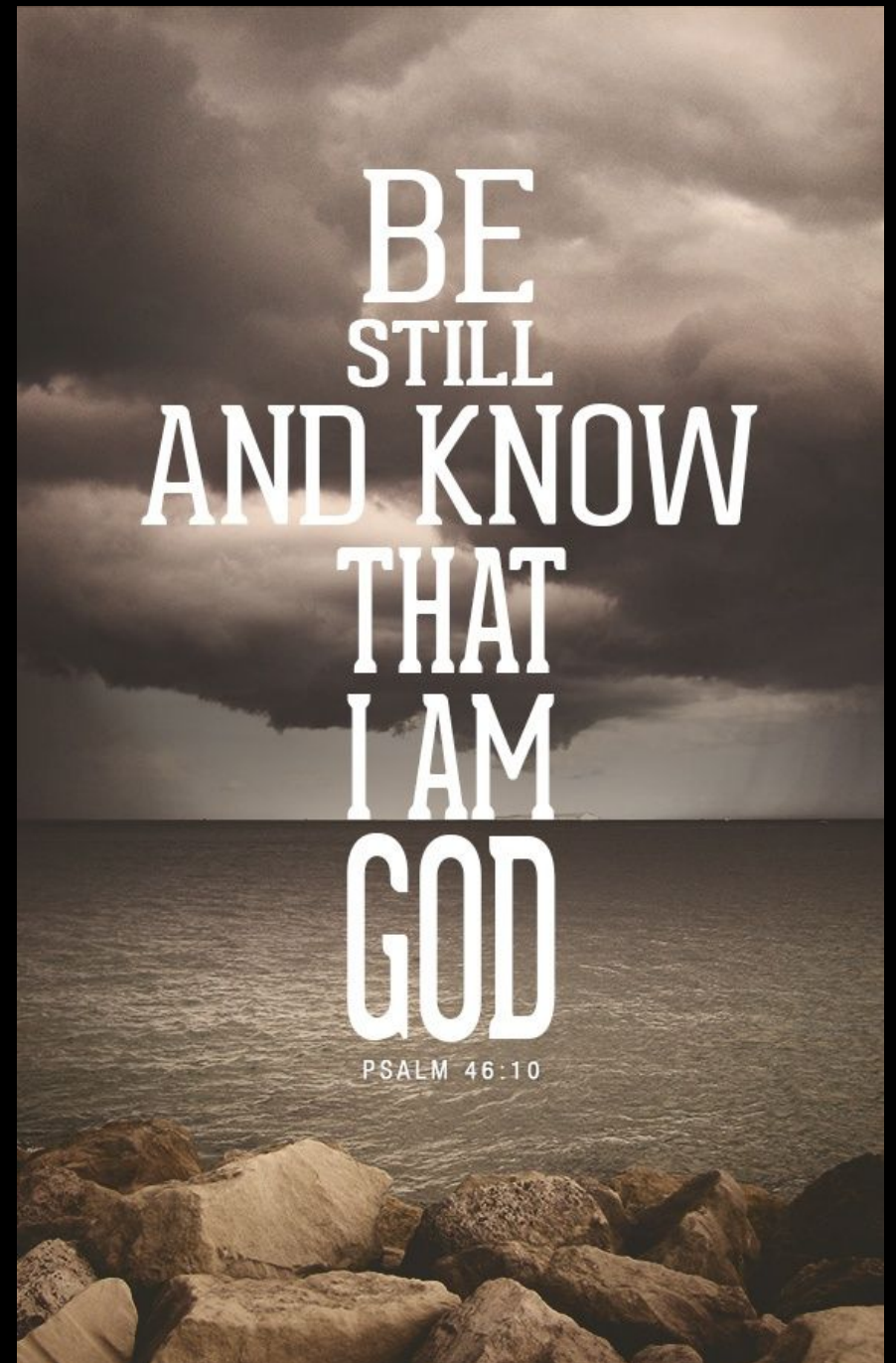
A lot of you are high achievers.
You're not afraid of hard work. You
are busy and productive.

You're a great planner.

A great problem solver.

But you have a difficult time turning
off your mind and just being still.

I understand. There are times when I
seem to be more of a *human doing*
than a *human being*.



Mother Teresa expressed it this way,

“We need to find God, and He cannot be found in noise and restlessness. God is the friend of silence. See how nature—trees, flowers, grass—grows in silence; see the stars, the moon and the sun, how they move in silence. . . . We need silence to be able to touch souls.”



Especially look at the
“interruptions” that enter your day
with this question: “What is God up
to here?”

In a 1943 letter, C.S. Lewis
advised a friend:



“The great thing, if one
can, is to stop regarding all
the unpleasant things as
interruptions of one’s
‘own’, or ‘real’ life. The
truth is of course that what
one calls the interruptions
are precisely one’s real
life—the life God is sending
one day by day: what one
calls one’s ‘real life’ is a
phantom of one’s own
imagination.”

Be glad that it's not all up to you.

