

Introduction — What's the world coming to?

We live in a day of uncertainty!

- Rapid change
- Technological explosion
- Moral chaos / increasing violence
- Family disintegration
- Global economic instability

Uncertain times tend to produce certain predictable fears!

- Fear of the unknown
- Fear of failure
- Fear of abandonment

Uncertain times are NOT new:

¹ After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide: ² "Moses My servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites.

³ I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. ⁴ Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Great Sea on the west. ⁵ No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you.

⁶ "Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them. ⁷ Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law My servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go.

⁸ Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. ⁹ Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."

Joshua 1:1-9

3 Keys to confidence:

1. Believing God's **PROMISE** for our future is the key to overcoming our fear of the **UNKNOWN**.

Joshua 1:3-4
(see also - John 14:1-3)

Key word = **HOPE**

2. Appropriating God's **POWER** for victory is the key to overcoming our fear of **FAILURE**.

Joshua 1:5, 7, 8
(see also - John 16:33, 1 John 4:4)

Key word = **FAITH**

3. Recognizing God's **PRESENCE** with us is the key to overcoming our fear of **ABANDONMENT**.

Joshua 1:5, 9
(see also - John 16:13-14, Hebrews 13:5)

Key word = **LOVE**

Life Application Questions:

1. What are your top two fears about the future?
2. How does Joshua's life and time of uncertainty parallel today?
3. Read verses 3-5 out loud and identify the three promises God made to Joshua about his future, his enemies, and God's presence. Now discuss Jesus' promises that parallel these concepts for us as New Testament Christians.
4. Where do you need to grow in confidence? Read verses 7-9. How do your intake, meditation, and obedience to God's Word develop confidence in your life? Describe your spiritual diet and what steps God would have you take to grow in confidence.

Introduction:

1. **Confusion** – 1) to mix up, jumble together, put in disorder, 2) an inability to distinguish between things, bewilderment, 3) a lack of coherent, orderly thinking in the midst of complex problems, relationships, and decision making opportunities.
2. **Synonyms** – disorder, disarray, chaos, muddled
 - **The problem with confusion** = It immobilizes, paralyzes, demotivates, and neutralizes individual and corporate progress and effectiveness.
 - **The cure for confusion** = A lesson from master teachers:
 - Reduce complexity = K.I.S.S.
 - Increase clarity = G.B.T.T.B.

Getting back to the basics:

1. God is **GREAT** - Perspective
2. Life is **SHORT** - Priority
3. Sin is **SERIOUS** - Purity

4. Wisdom is **ESSENTIAL** - Purpose

5. Mercy is **AVAILABLE** - Prayer

6. Success is **POSSIBLE** - Productivity

¹Lord, You have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. ²Before the mountains were born or You brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting You are God.

³You turn men back to dust, saying, "Return to dust, O sons of men." ⁴For a thousand years in Your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night. ⁵You sweep men away in the sleep of death; they are like the new grass of the morning - ⁶though in the morning it springs up new, by evening it is dry and withered.

⁷We are consumed by Your anger and terrified by Your indignation. ⁸You have set our iniquities before You, our secret sins in the light of Your presence. ⁹All our days pass away under Your wrath; we finish our years with a moan. ¹⁰The length of our days is seventy years – or eighty, if we have the strength; yet their span is but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away.

¹¹Who knows the power of Your anger? For Your wrath is as great as the fear that is due You. ¹²Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

¹³Relent, O LORD! How long will it be? Have compassion on Your servants. ¹⁴Satisfy us in the morning with Your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days. ¹⁵Make us glad for as many days as You have afflicted us, for as many years as we have seen trouble.

¹⁶May Your deeds be shown to Your servants, Your splendor to their children. ¹⁷May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us; establish the work of our hands for us--yes, establish the work of our hands.

Six questions to ask when you're confused:

1. Am I rightly **RELATED** to God?
2. Am I **PREPARED** to die?
3. Am I **TAKING** sin seriously?
4. Am I **SPENDING** or **INVESTING** my life?
5. Am I **EXPERIENCING** the joy of the Lord?
6. Am I **IMPACTING** my world for good?

Life Application Questions:

1. In what area of your life are you experiencing the most confusion?
 - Spiritual?
 - Relational?
 - Vocational?
 - Emotional?
 - Future Plans?
2. Place an asterisk next to the section of Psalm 90 (on page 2 of this handout) which spoke most powerfully to you. Share with your group (or write privately) why you think this section of the Psalm impacted you.
3. How does asking "the big questions" of life help us move from confusion to clarity? Which of the six questions helped bring clarity or a need for re-evaluation in your life?
4. What one action step would demonstrate that you are serious about "numbering your days to gain a heart of wisdom?" Who will hold you accountable and encourage you for the next 45 days?

Introduction: Dealing with doubt

- **An ancient story worth remembering**

Jehoshaphat - 2 Chronicles 20

- **A story I can't forget**

Manila - 1988

- **A timeless principle for our times of doubt**

PRAISE - the antidote for doubt

Praise: The antidote to doubt

Psalm 145 - A Classic Model to Follow

- ❖ **Step #1: CHOOSE to praise God**

*¹ I will exalt You, my God the King;
I will praise Your name forever and ever.*

*²Every day I will praise You
And extol Your name forever and ever.*

Psalm 145:1-2

❖ **Step #2: VERBALIZE specific evidence of God's greatness**

³Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise;
His greatness no one can fathom.
⁴One generation will commend Your works to another;
They will tell of Your mighty acts.
⁵They will speak of the glorious splendor of Your majesty,
And I will meditate on Your wonderful works.
⁶They will tell of the power of Your awesome works,
And I will proclaim Your great deeds.
⁷They will celebrate Your abundant goodness
And joyfully sing of Your righteousness.

Psalm 145:3-7

❖ **Step #3: FOCUS on God's character and adore Him**

• **He is Good**

⁸The LORD is gracious and compassionate,
Slow to anger and rich in love.
⁹The LORD is good to all;
He has compassion on all He has made.

Psalm 145:8-9

(A.W. Tozer: Knowledge of the Holy)

• **He is Sovereign**

¹⁰All You have made will praise You, O LORD;
Your saints will extol You.
¹¹They will tell of the glory of Your kingdom
And speak of Your might,
¹²So that all men may know of Your mighty acts
And the glorious splendor of Your kingdom.
^{13a}Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,
And Your dominion endures through all generations.

Psalm 145:10-13a

- **He is Faithful**

*13b The LORD is faithful to all His promises
And loving toward all He has made.
14 The LORD upholds all those who fall
And lifts up all who are bowed down.
15 The eyes of all look to You,
And You give them their food at the proper time.
16 You open your hand
And satisfy the desires of every living thing.*

Psalm 145:13b-16

- **He is Righteous**

*17 The LORD is righteous in all His ways
And loving toward all He has made.
18 The LORD is near to all who call on Him,
To all who call on Him in truth.
19 He fulfills the desires of those who fear Him;
He hears their cry and saves them.
20 The LORD watches over all who love Him,
But all the wicked He will destroy.*

Psalm 145:17-20

❖ **Step #4: INVITE** others to praise Him with you

*21 My mouth will speak in praise of the LORD.
Let every creature praise His holy name
Forever and ever.*

Psalm 145:21

Life Application Questions:

1. In which of the following areas are you most prone to doubt God's love and plans for your life?
 - God will meet my financial needs.
 - God will guide me concerning big decisions I must make.
 - God will protect my children/loved ones.
 - God will use my life in a significant way.
 - God cares about my life, my dreams, and my future.
 - God will give me power to overcome areas of temptation and struggle.
2. Discuss with your group the boxes you checked and why.
3. How did praising God impact "the battle" in the story of Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 20?
4. What role does praise have in your prayer life currently? What did you learn about the importance of and practice of praising God from this message?
5. What one thing could you do to make praising God more a part of your everyday life?