

Follow the Leader

As the children of Israel were preparing to cross the Jordan River, Joshua sent the priests ahead with the Ark of the Covenant. He instructed the people: “When you see the Levitical priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD your God, move out from your positions and follow them.”¹ Then you will know which way to go, since you have never been this way before.”²

“Never been this way before.” I often feel that way. I run into a situation or a dilemma that’s new to me, and I don’t know how to tackle it. Should I go or stay? Should I take this offer or turn it down?

Some decisions in life are easy to make. Sometimes the path ahead seems pretty straightforward, even if you’ve never been that way before. Other times, it can feel like you’re walking into foreign terrain, with potential dangers and pitfalls all around.



The children of Israel didn't know how things were going to play out for them. They knew they had to keep moving forward, as there was a promised land ahead for them, but there was also the Jordan River blocking their way.

They must have been asking themselves, "How are we possibly going to cross this river, let alone conquer this entire land?" I mean, here was a nation of millions, along with their animals and possessions, crossing a flooded river into enemy-occupied lands.

The Israelites hadn't traveled that way before; they didn't know what to do. That's why they had to follow the Ark. The Ark represented God's Spirit and His promises. By following the Ark—by following God—they could walk ahead confidently, knowing that they were headed in the right direction.



Following God can be tough to do, though. The way He leads doesn't always seem to make sense. Sometimes it can look downright crazy, like when He instructed Joshua, "Tell the priests who carry the ark of the covenant: 'When you reach the edge of the Jordan's waters, go and stand in the river.'"³ In other words, "Go into the river and *then* see what I will do."

"As soon as the priests who carried the ark reached the Jordan and their feet touched the water's edge, the water from upstream stopped flowing. It piled up in a heap a great distance away."⁴ And the priests stood in the middle of the dry riverbed while all the Israelites walked safely across.

This story offers a pretty awesome formula for making decisions. When you're facing tough choices, when you "haven't been this way before," and you're dealing with brand-new challenges or seeming impossibilities, remember to keep your eyes on Jesus. He's out in front, going ahead of you, and all you have to do is obey His instructions and follow His lead.

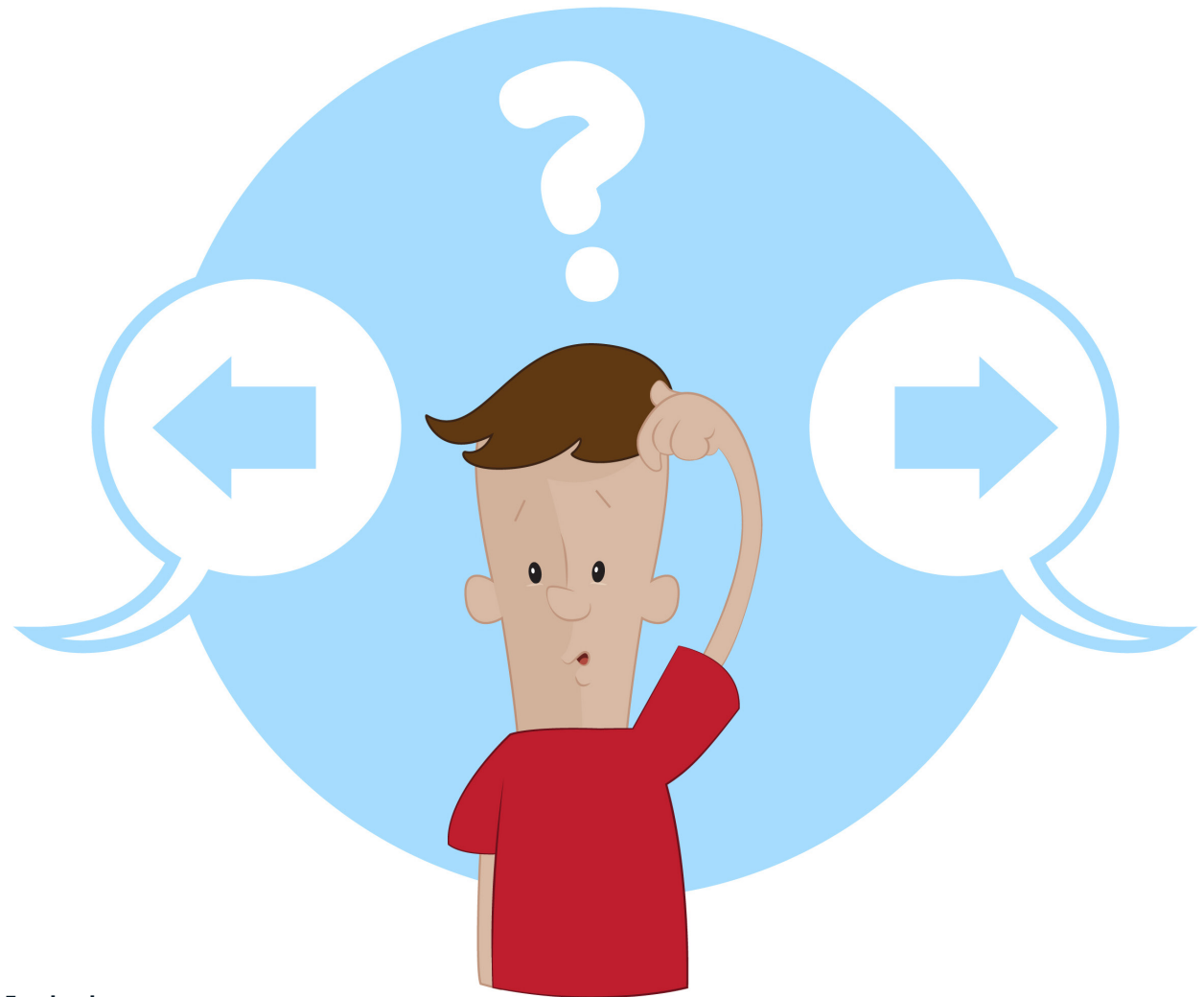


If you rush ahead, you won't know where you're going—and you may end up going the wrong way. Only God knows what's ahead, so it's a good idea to follow His lead. God cares about your problems and concerns and dilemmas just as much as He cared about those millions of Israelites sitting on the banks of the Jordan River. God promises that you will find Him when you search for Him with all your heart.⁵ So if you're serious about finding His answers and having His guidance in your life, then seek Him, tell Him about your concerns and questions, listen for His answers, and be willing to obey His instructions, and then you can be sure that He will lead and guide you.

Note: You can find a retelling of the story of Joshua and his people crossing the river, as well as defeating Jericho, [here](#).

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Footnotes

¹ Joshua 3:3 NLT

² Joshua 3:4 NIV

³ Joshua 3:8 NIV

⁴ Joshua 3:15–16 NIV

⁵ Jeremiah 29:13