



CHALLENGE

January 26, 2021

On January 3rd, I challenged the body to choose Higher Ground for 2021. Below you will find the thoughts and passages that went with that sermon. My goal is to help you live this out each month. Let's memorize the key passage, Philippians 3:13-14, and one of your own choosing from the message for February. Why memorize? Listen to these words from the Lord to Joshua: *Joshua 1:8, This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success*

You will also find a magnet enclosed with this note. The QR code on it will take your smartphone to a beautiful YouTube video of a young lady singing the hymn, Higher Ground. This magnet is a quiet reminder to help you live out this year's challenge. There are more in the office if you need another.

I hope you will join in this shared experience of straining for higher ground.

In His Grip,

Pastor Jim

HIGHER GROUND MESSAGE

Preached January 3, 2021 To rehear to the message, go to the listening page of our website.

Key Verse

Philippians 3:13-14 ... But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Higher Ground Defined

An ethically superior position

Higher Ground is..

- Morally Supreme
- Visually Clear
- Strategically Defensible

"The right path is usually uphill."

Higher Ground's Obstacles

Unnatural Isaiah 55:9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Foolish 1 Corinthians 2:14 The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

Rejectable Jeremiah 6:16 Thus says the Lord: "Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls. But they said, 'We will not walk in it.'

Restrictive Matthew 7:13-14 "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. 14 For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

Higher Ground's Promises

Satisfying Psalms 16:11 You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Knowable Psalms 25:4-5 Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths. 5 Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long.

Failure Proof Psalms 37:23-24 The steps of a man are established by the Lord, when he delights in his way; 24 though he fall, he shall not be cast headlong, for the Lord upholds his hand.

Available James 1:5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

Work Philippians 3:13-14 ... But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Higher Ground is the activity of our prayer life combining Philippians 3:13-14 with James 1:5. Forgetting, straining, and pressing in prayer.

Higher Ground's Altimeter Test

Psalms 139:23-24 Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! 24 And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!

James 3:13-18 Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. 14 But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. 15 This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. 16 For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. 17 But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. 18 And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.