

Then Joshua, son of Nun, secretly sent out two spies from Shittim, saying, "Go, reconnoiter the land and Jericho." When the two reached Jericho, they went into the house of a prostitute named Rahab, where they lodged.

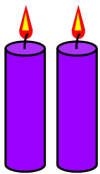
So the king of Jericho sent Rahab the order, "Bring out the men who have come to you and entered your house, for they have come to spy out the entire land."

The woman had taken the two men and hidden them, so she said, "True, the men you speak of came to me, but I did not know where they came from. At dark, when it was time to close the gate, they left, and I do not know where they went. You will have to pursue them quickly to overtake them."

Now, she had led them to the roof, and hidden them among her stalks of flax spread out there. But the pursuers set out along the way to the fords of the Jordan. As soon as they had left to pursue them, the gate was shut.

Before the spies lay down, Rahab went up to them on the roof and said: "I know that the LORD has given you the land, that a dread of you has come upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land tremble with fear because of you. Now then, swear to me by the LORD that, since I am showing kindness to you, you in turn will show kindness to my family. Give me a reliable sign that you will allow my father and mother, brothers and sisters, and my whole family to live, and that you will deliver us from death."

"We pledge our lives for yours," they answered her. "If you do not betray our mission, we will be faithful in showing kindness to you when the LORD gives us the land."



► REFLECTION: Put yourself in Rahab's place. The city-state where you live is going to be taken over by the Israelites. You know it, though most people around you deny it. The king of the city-state is powerful but scared, and he is therefore dangerous. But the Israelites belong to the LORD. The *gift* of Fear of the LORD "outweighs" normal fears, such as the fears of capture and death. Of course, there can't really be any "weighing" because normal fears are a burden, but Fear of the LORD is freedom. You can do *nothing* and give up any say you might have in what happens; or you can do *something* and perhaps win the favor of the LORD and safety. What do you do?