

Claim the Victory!

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The Book of Joshua

This inductive Bible study is designed for individual, small group, or classroom use. A leader's guide with full lesson plans and the answers to the Bible study questions is available from Regular Baptist Press. Order RBP1641 online at www.regularbaptistpress.org, e-mail orders@rbpstore.org, call toll free at 1-800-727-4440, or contact your distributor.

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*The King James Version is the English translation used
in our Sunday School curriculum.*

The Doctrinal Basis of Our Curriculum

A more detailed statement with references is available upon request.

- The verbal, plenary inspiration of the Scriptures
- Only one true God
- The Trinity of the Godhead
- The Holy Spirit and His ministry
- The personality of Satan
- The Genesis account of creation
- Original sin and the fall of man
- The virgin birth of Christ
- Salvation through faith in the shed blood of Christ
- The bodily resurrection and priesthood of Christ
- Grace and the new birth
- Justification by faith
- Sanctification of the believer
- The security of the believer
- The church
- The ordinances of the local church: baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper
- Biblical separation—ecclesiastical and personal
- Obedience to civil government
- The place of Israel
- The pretribulation rapture of the church
- The premillennial return of Christ
- The millennial reign of Christ
- Eternal glory in Heaven for the righteous
- Eternal torment in Hell for the wicked

CLAIM THE VICTORY

Adult Bible Study Book

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Preface

What a promise God gave Joshua! Every inch of Canaan that his foot stepped on would be his. No ifs, ands, or buts! The promise was ironclad. But claiming the land would not be easy. The Canaanites were trained warriors who would not just roll over and play dead. They would fight furiously. To make matters more challenging, some drove iron chariots.

Joshua knew these facts. Forty years earlier he had joined a delegation of spies in a mission to search Canaan. The group had seen giants and well-fortified cities, but they also discovered that the land was everything God had said it was—lush and productive. Only Joshua and Caleb urged the Israelites to go up at once to possess the land. The other spies predicted disaster if Israel entered Canaan. As is often the case, a faithless majority focused on obstacles, whereas a faithful minority looked beyond the obstacles and saw God's power and faithfulness.

Joshua became Moses' successor and Israel's commander. Braced by God's sweeping promise of success, he was ready to lead Israel into Canaan and claim victory over Israel's foes. He knew the challenge was enormous, but he also knew God's sufficiency was indisputable.

You may be facing enormous challenges: a severe illness, a strong temptation, a hectic work schedule, a family problem, a financial crisis, or a job loss. Will you believe God's promises and claim the victory, knowing that His power and faithfulness are as reliable today as they were when Joshua entered Canaan?

As you explore the book of Joshua, confront with faith every challenge life throws at you. Know that you are more than a conqueror through Christ. Claim the victory!

Lesson 1

The Character of a Leader

Joshua 1:1–9

“Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest” (Joshua 1:9).

An eye-catching bumper sticker advises, “Don’t follow me. I’m lost too!” Perhaps many leaders of nations should signal the same message to their followers. The world certainly seems to be following leaders who have no sense of direction while they rush to destruction. Even a segment of the church seems to lack confident leadership. It lacks a clear mission statement and leaders who fearlessly trust God for victory over the enemy and the power to wrest souls from his power. And it needs single-minded men and women of faith who can say to a bewildered world, “Follow me! I will take you to my Leader!”

Getting Started

1. Who do you consider the greatest leader of the last century? What made him or her such a great leader?

2. What challenges do you think every leader must face?

3. Why does a church need strong leaders?

Searching the Scriptures

For forty years Moses had guided the Israelites through the wilderness, transmitted God's laws to them, and borne the full responsibility of their welfare. All history would look back with admiration to this man of God who possessed extraordinary talents of leadership. But Moses had died just when Israel was poised to enter Canaan. How could the Israelites possibly enter and conquer Canaan unless another person with leadership character and skills similar to those of Moses accepted the challenge?

Of course, the Lord had the right person in mind. He spoke to Joshua, saying, "Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them" (Joshua 1:2).

4. Read Exodus 17:10, Numbers 14:5–9, 27:15–20, 32:12, and Deuteronomy 34:9. Based on these Scriptures, how would you characterize Joshua?

5. Read Deuteronomy 1:38. What had the Lord predicted about Joshua?

Because Joshua had humbly followed the Lord, he had arrived at a high level of spiritual maturity. He knew how to take the shocks and jolts of the journey and maintain his equilibrium. When God allowed trials and difficulties to occur, Joshua simply used them as occasions to move closer to Jehovah and learn lessons that the majority of his countrymen missed. He had heard the murmuring and the complaints of those who had refused to trust God to prove Himself to them. The atmosphere in which he lived was largely one of unbelief. Yet in spite of the Israelites' unbelief and overwhelmingly difficult circumstances, Joshua believed. He had learned by experience that the just must live by faith. The wilderness lay behind him; and just across the river, Canaan opened to receive him and his followers.

The land belonged to Israel because God had given it to them, but their occupation would be contested every mile of the way. Today, too, the enemy contests every effort to claim territory for Christ. Satan, the god of this world, and his cohorts vigorously oppose us. We must "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might" (Ephesians 6:10).

Leading Israel in the conquest of Jordan would demand dedication and persistent effort, but the Lord gave Joshua ironclad promises that would encourage him. These promises were both short-range and long-range.

6. What short-range promise did the Lord give Joshua in Joshua 1:3?

7. What long-range promise did he give in Joshua 1:4?

The Promised Land, which God had promised first to Abraham and then to Moses, stretched from the wilderness on the south to the Lebanon mountain range on the north and from the Euphrates River on the east to the Mediterranean on the west. Having scouted part of the Promised Land thirty-eight years earlier, Joshua knew from personal experience that it was a verdant, fruitful land.

8. How does Deuteronomy 8:7–10 describe Canaan?

All who lead God's people must cherish His promises and keep their eyes on the goal He has set. God had given the Israelites a vast and productive land, but Joshua would have to encourage them to take it step by step (Joshua 1:3). Victory was ensured because of the Lord's promises.

9. What did God promise Joshua in Joshua 1:5?

10. What promises has the Lord given you that demand action on your part? (For help, see Psalm 37:4, Matthew 7:5–8, Galatians 6:9, and Philippians 4:6 and 7.)

Joshua had witnessed the Lord's goodness and power in the wilderness. For example, he had seen Him miraculously provide manna, quail, and water (Exodus 16:11–16; 17:5, 6; Numbers 20:7–11), and he had witnessed His mighty power over the fierce Amalekites (Exodus 17:9–13). Still, fresh challenges lay ahead in Canaan. To be an effective leader, Joshua would need to be "strong and of a good courage . . . and very courageous" (Joshua 1:6, 7). Past victories could serve as guideposts, but they were not to be hitching posts.

11. What has the Lord done for you in the past that encourages you to trust Him in the future?

12. Why does a Christian leader never reach a point in life where he or she can coast? (Hint: see Proverbs 16:18 and 1 Corinthians 10:12.)

Joshua's success as a leader would depend in large measure on a proper relationship to God's Word. The Lord commanded him first of all to obey it: "Turn not from it to the right hand or to the left" (Joshua 1:7). Strength of character is essential to leadership. Who would follow a leader into battle if that leader showed no integrity? If a person cannot be trusted to do the right thing, he or she cannot be trusted to guide a nation. By submitting to the authority of God's law, Joshua would be able to say, "Do as I do," not simply, "Do as I say."

13. The apostle Paul understood how important obedience to Scripture is in the life of a leader. What did the Lord, through Paul, command Timothy (1 Timothy 4:16) and Titus (Titus 1:7–9) to do with God's Word?

The Lord commanded Joshua to meditate in the book of the law day and night (Joshua 1:8).

14. a. Why did God insist that Joshua meditate on God's Word? Was he not already a success?

b. Look back at the answers you recorded for question 4. What, if anything, is missing from Joshua's reputation? Which of Joshua's qualities were permanent regardless of what he did in the future?

15. What is the significance of meditating on the Word day and *night*?

16. What hope of success does a Christian leader have if he or she uses the Word for public ministry but does not use it for personal growth?

17. Read Matthew 4:1–11. What weapon did Jesus use to ward off Satan’s attacks? _____ Read Joshua 1:8, Psalm 119:9–11, and 2 Timothy 2:15. How can a person become proficient in using this weapon?

Finally the Lord repeated His charge that Joshua be strong and courageous. Neither fear nor dismay were to blunt his leadership (Joshua 1:9). His success was guaranteed, because the Lord, his God, would be with him wherever he went. The promised constant presence of the Lord must have encouraged Joshua later when he crossed the Jordan, marched around the strongly fortified city of Jericho, exercised decisive discipline within his own ranks, and battled well-armed foes.

We Christians may also depend on the Lord’s presence. He is with us wherever we go.

18. Read Romans 8:35–37. According to this passage, over what adversities do we triumph through Christ?

We never offer a gospel witness alone, face a trial or temptation alone, or confront a hostile world alone. The Lord is with us “always, even unto the end of the world” (Matthew 28:20). He pledged, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Hebrews 13:5). Like Joshua, we have every good reason to do God’s will.

Making It Personal

Those who are involved in full-time, vocational Christian service are not the only ones with leadership responsibilities. Every Christian adult is a leader somewhere. At home as a parent, a mom or dad must lead the children in God's ways. At work a Christian should endeavor to lead his or her associates to know Jesus Christ. How well are we providing godly leadership?

19. a. List the Christian leadership roles you fill.

b. Evaluate whether you have been successful in each of your Christian leadership roles. Put a plus sign next to each one in which you are growing and succeeding. Put a minus sign next to each one in which you are not growing and not enjoying success.

20. Finish the following two sentences with a brief description of your regular approach to each of these activities:

I read the Bible . . .

I meditate on the Word . . .

21. What correlation do you see between the pluses and minuses from your list above and the descriptions you wrote in question 20?

22. What steps will you take to become better acquainted with the Lord through the Scriptures?

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)