

# Courageous

Claiming Canaan, Lessons from the Book of Joshua

Lesson 2: Challenged (1:1-9)

After mourning thirty days in the plains of Moab (Deuteronomy 34:8), it was time for Joshua to "arise to finish what Moses began"<sup>i</sup>. Like his predecessor, his commission would begin with an act that was humanly impossible and would continue with exploits that required absolute trust, full reliance, and unquestioning obedience.

In the promised land, there would be no victory without battle and no inheritance without surrender. The very key to the Israelite's success was not dependent upon military tactic, but upon their spiritual posture before God. Consistent faithfulness to Him and obedience to His revealed Word was the only method that would ensure their success.

The tools had been provided; the instructions given: *"Don't get off track, either left or right, so as to make sure you get to where you're going. And don't for a minute let this Book of The Revelation be out of mind. Ponder and meditate on it day and night, making sure you practice everything written in it. Then you'll get where you're going; then you'll succeed"* (Joshua 1:7-8, MSG).

God's promises were sure; His blessings were within their reach. But only the Israelites could decide whether they would experience victory after victory.

*Read Joshua 1:1-6.*

1. It was amid great loss that Joshua received his greatest desire. (v.1) What occurred? (Consider Exodus 33:11.)
2. *"Moses My servant is dead"* (Joshua 1:2). Why was God's statement important in light of His subsequent instruction?
3. How can your past experiences (positive and negative) hinder you from going where God is leading?

4. What did Moses symbolize to the people? If Joshua is an archetype of Christ, and the promised land a picture of victorious Christian living, why couldn't Moses lead them in?
  
5. Describe the magnitude of Joshua's commission and the shoes he was required to fill.
  
6. Was Joshua to be like Moses? Explain.
  
7. Joshua's charge began with an act that was humanly impossible (v.2). What thoughts and feelings could Joshua have easily entertained?
  
8. Like Joshua, how does your willingness to "arise" and "go" (1:2) impact those around you? Do you believe that your readiness to obey God's instructions has the potential to affect people's faith in the way Joshua's would affect Israel's? Why or why not?
  
9. Per verse 3, what was required of Joshua to cause Israel to inherit the land? Why do you believe God didn't accomplish this for Israel?

What does this reveal to you about living victoriously?

10. After the Lord told Joshua to cross the great river, he was given no further (tactical) instructions. What did God say instead? Record His promises of:
- a. Possession
  - b. Protection
  - c. Position
  - d. Presence
11. If you were Joshua, which of these promises would be of greatest importance? Which one is of utmost importance to you in your present circumstances? Why?
12. How would the absence of additional tactical instructions challenge your faith?
13. What must Joshua believe about the One who ordered the river crossing? (Think on Isaiah 43:1-2 and 1 Thessalonians 5:24.) Why is this more important than detailed instructions? Is trust without knowledge a challenge for you?
14. Do you trust God to "give you the directions you need when you need them?"<sup>ii</sup> Explain.
15. Before God could fulfill His promises, Joshua was required to *exercise* his faith. Why?
16. Read James 2:14-26. Describe the relationship between faith and works.

17. Return to Joshua 1 and read verses 10-11. How did Joshua demonstrate his belief in God's words?

*Read Joshua 1:7-9.*

18. God's spoken law and historical account (the Torah; Genesis-Deuteronomy) was recorded and completed by the hand of His servant, Moses. Now entrusted to Joshua, he was the first to hold God's written Word in his hand.

What four things would ensure Joshua's success as he crossed the river and claimed the land?<sup>iii</sup> (Also consider Deuteronomy 11:18-25, 29:9, Psalm 1:1-3, and James 1:22-25.)

19. Do you think your "success" in life is dependent upon the same? Explain.

20. Israel's ownership of the land was unconditional (Genesis 12:7), but their possession was conditional.<sup>iv</sup> Upon what was Israel's occupation dependent? See Deuteronomy 6:1-25 and 30:15-20.

21. Return to Joshua 1. Per verse 7, what actions would the Israelites be tempted to take? (Deuteronomy 5:32, 28:14, and Proverbs 4:25-27)

22. What would result if Joshua and the Israelites failed to obey the Lord's instruction regarding His Word?

23. What similarities exist between Israel's obedience and possession of the land, and our obedience and experiencing the fullness of God's blessings?
24. According to Joshua 1:6, 7, and 9, what phrase did God repeat three times? In what three areas did Joshua and the Israelites need assurance?

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<sup>i</sup> Henry, Matthew.

<sup>ii</sup> Wiersbe, Warren W. (2003) *The Bible Exposition Commentary: Old Testament History*. (17) Colorado Springs, Colorado: Cook Communications.

<sup>iii</sup> "It is striking that God's instructions here to Joshua are not about military matters, given that Joshua and the Israelites faced many battles ahead. However, the keys to his success were spiritual, directly related to the degree of his obedience to God". (Howard, D. M., Jr. (1998). *Joshua* (Vol. 5, p. 85). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.)

<sup>iv</sup> For further study read Deuteronomy 28:1-68.