Grace Group Study Guide

Joshua Part 1: Introduction

Joshua, as we’ll see, had a very privileged opportunity to lead the children of Israel into the land of Promise. As we would with many other Old Testament heroes, we can stand back and consider things about Joshua and his life that made him qualified to take on that task. What was the training like? What characteristics did God build upon to ready him? What sort of educational background did he have that specifically equipped him for such a time as that?

Living in the society that we live in, we’re all about qualifications. I remember graduating from Liberty and the job hunt that ensued afterwards. It was one of the most discouraging times of my life. I had a piece of paper from a reputable institution that said I was qualified to carry out a certain task, but every job description I read not only wanted that educational qualification, they also wanted at least 3 years or 5 years of experience in that particular field. It’s frustrating because how are these people that are new to the ministry ever going to gain experience if no one will hire them because they lack it?

Unfortunately, this mentality spills over into the Christian life. As we heard Glenn and Erin talk about this past Sunday, there are literally tons of opportunity for the Gospel to go forth, but as the Scripture says “the laborers are few.” Why is that? Could it be that we’ve fallen prey to the lie that we have to know enough or be good enough or have a degree in Bible before we can be useful to God in the ministry?

I think that we’ll see time and time again in this wonderful book, that Joshua demonstrates a couple of things in this regard. First off, his qualifications. 1. He trusted in the Lord. 2. He listened to the Lord. 3. He followed the Lord. It’s literally that simple. And the sad thing is that on a modern resume if those things were listed under qualifications with nothing else, it would most likely get tossed in the garbage. But those things characterized Joshua, and they prepared him for one of the most important tasks in the history of his people – taking God’s people into the Promised Land. Those things that characterized his life gave him a faith that would help take the first step towards many victories. Life is a wonderful schoolhouse that provides us with unlimited opportunities for growth, experience, and knowledge.

**Think back on your life both as a believer and before you were a believer. What experiences helped prepare and bring you to the place you are today?**

Let’s take a few moments and look at some of the things Joshua experienced that would prepare him for the role he would later take on after Moses’ death. Consider these texts:

**Joshua, the soldier: Exodus 17:8-10; 13-14.** Moses chose Joshua, a man who was willing to follow orders, who was also a man of courage, unafraid to take on enemies of God and his people. Without Joshua's even knowing what was involved in this battle, God was using it to season him, to strengthen his faith and courage. This conflict with the Amalekites was preparation for many battles that he would fight in the promised land.

**Joshua, the servant of Moses: Exodus 24:12-13.** Here Joshua was a personal assistant to the leader of Israel. Joshua was intimately involved with Moses as God’s truth was revealed. That was important in the process of preparing Joshua to learn revealed truth, to know both the holy God of Israel who met Moses face-to-face on the mountain, and also the holy Law that God gave his people to obey.

**Joshua, overzealous: Numbers 11:28-29.** This served as a wonderful, teachable moment for Moses.

**Joshua, the spy: Numbers chapter 13.**

**Joshua, the faithful one: Numbers 14:1-10.**

**Joshua, the successor: Deuteronomy 31:1-8.**

There’s a whole lot to the man, Joshua, that we’ll be frequently hearing about. It’s important to remember that he was a man just like us (except around 80 years old when he took on this leadership role). It was his life experiences that helped to prepare him for that role.

Let us also not neglect the main character in this account: God. In that connection, I love this phrase from Doug Goins and the accompanying challenge: *“The most important character in this exciting history is not the man, Joshua. It's Yahweh, the God of Joshua and the God of Israel. In everything Joshua did by faith, his heart's desire was to glorify God. We're going to see that when the Jews crossed the Jordan River, Joshua reminded them that the living God was among them, and he would overcome their enemies. Joshua also called the people to obedience so that all the nations around them would believe in God. Their obedience to God would have a saving effect on all the people who observed the conquest. In his farewell address to the leaders of the nation at the end of the book, Joshua gave God the glory for all that Israel had accomplished under his leadership. At least fourteen times in the book, God is called "the LORD God of Israel."*

Everything that Israel did in this book either glorified God, or brought disgrace to His reputation. When Israel obeyed by faith, God's promises were fulfilled, and He was their strong ally. But when they disobeyed in unbelief, God basically let them have their way. Defeat was the result. The same spiritual principle applies to us today. Our studies in Joshua are going to help us to look at the spiritual map of our Christian lives.

**Discuss- Read 2 Peter 1:3-8** – **How do these verses guide us in our journey through life? Share with each other how the Lord is working these qualities out in your life. Using just these verses, how do we avoid the kind of defeat that the Israelites experienced?**

Today as we look at our lives, do we see ourselves wandering in the wilderness, or conquering in the promised land? In the wilderness, the Israelites were complainers. In Canaan, they were a conquering people. In the wilderness, they kept looking back, yearning for what they had left behind in Egypt. But in the promised land, they looked forward to conquering their enemies, claiming rest and riches. The wilderness march was an experience of delay, defeat, and death for the nation. Their experience in Canaan was one of life, power, and victory.

A great way to begin the study of this book is to ask ourselves, **where am I living? Am I in need of a new beginning?**”