

MOVING AHEAD TOGETHER WITH
A WINNING MINDSET

STUDY ONE

Setting the Leader on Fire

Joshua 1:1–9

By accepting Moses' mantle of leadership, Joshua was no longer the servant of Moses. He was the leader of the Hebrews.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

WHEN the Lord commissioned Moses to lead the Hebrews out of Egypt, He spoke to Moses from a burning bush. Forty years later, when Moses died, the Lord commissioned Joshua to lead the people into the promised land. Instead of setting a bush on fire, however, the Lord ignited Joshua's heart with this fiery mandate:

"Be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." (Joshua 1:9)

The same God who once led Moses now led Joshua. The same divine voice that Moses heard rumbling in the wilderness of Midian now reverberated on the plains of Moab. Joshua would have to press on without Moses, his mentor and friend, but he would have the Lord to guide him and the Lord's presence to empower him. As A. W. Tozer wrote, "Nothing of God dies when a man of God dies."¹

Joshua may have wondered whether anyone could fill Moses' sandals. "There has never been another prophet in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face" (Deuteronomy 34:10). How could Joshua compare? Was he really up to the task?

The Lord thought so, and that's all that mattered.



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INSIGHT FOR LIVING
MINISTRIES

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Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

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PREPARE YOUR HEART

Has the Lord put you in a situation in which you doubt your abilities? Perhaps someone you've relied on is no longer with you, and you truly feel alone. Open this *Searching the Scriptures* study of Joshua's commissioning with a prayer of dependence on the Lord.

Father, the task You have laid out for me is too big for me to accomplish on my own. I need Your arm under me and around me, supporting and empowering me to do what You've called me to do. I depend wholly on You. Show me from Your Word the truth to help me feel strong and courageous. I pray in Jesus' true name. Amen.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Joshua, the sixth book of the Bible, traces the Hebrews' conquest of the land God had promised to Abraham and his descendants. Begin this new series on Joshua by examining Pastor Chuck Swindoll's overview of the book on the following page. The book can be divided into two main parts consisting of twelve chapters each (Joshua 1–12 and 13–24). Below the book chart, write down a basic outline of Joshua.



***Searching the Scriptures* Method and Resources**

Searching the Scriptures is a four-step Bible-study method that includes observing the passage, interpreting the meaning, correlating with similar passages, and applying the principles. For helpful instruction, consult the Insight for Living Ministries online web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)." There, you can also follow the [link to purchase a copy](#) of Pastor Chuck's book, *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs*.



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INSIGHT FOR LIVING MINISTRIES
The Bible-Teaching Ministry of Pastor Chuck Swindoll



JOSHUA
OVERVIEW BIBLE CHART

OUTSIDE CANAAN: PROMISES GIVEN	COMMISSIONING THE LEADER PREPARING THE PEOPLE	CONQUERING THE ENEMY		DIVIDING THE SPOIL				WARNING THE VICTORS	INSIDE CANAAN: PROMISES FULFILLED
	Joshua 1–5	Joshua 6–9	Joshua 10–12	Joshua 13–17	Joshua 18–19	Joshua 20–21	Joshua 22	Joshua 23–24	
	Invasion of Land	Subjection of Land		Distribution of Land			Conclusion		
Commission (ch. 1)	Central campaign	Southern campaign (ch. 10)	PHASE ONE	PHASE TWO	PHASE THREE		Joshua's final words to Israel (ch. 23)		
Spying (ch. 2)	Jericho (ch. 6)	Northern campaign (ch. 11)	Reuben, Gad, 1/2 Manasseh (ch. 13)	Benjamin (ch. 18)	Cities of refuge (ch. 20)	Civil war threat (ch. 22)			
Jordan (ch. 3)	Defeat at Ai (ch. 7)	Summary of kings (ch. 12)	Caleb's life story (ch. 14)	Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, Dan, Joshua (ch. 19)	Levites—48 towns (ch. 21)		Covenant renewed (ch. 24)		
Memorials (ch. 4)	Victory at Ai (ch. 8)		Judah (ch. 15)						
Consecration (ch. 5)	Gibeonites (ch. 9)		Ephraim (ch. 16)						
			1/2 Manasseh (ch. 17)						
THEME	Obedient faith brings abundant blessing.								
KEY VERSES	Joshua 1:8; 24:14–15								
CHRIST IN JOSHUA	Typified by Joshua, a victorious leader whose name means "Yahweh is salvation"; pictured in Rahab's scarlet cord, which symbolizes safety through Christ's blood								

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Joshua 1:1–9

Now read Pastor Chuck's summary [article](#) of Joshua along with any other source you may have in your library. What significance does the name, *Joshua*, have to the main message of the book? Why is the book of Joshua important in biblical history? Answer the questions below and record any other notes you find interesting in your research.



Observation: The Commissioning of Joshua

In *Searching the Scriptures*, we begin with observation. Read [Joshua 1:1–9](#) carefully and slowly. Follow the progression of thought from God's initial statement, "Moses my servant is dead" (Joshua 1:2), to God's promises and commands. Put yourself in Joshua's place as he listens to God speak and try to imagine Joshua's thoughts and feelings.

What was the Lord's charge to Joshua, according to [Joshua 1:1–2](#)?



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The Lord backed His charge with what promise in *Joshua 1:3–5*? Compare this promise with the Lord’s promise to Moses in *Deuteronomy 11:22–25*.

God concluded His commission of Joshua with three identical commands. What mandates did the Lord give Joshua after each of these commands to help him be strong and courageous?

Joshua 1:6: _____

Joshua 1:7–8: _____

Joshua 1:9: _____

When we go through the death of a loved one, we think that all is over for us. We forget that the same God who chose to take the loved one left us for a significant purpose.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: Principles from Joshua’s Commissioning

Interpretation uncovers the truths that the original author of the biblical text intended his audience to understand. What does the passage mean? From these central truths, you can glean principles that apply not just to Joshua and his culture, but to all people at all times.



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“Moses . . . Is Dead” (Joshua 1:2)

The reality of Moses’ death was obvious. The nation had just finished thirty days of mourning (*Deuteronomy 34:5–8*). The Lord didn’t tell Joshua anything he didn’t already know. Why do you think the Lord opened His address to Joshua with this cold splash of reality?

What principle or principles can you draw based on these circumstances? A principle can be crafted by using this formula: “When . . . [state a premise or situation], then we should . . . [state a response that captures the biblical truth].” For example:

When a godly leader dies, we should face the reality of the person’s death.

Try writing your own principle.

The main message Joshua must remember is that even though a great deal of changes were going to occur in his life, nothing of God would change. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



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“The Time Has Come for You to Lead” (Joshua 1:2)

Joshua had a close bond with Moses—who trusted Joshua and valued him. Moses sent Joshua into Canaan as one of the twelve spies (*Numbers 13:1–16*) and selected Joshua to command the Hebrew army (*Exodus 17:8–13*). When Moses climbed Mount Sinai, he took Joshua with him (*24:13*). Moses even changed Joshua’s name from “Hoshea” to “Joshua” (*Numbers 13:16*)—which means, “the Lord has delivered.” Forty years his senior, Moses was like a father to Joshua, as well as a mentor and spiritual model.

When the Lord told Joshua, “The time has come for you to lead” (Joshua 1:2), what implied messages was the Lord giving Joshua?

What principle or principles emerge about moving on after grief?

Never once did God tell Joshua, “Now you be Moses the Second,” or “You fill his shoes.” No, Joshua had a new leadership style. He was a new man to lead. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



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“I Will Not Fail You or Abandon You” (Joshua 1:5)

What foundational promises—that would carry Joshua through hard times—was the Lord giving the newly selected leader in these verses?

“No one will be able to stand against you as long as you live. For I will be with you as I was with Moses. I will not fail you or abandon you.” (Joshua 1:5)

“Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.” (Joshua 1:9)

What principle or principles do you glean about managing fear?

In grief, we get afraid. We hear noises in the night. We don't have our loved one to reassure us. The Lord says, “Don't be afraid, I'm with you.” —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



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“Study This Book of Instruction Continually” (Joshua 1:8)

The pathway to success in the Hebrews’ mission included what essential actions, according to *Joshua 1:7–8*?

What principle or principles emerge from these verses about the centrality of the Scriptures in our walk with God?

In your grief, open your Bible. Don't just listen to someone else read it for you. Read it aloud, read it repeatedly. Let it speak to you. Let it comfort you. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: Affirmations of God’s Presence

The same promise God gave Moses and Joshua, “I will be with you” (Exodus 3:12), He gives us through Christ. What do the following verses promise about the Lord’s presence in us?

Matthew 1:23: _____

Matthew 28:20: _____

John 14:15–20: _____

Hebrews 13:5–6: _____



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How do these promises encourage and inspire you?

Application: Transitions, Reminders, and Applications

Through their wandering in the wilderness, the Israelites transitioned from a ragtag assembly of newly freed slaves to an organized community with a national identity. Now, perched on the plains of Moab overlooking the Jordan River, the Hebrews were peering into a new world—a homeland for their newborn nation. Moses had brought them to this point. Joshua would take them forward.

Perhaps you are standing on the precipice of your “new” world. Here are some possibilities:

1. You lost a loved one or you face the possibility of losing that person. *Remember, nothing of God dies when someone you love dies.* The Lord was with you before, and He is with you now. He has a purpose for you and plans for using you as He did for Joshua.
2. In your organization, a former leader has been replaced by a new leader. *Remember, be flexible, adaptable, and willing to release what once was.* Don't resist changes that may be necessary to move forward.
3. You may be the new leader, following a “legend” who came before you. *Remember, God's hand is on your life.* Don't compete with your predecessor. Acknowledge the differences and be yourself. Seek to please the Lord alone.



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Do any of these transitions describe your situation? Are you in a different kind of transition? How can you apply the principles you learned from Joshua's example?

In whatever circumstances you may find yourself, a few simple lessons ring true for every believer. Saturate yourself in the Scriptures—study the Word, meditate on it, and obey it! Knowing and doing God's commands was the key to Joshua's success and ours. Also, stay involved with people who can support you, and seek ways to help others in need. As you do, God will make clear His plan for your future.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, comfort me through loss. When my "Moses" dies, remind me of Your unchanging promise to never abandon me. I cling to You in my grief. Now, hold onto me as I step into the new world ahead of me as I seek to follow Your purpose for my life. In Jesus' name, amen.

ENDNOTE

1. A. W. Tozer, *The Divine Conquest* (Wheaton, IL: Living Books, Tyndale House, 1995), 5.

