

**BOOK OF JOSHUA
STAY THE COURSE
JOSHUA 24:1-33**

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Introduction

Tonight we come to the end of this series on the book of **JOSHUA**.

One thing that we learn when we study the **WORD OF GOD** is that **GOD** uses people who are not perfect. We have observed great victories and some great failures in the life of **JOSHUA**, but in spite of his failures, he was still a godly man.

There are some characters we meet in the **SCRIPTURES** who begin well, but who unfortunately finish badly. (*e.g. Moses, Saul, and Solomon*)

That was not the case with **JOSHUA!** He is an example to all of us of how to **STAY THE COURSE** and **FINISH STRONG!**

Remember that was **PAUL'S** testimony too.

2 Timothy 4:7–“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.”

In **JOSHUA'S** last days, we see here that he assembled **ISRAEL** together to share one last exhortation before passing on.

JOSHUA'S burden at this last meeting was twofold.

- 1) He had a burden for those in his generation.
- 2) He also had a burden for future generations to come.

He wanted to make sure that his generation lived in such a manner so as to pass their **SPIRITUAL HERITAGE** on to generations to come.

JOSHUA here gave to **ISRAEL GOD'S** formula for remaining in the land under **GOD'S BLESSING**. **GOD** wanted to **BLESS ISRAEL**. **GOD** wanted **HIS** people to **SUCCEED**. **GOD** still wants all of **HIS** people to **SUCCEED**.

From a **BIBLICAL** perspective, **SUCCESS** is doing **GOD'S WILL** and staying with it. The only way for **ISRAEL** to do that would be for them to **STAY THE COURSE**. He taught them how to **REMAIN FAITHFUL** for the long haul.

These principles are certainly applicable to us today. So let me share with you some thoughts tonight from our final look at the book of **JOSHUA**.

I. WE NEED TO REVIEW GOD'S BLESSINGS! (Vs 1-13)

- A. The First Thing Joshua Did Was To Deliver A Message From God That Reviewed God's Blessings In Their Lives.**
He prefaces what he is about to say with the words, '*...Thus saith the Lord God of Israel...*'

This account of **GOD'S BLESSINGS** is filled with verbs that are preceded by the personal pronoun **"I."**
(Used 18 times in 13 verses)

Eighteen times GOD reminds them of what HE has done for them.

1. **GOD** reviewed the marvelous deeds **HE** had performed for **ISRAEL'S** benefit!
2. **ISRAEL'S** deliverances, victories, and prosperity were of **GOD'S GOOD MERCIES!**
3. Any greatness that **ISRAEL** achieved was not by her own effort, but through **GOD'S GRACE** and **ENABLEMENT**.

These verbs revealed that **GOD** was actively involved in the lives of **His** people. It is good for us to remember that as well!

ISRAEL was prone to take the GOD'S BLESSINGS for granted:

1. **GOD** provided the **PILLAR OF THE CLOUD** and the **PILLAR OF FIRE** to guide them but when they got to the **RED SEA** and **PHARAOH** was on their trail. *Exodus 14:11–“And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt?”*

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2. **GOD** opened up the **RED SEA** and they walked through on dry ground, but then they had trouble finding water.

And the water they did find at **MARAH** was bitter. This was only 3 days later!
Exodus 15:24—“*And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?*”
3. After **GOD** provided them good water to drink then they got hungry.
Exodus 16:2—“*And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness:*”
4. After **GOD** provided them **MANNA**, then they had another time when they didn’t have any water.
Exodus 17:3—“*And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?*”
5. After **GOD** provided them with water again, they got to **MT. SINAI** and readily abandoned **GOD**.
Exodus 32:1—“*And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.*”
6. After **MT. SINAI**, they complained about the **MANNA** that **GOD** had provided and wanted some meat. So **GOD** miraculously gave them quail.

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7. After **GOD** gave them the quail, **HE** later told them to go in to the **PROMISED LAND**. Instead they sent 12 spies and they wound up believing the evil report of the majority of the spies rather than believing **GOD** and wound up wandering in the wilderness for 40 years.

Yet in spite of all that, **GOD** did not abandon them, but rather **HE** continued to care for them!

- HE** had **PROVIDED** for them by supernatural means.
- HE** had **PRECEDED** them in battle.
- HE** had **PROTECTED** them in conflict.
- HE** had **PROSPERED** them beyond measure.

One very important element for STAYING THE COURSE is a good memory related to GOD’S past BLESSINGS in our life.

This is one of the reasons that **GOD** established the ordinance of the **LORD’S TABLE**! “...*This do in remembrance of me.*”

We need to review the BLESSINGS of GOD in our own lives lest we also take them for granted.

1. Our Deliverance From The Bondage Of Sin–Salvation!
2. Our Conquests In The Christian Life–Victory over Sin!
3. Our Prosperity In This Life.

REMEMBERING that we serve a **GOD WHO** is active in our lives, and **WHO** has **BLESSED** us greatly will keep us from drifting from **GOD’S** chosen course for us.

WE NEED TO REVIEW GOD’S BLESSINGS!

II. WE NEED TO REHEARSE OUR RESPONSIBILITIES!
In light of what **GOD** has done for us, there are rightfully some **RESPONSIBILITIES** that **GOD** expects from us as **HIS** children.

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“Now therefore. . .” He is referring back to the list of things that **GOD** reminded them that **HE** had done for them!

- A. The Responsibility Of FEARING GOD! (Vs 14)**
What is a **HOLY FEAR OF GOD**?– It’s a **REVERENCE**, **AWE**, and **ESTEEM** for **GOD’S HOLINESS** and **POWER**, which results in **OBEDIENCE** and **SERVICE** and **CAREFULNESS**.

It comes from a **PROPER RECOGNITION** of the **CHARACTER OF GOD!**

It is the **PROPER RESPONSE** to the **RECOGNITION** of **GOD’S CHARACTER**.

It implies a **RIGHT STATE OF HEART TOWARD GOD**.
To **FEAR GOD** is to **GLORIFY** and **WORSHIP HIM!**

The **BIBLE** has a lot to say about the **FEAR OF THE LORD**:

1. Is the beginning of knowledge. (*Proverbs 1:7*)
2. Is to hate evil. (*Proverbs 8:13*)
3. Prolongeth days. (*Proverbs 10:27*)
4. Is a strong confidence. (*Proverbs 14:26*)
5. Is a fountain of life. (*Proverbs 14:27*)
6. Combined with humility it is the path to riches and honor and life. (*Proverbs 22:4*)
7. Is the root problem with the wicked. (*Psalms 36:1; Romans 3:18*)

The Responsibility Of FEARING GOD!

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- B. The Responsibility Of SERVING GOD! (Vs 14)**
The kind of **SERVICE GOD** is looking for is **WHOLE-HEARTED SERVICE!**

“...in sincerity and in truth...” vs 14

1. **Serve In SINCERITY**–Not just lip service or outward service. The word translated *“sincerity”* here means *“entirely, with integrity.”*
2. **Serve In TRUTH**–In **FAITHFULNESS!**
The word translated *“truth”* here means *“stability, certainty, trustworthiness.”*

- C. The Responsibility Of PUTTING AWAY OTHER GODS! (Vs 14, 15)**

The kind of service **GOD** is looking for is an exclusive service!
A **god** is anything you put ahead of the one true **GOD!**

1. **He Talked About Putting Away Old Gods.**
“...and put away the gods which your fathers served”
This is talking about the things served prior to **SALVATION!**
(*i.e. Job, leisure, self, habits, things.*)
2. **He Talked About Putting Away New Gods.**
“...the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell.”
The things that try to draw you away from **SERVING GOD** after you come to know **HIM!**

The Responsibility Of FEARING GOD!

The Responsibility Of SERVING GOD!

The Responsibility Of PUTTING AWAY OTHER GODS!

- D. The Responsibility Of CHOOSING TO SERVE THE LORD! (Vs 15)**

A **CHOICE** must be made!

1. **It Is An INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY!**
“...choose you this day whom ye will serve. . .”

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We all must make a **CHOICE** of **WHOM** we will **SERVE**, not whether or not we will **SERVE**!

You make that **CHOICE** for yourself!
No one can make the **CHOICE** for you!

GOD will not force us to **SERVE HIM**!

2. It Is A FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY!

"...as for me and my house..."

We must realize the **CHOICES** we make affect our families.

We are all called upon to make that **CHOICE**, and **JOSHUA** served as a great example to his family and to the rest of **GOD'S** people.

E. The Responsibility Of FULFILLING OUR PROMISES TO THE LORD! (Vs 16-24)

The response of the people was basically: *"...we will serve the Lord..." vs 18*

1. The ISRAELITES Promised With Their Lips, But Not With Their Actions. (Vs 16-21)

- a. They Were Caught Up In The Emotion Of The Message.
- b. They Had A Burst Of Enthusiasm That Was Full Of Insincerity.

2. JOSHUA Challenged Them To Prove Their Sincerity By Their Works. (Vs 22-24)

3. JOSHUA Set A Stone As A Witness And A Reminder.

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Conclusion

If we are to **STAY THE COURSE** and not drift from what **GOD** would have us do, we must never forget what **GOD** has done for us.

We also must realize that our empty promises are of no use to **GOD**!

What **GOD** desires is a **TOTAL, WHOLE-HEARTED COMMITMENT TO HIM**!

We must make a **CONSCIOUS CHOICE** and **COMMITMENT** to **SERVE GOD** and then **FOLLOW THROUGH** on our **COMMITMENT**!

We must leave a good example for the future generations.

Whom will you **SERVE**? You will **SERVE** a god.

Will you **SERVE** the **ONE TRUE GOD** now matter the cost?

Romans 12:1-2—“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.