

## CORE COMPETENCIES

### Core Beliefs

- Trinity
- Salvation by Grace
- Authority of Bible
- **Personal God**  
"I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life."
- Identity in Christ
- Church
- Humanity
- Compassion
- Eternity
- Stewardship

### Core Practices

- Worship
- Prayer
- Bible Study
- Single-Mindedness
- Biblical Community
- Spiritual Gifts
- Giving Away My Time
- Giving Away My Money
- Giving Away My Faith
- Giving Away My Life

### Core Virtues

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Patience
- Kindness/Goodness
- Faithfulness
- Gentleness
- Self-Control
- Hope
- Humility

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elcome to a new study in the book of Joshua! I pray that you are excited to see what God will teach you and how He will grow you as you dig into His Word. The book of Joshua is a fun one to read and to study—full of fast-paced action, real-life heroes (and “villains”), and an abundance of personal application to today. If you’re new to Engage, welcome! I pray that this tool, lovingly and prayerfully prepared by some wonderful people (and no, I’m not referring to myself!), will be a great help to your walk with God. Don’t let yourself be overwhelmed if you don’t get everything done or aren’t sure if you’ve got the “right answers.” God will honor your efforts and desire to know Him and His Word, wherever you are on your faith journey. As the name of this study guide says, this is all about an active pursuit.

So, are you ready? Let’s Engage!

In His Grace,

**Richard Gotthardt, Pastor of Spiritual Formation**

### Teachability

This week we begin a new series on the book of Joshua. I am very eager to see how God is going to use the truths He reveals to us in this book to renew our minds and transform our lives!

Your desire and commitment to get into the Word of God places you into more **intensive warfare** with the enemy of God. Did you know that every piece of the Christian’s armor is related to the Word of God? Not only that, but our only offensive weapon is the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. The enemy desires that our sword be dull and ineffective, so he will no doubt oppose your commitment to and practice of diligent study. So be prepared- expect the enemy to try to frustrate or discourage you.

Each day, before you begin the assignment, it is very important to **begin your time of study with prayer**. As we seek to handle the Word of God accurately, we must recognize that the Bible is divinely inspired. The words we are reading are truth—given to us by God that we might know Him and His ways.

*For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him. Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 2:10-11).*

So, we go to God first, we ask Him to reveal His truth, and to lead and guide our minds and hearts into all truth. If we ask, we can expect that He will honor our efforts by revealing Himself and by transforming our lives! And our lives will then reflect the truth of 2 Timothy 2 and 3, which command us to diligently study God’s Word and to handle it accurately. And we will be “taught, reprovved, corrected, and trained in righteousness, so that we will be adequate and equipped for every good work.” If we are faithful, He will be faithful!

## **Technique**

One of the things I would like to encourage you to do as you read each week is to train yourself to “interrogate the text.” By that I mean: Ask yourself the “5 W’s and an H”: (See below) This will help you to slow down when you read the words on the page in order to observe what is being communicated. Some of the types of questions you might ask include:

1. **What** is the chapter about?
2. **Who** are the main characters?
3. **When** does this event or teaching take place?
4. **Where** does this happen?
5. **Why** is this being done or said?
6. **How** did it happen?

## **Tools**

As we methodically work our way through the entire book of Joshua, there are a few tools to enhance your study time. They’re not mandatory, but they will help.

- **A Bible** that you are willing to mark in. Although marking may seem elementary and tedious to some, it is essential to slowing you down in your reading. Our purpose is not to *cover* as many verses as possible, but rather *to study and to understand* the Scripture as fully as possible.
- **Colored fine point pens** to write in your Bible, and **colored pencils** for marking various key words.
- **A loose-leaf notebook** for your *Engage* pages as well as separate paper for your various work and insights as you work through the *Engage* questions.
- **A personal bookmark or note card** that helps you to keep track of the key words, and your choice of colors or symbols for marking these words. This will help you to maintain consistency as you progress through your study of God’s Word. A simple 3x5 card can work well for this purpose.

## **Day 1 (Joshua 1)**

- If you skipped over the introduction on the first page, please go back and read it. Pray first!
- Slowly read through the first chapter of Joshua to get the general context of who, what, where, when, why, and how.

Today we will read through this chapter *five to seven times*, marking various key words and their related synonyms or pronouns. The marking of these words will help you to make lists in a future assignment and to clearly see the main details of this chapter. Mark with distinctive colors or symbols the following (remember to put these on your personal bookmark with their appropriate marking):

*Lord – Joshua – Moses – Command – Strong and Courageous*

*Every reference to time: so, words such as then, or after if they indicate an important sequence in events*

Before you stop for the day, what is your first impression of this chapter? What do you believe is the **main thing** that God is trying to convey?

## Day 2 - Pray first!

You will be reading through Joshua 1 several times again today. As you read you will be noting and beginning to compile, on three separate sheets, three lists.

- On the first list, write everything that you see about **God's character and His ways**.
- The second list will contain **God's promises**.
- The third list should include the **commands** to Joshua or the people of Israel.

Now, take time to **reflect** on the truths that God has revealed to you.

What helped you to:

- more clearly see God's character?
- to more personally and courageously follow His commands?
- and strongly hold onto His promises?

How can you apply this knowledge to your life today? Record your thoughts below.

## Day 3 - Pray first!

Today we will focus on deepening our understanding of the man that God chose to lead the nation of Israel into the Promised Land. Read through the following passages and begin a list on what you discover about Joshua.

Exodus 17:8-13  
Exodus 24:12-13  
Exodus 32:17  
Numbers 13:1-14:38  
Deuteronomy 31:1-8; 14-23  
Deuteronomy 32:44-52  
Deuteronomy 34:1-12

**Reflect** on the man Joshua—his character traits and experiences. **Why** do you think God chose such a man?

Most of us will never hold a position of leadership over such a monumental endeavor, but each of us as believers in Jesus Christ have been given responsibilities of leadership. It may be in your home and family, or in your occupation, or within the body of Christ.

**What lessons** can you learn from Joshua's life and apply to your responsibilities in leadership?

**Day 4** - Pray first!

Today we will take a closer look at the command to “***be strong and courageous***” from this chapter. This is a key phrase that you marked on Day One. Key words or phrases are words that are often repeated within a text in order to convey the author’s message to the reader. We refer to them as key words, because like keys, they often unlock the meaning of the text.

In your background reading yesterday concerning Joshua, you may have noticed the occurrence of this phrase in several of the passages. How many times is the phrase “be strong and courageous” used in this first chapter of Joshua?

Look closely at each verse that uses this phrase and “interrogate the surrounding text” with the “5 W’s and an “H” (who, what, when, where, why, how). I’ve listed out a few sample questions to get you started.

**Who** was being commanded to be strong and courageous?

**What** would be the result?

**When** was this going to be necessary?

**Where** was this strength and courage to come from?

**Why** was it necessary to have strength and courage?

**How** could Joshua obey this command?

In verse nine there is a very clear contrast presented between being strong and courageous versus being terrified and discouraged. As you look through the various verses that contain the exhortation to be strong and courageous, what is it that will sustain this courage?

**What** would tempt Joshua to be terrified and to be discouraged?

**Who** and **what** would provide strength and courage to Joshua?

Verses 16-18 contain the response of the people back to Joshua’s charge: they exhort him to be strong and courageous. **What** do they pledge to Joshua?

**How** do you think this made Joshua feel?

Now, remember, this is the next generation of the spies who first entered the promised land at Moses instruction after God’s first command. Ten (of the twelve) spies were filled with fear and dread at what they saw in the Promised Land and rebelled against God and against Moses, only Joshua and Caleb stood firmly on God’s promises of protection. They encouraged the children of Israel to appoint another leader and return to Egypt. They even wanted to stone Joshua and Caleb for remaining faithful to God! In response, God judged all those over the age of 20, except for Caleb and Joshua. They would die in the wilderness and never be allowed to enter the Promised Land. The nation of Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 more years waiting for God’s judgment to be complete! (You can read Numbers 13 and 14 for the rest of the story!)

Also, *this* group of people (that pledges complete obedience to Joshua) is the generation that (as God told Moses, in the presence of Joshua) would play the harlot with the strange gods of the land, that would forsake Him and

that would break His covenant! Moses had accused them of being stubborn and rebellious against God already! (Read Deuteronomy 31 for the details of this!)

**Now**, how do you think their response affected Joshua?

### **Day 5** - Pray first!

Today we will make personal application of the truth that God has revealed to you.

Along the left hand side of the first page of this study guide are listed the 30 Core Competencies that God desires to be evident and increasing in your life. As we study through the book of Joshua, it will be good for you to keep these in mind and to look for examples of various **beliefs, practices, or virtues** that may be there. Each week, one of the core competencies will be highlighted to help us evaluate our need for growth in this area.

This week's core competency is the **belief** in a **Personal God**, and our creed states, *"I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life."*

The assessment statements that correspond with this belief are:

1. I believe that God has a purpose for my life.
2. I believe that pain and suffering can often bring me closer to God.
3. I believe that God is actively involved in my life.
4. I believe that God enables me to do things I could not or would not otherwise do.

**Where**, in your life, do you sense God's calling and yet feel a sense of fear or a lack of courage to step out in obedience?

When God calls us to do something (a command), He always promises and provides whatever is necessary to be obedient to that command. As you reflect on your life and the commands and promises that God has given you, what **promises** do you see in this chapter of Joshua that are applicable to you?

**What** in your life that might cause you to be terrified or discouraged?

**What promises** of God are you not claiming and walking in the truth of?

**What part** does the Word of God play in your life? Are you careful to walk in obedience to all that God tells you? Or do you find yourself veering just a little to the right or the left and still thinking that you are on track with God? Is God's word so much a part of your life that you think about it, meditate on it, all the time? Do you look to it for direction continually? How could this area of your life be enhanced?

What people in your life are counting on you to lead them in a strong and courageous way?

Does your strength and courage depend on *their* whole-hearted devotion to your leadership? If not, what does it depend on?

Maybe you are not the “leader” type, but as a part of Grace Community Church, there are leaders that are called to lead you in a strong and courageous way. How would the truths in this chapter apply to you as a “godly follower”? How can you encourage them to be strong and courageous?

Begin today to memorize Joshua 1:6-9 so that you have a piece of God’s word to meditate on! This will help you to be strong and courageous and to have success wherever you go!

### Joshua in Context

It is important to see how Joshua fits into the Old Testament or Hebrew Bible. The first five books of the Old Testament are called the Torah. These are the foundational books to Hebrew theology and discourse. The next section, starting with Joshua through 2 Kings is a detail of the history of the Israelite people. The ancient Israelites referred to these books as the Former Prophets.

#### **<sup>1</sup> After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide:**

- ♦ The taking of the promised land was an event the people of Israel had looked forward to for generations. In Genesis 12:1-3, God makes a covenant with Abraham. In this covenant God promises to make Abraham’s descendents into a great people who will inhabit the fertile land of Palestine. However, for nearly 400 years the people had been exiled from the land and enslaved in Egypt. Moses led the people out of slavery in Exodus, but the Exodus generation was forced to wander in the wilderness for 40 years before finally entering into the fertile land of promise. This is where the book of Joshua picks up. Moses has just died (Deuteronomy 34). In the first chapter God transfers the leadership of the community from Moses to Joshua and declares that he will be the one to lead the people into the promised land.

#### **<sup>2</sup> "Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites.**

- ♦ Moses is called the “servant” of God whereas Joshua is labeled as the “official.”
- ♦ Verses 2-9 is a Divine speech where the LORD speaks directly to Joshua.
- ♦ The command to cross the Jordan is literally, “Now, arise, cross...” This gets the immediacy across to Joshua, there is not to be any delay.

#### **<sup>3</sup> I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. <sup>4</sup> Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Great Sea on the west.**

- ♦ God’s call on Joshua was to take control of the land which is delineated in verse 4. However, we must remember that Joshua was not simply moving a group of people into some uninhabited land. He was moving people into the most prized and sought after real estate in the ancient world. In order to possess the land, many nations (far more powerful than Israel) would have to be forcibly dispossessed.

#### **<sup>5</sup> No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. <sup>6</sup> "Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them.**

- ♦ The first motif that surround the words of encouragement to Joshua is the idea of divine presence. The LORD affirms to Joshua that just as He revealed His presence to Moses on Sinai and in the burning bush, he will be a God who is present with Joshua and the people of Israel.

**<sup>7</sup> Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. <sup>8</sup> Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. <sup>9</sup> Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."**

- ♦ The second motif is the idea of the Law or *Torah*. The Torah is the first 5 books of the Old Testament. Joshua is commanded to keep these words close to him.
- ♦ The command to "meditate on it day and night" is a literary technique called "merism." A merism takes two aspects to mean "everything." In effect, God is telling Joshua to always meditate on Torah.
- ♦ Obedience to Torah not military prowess is the means to prosperity and success in the campaigns to taking over Palestine.

**<sup>10</sup> So Joshua ordered the officers of the people: <sup>11</sup> "Go through the camp and tell the people, 'Get your supplies ready. Three days from now you will cross the Jordan here to go in and take possession of the land the LORD your God is giving you for your own.'"**

- ♦ Joshua commands his officers to prepare for battle. The it is at this point that the major divisions of ranks is made for the army.

**<sup>12</sup> But to the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh, Joshua said, <sup>13</sup> "Remember the command that Moses the servant of the LORD gave you: 'The LORD your God is giving you rest and has granted you this land.' <sup>14</sup> Your wives, your children and your livestock may stay in the land that Moses gave you east of the Jordan, but all your fighting men, fully armed, must cross over ahead of your brothers. You are to help your brothers <sup>15</sup> until the LORD gives them rest, as he has done for you, and until they too have taken possession of the land that the LORD your God is giving them. After that, you may go back and occupy your own land, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you east of the Jordan toward the sunrise."**

- ♦ This section is a virtual quote of Deuteronomy 3:18-20.
- ♦ The tribes that would inherit the eastern lands are commanded to continue fighting with their brothers until all the land was won.

**<sup>16</sup> Then they answered Joshua, "Whatever you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go."**

- ♦ The response of the people is "Whatever... wherever..." They commit to following Joshua's leadership under any and all circumstances.

**<sup>17</sup> Just as we fully obeyed Moses, so we will obey you. Only may the LORD your God be with you as he was with Moses. <sup>18</sup> Whoever rebels against your word and does not obey your words, whatever you may command them, will be put to death. Only be strong and courageous!"**

The command to "be strong and courageous" is a refrain in this section that is meant to highlight the need for such attributes.