

CORE COMPETENCIES

Core Beliefs

- Trinity
- Salvation by Grace
- Authority of Bible
- Personal God
- Identity in Christ
- Church
- Humanity
- Compassion
- Eternity
- Stewardship

Core Practices

• Worship

"I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me."

- 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

Imagine for a moment that you had only a few days left to live. I'm not trying to be morbid or alarming, just providing a chance to think about something important. Now imagine you had the opportunity to gather around you, some of the people you loved deeply and to speak to them. What would you want to say? What wisdom would you offer? This is the very situation that Joshua finds himself in near the end of this book. His words reflect a lifetime of experience, faithfulness and wisdom. They merit our attention and reflection, and I pray that you'll find much here to help you in your own journey. Happy studies this week!

In Him,

Richard Gotthardt, Pastor of Spiritual Formation

If you are new to using the Engage for our Joshua series—

Included in the *Engage* for July 10th is an Appendix to our series in Joshua. You may access it through the Grace Community Church web site www.gracecommunityaz.org. Simply click on the "Messages" button and "Download Study Guide" for July 10th. You can then print the final three pages which contain the appendix. In the Appendix you will find three items that have been included in previous lessons, and are necessary for understanding and completing the daily assignments in the *Engage*. The first part is a brief introduction for using the *Engage* study guide and contains some basic instructions, techniques, and suggested tools. Please read through this before beginning your study time! Also included is a Reading Plan for the entire book of Joshua since we will only be looking in-depth at thirteen of the twenty-four chapters. Lastly is a map entitled "Occupying the Land."

Review from last week's study in Joshua 14

Last week we saw Caleb's example of faithfulness. We saw that Caleb was faithful to believe God's promises and provision, regardless of the majority opinion of those around him. We saw that Caleb's faithfulness was evident throughout his life, during times of wandering in the wilderness and even into his "golden years." We saw that Caleb knew God's promises, he was dependent on God's provision and he followed God wholeheartedly.

Reading Plan Assignment for this week: Joshua 19-21

MEMORY VERSE

"Be very strong; be careful to obey
all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses,
without turning aside to the right or to the left."
Joshua 23:6

Day 1 (Joshua 23)

Review the passages you have been committing to memory (Joshua 1:6-11, Joshua 2:11, Joshua 3:3-5, Joshua 6:20, Joshua 7:13, Joshua 10:14, Joshua 14:11-12a), and begin today to memorize **Joshua 23:6 and 14**. Remember that as we store God's Word in our minds and our hearts, we are doing that which God says is necessary to be strong and courageous, prosperous, and successful (Joshua 1:8).

Every day as we go to God's Word, begin your time in prayer asking Him to reveal His truth to your mind and your heart and to transform your life by that truth.

This week we will look at Joshua 23 where Joshua is giving final words of exhortation to the nation of Israel. Read through this short chapter one time without doing any marking of your text, simply noting the people and the timing of this chapter.

- Who is speaking and to whom is he speaking?
- What is the timing of this chapter?
- How would you characterize the tone of this chapter?
- Why do you think Joshua is motivated to speak this way?

Now begin to read the chapter through several times and mark the following key words. Remember to actually read the text, not just look for certain words! The marking of these words aids your study in at least three ways: it forces you to read the passage multiple times, it slows down your reading so you can more carefully observe the details, and therefore, helping you to more accurately interpret the meaning of the passage within the context. Mark the following key words (including synonyms and pronouns) as you have in the previous lessons and chapters.

LORD (God), Joshua, any expressions of time (including words such as then or until)

When we began our study on the book of Joshua, we made (and each week we have added to) lists on separate paper. The first is ***God's Character and His Ways***, and the second, entitled ***Joshua***, contains insights about his character and experiences. If this is your first week, you may at some point want to go back and list what you see about Joshua and the LORD from the previous chapters of Joshua, but for now begin your lists with chapter twenty-three.

- Go back and read Joshua 1:1-5. What did God promise to Joshua and the children of Israel?
- Review your list on God's Character and His Ways. How did He show His faithfulness?

The children of Israel knew before they crossed the Jordan River there would be battles to fight and enemies that would have to be driven out and destroyed. We also know that in order to possess our "Promised Land," the abundant life that God has promised for each of His children, there are daily battles and enemies of our soul that must be driven out. Finish your time today, acknowledging in your heart and mind that you are in a battle. As Ephesians 6:12 tells us *"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."*

Allow God to identify for you personally the enemies that desire to defeat you, and then to remind you of His promise that He will never fail you and never forsake you! Thank Him for the victory that He will provide as you walk in obedience to His commands!

Day 2 (Joshua 23, Deuteronomy 7)

Pray first!

Today we will continue to read and mark Joshua 23. The words we will mark today are new key words that help us to see the main theme of this chapter. (Be sure to record these on your personal bookmark with the marking of your choice.) Mark in a distinctive color or way the following words, their pronouns and synonyms.

Israel, these nations, promise(d)

- According to the text, who is Joshua referring to by “these nations”? Where are they?
- Read Deuteronomy 7 and note its similarities to Joshua 23. As Moses is giving instructions to the children of Israel before they enter the Promised Land, what specifics does he warn Israel about concerning “these nations”?
- What was God’s short-term and long-term plan for “these nations”? Especially note what He says in Deuteronomy 7, verses 22 and 23.
- Now go back to Joshua 23 and make a list with two columns. In the first column, list all that Israel is warned not to do in regard to “these nations,” and in the second column, all that Israel is warned not to do in regard to “their gods.”
- Next, under each column, record what Joshua says will be the results if they do not heed his specific warnings.
- Write everything you learned from this chapter regarding God’s promises.
- Reflect on the truths God has revealed to you today in His Word. Are there promises He wants you to claim? Are their enemies who are blocking God’s fulfillment of all those promises? How are these warnings and consequences applicable to your daily battles? What truths do you believe God wants you to apply today?

Day 3 – (Joshua 23, Joshua 1)

Pray first!

- Begin by reading Joshua 1:1-9. Who is speaking to whom? When is this taking place? What is the exhortation that is repeated three times?
- Read through Joshua 23 once again. Along with Joshua’s warnings are four exhortations, three that begin with the word “be.” List below the three things that all Israel is instructed to be.
- The other exhortation in verse eight is to continue to do something. What is that?

Now let’s look at these commands a little more closely. “Be very strong.” The Hebrew word translated **strong** in the NIV is “**chazaq**” and includes the ideas of *prevailing upon, being firm, secure, and urgent*. This is the same Hebrew word God uses three times in Joshua 1 when He is charging Joshua with leading the people into their Promised Land. The adverb “**very**” could be translated *exceedingly, with much substance, or abundance*.¹

“**Be careful to obey,**” in the Hebrew carries the idea of *keeping, guarding, observing, giving heed to as well as doing, acting, attending to, and accomplishing*.

- What are they told to be careful to obey? What quantifying words are used in this exhortation?
- If you look at the way the New American Standard Version translates Joshua 23:6-7 with verse seven being a continuation of the sentence and thought of verse six, what further insight do you see regarding this exhortation? Why was it so important for all Israel to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses?
 - 6 *“Be very firm, then, to keep and do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, so that you may not turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left,*
 - 7 *so that you will not associate with these nations, these which remain among you, or mention the name of their gods, or make anyone swear by them, or serve them, or bow down to them.*
- In verse eight, we see Joshua’s third exhortation to Israel when he tells them rather than serving or bowing down to the gods of the other nations, they are to “hold fast to the LORD your God.” The Hebrew word translated “**hold fast**” is “**dabaq**” and it means *to cling, stay close, cleave, stick with, join to, or follow closely*.² This is the same Hebrew word in verse twelve that the NIV translates as “ally.” What contrast do you observe between these two verses?

¹Strong, J. (1996). *The exhaustive concordance of the Bible : Showing every word of the test of the common English version of the canonical books, and every occurrence of each word in regular order.* (electronic ed.) (H3966). Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship.

²Strong, J. (1996). *The exhaustive concordance of the Bible : Showing every word of the test of the common English version of the canonical books, and every occurrence of each word in regular order.* (electronic ed.) (H1692). Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship.

- The fourth exhortation in verse eleven to “be very careful to love the LORD your God,” appears to be sandwiched between a reminder and a warning. What are the basics of that reminder and warning?
- As you reflect on the exhortations recorded in this chapter, how do they correspond with the warnings we saw yesterday?
- How can this truth be applied to your life?

Day 4 – (Joshua 23, Deuteronomy 4)

Pray first!

Today we will spend some time looking more closely at verses seven & sixteen and Joshua’s warnings regarding the gods of the other nations. Review the second column of the list that you compiled on DAY 2

As we look at the progression of association with these “other gods” from verse seven, let me share some insights according to the Hebrew word meanings and Webster’s definitions.

“Invoke” the names	to remember, recall, call to mind, be thought of, be brought to mind
“Swear” by them	to adjure, to entreat solemnly, appeal to earnestly
“Serve” them	to work for another, serve another by labor
“Bow down” to them	before superior in allegiance

- Now take this information and consider the “other gods” that are prevalent around each of us within our American suburban culture. How are we enticed to enter into this very serious rebellion or turning away from the LORD our God?
- Do you think this warning is more or less applicable to your life? Why?
- In verse sixteen, what does Joshua warn will cause the LORD’S anger to burn against Israel?
- Read Deuteronomy 4:1-26 and record any additional insights you gain regarding God’s warnings concerning our association with other gods.
- Record in your Bible what you have seen as the theme of Joshua 23.

Day 5

As Joshua reminds the people of God's covenant with them, His promises to them and His deeds for them, we can clearly see the core value of **Worship – I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.**

The four Assessment Statements that correspond to the practice of Worship are listed below. Use these statements to evaluate the reality of this practice in your personal life

1. I thank God daily for who He is and what He is doing in my life.
2. I attend religious services and worship with other believers each week.
3. I give God the credit for all that I am and all that I possess.
4. I am not ashamed for others to know that I worship God.

The key verse that corresponds to this practice is found in Psalm 95:1-7 – *“Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before Him with thanksgiving and extol Him with music and song. For the LORD is the great God, the great King above all gods. In His hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to Him. The sea is His, for He made it, and His hands formed the dry land. Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker; for He is our God and we are the people of His pasture, the flock under His care.”*

Read the following quote of James Packer from *Your Father Loves You*. Meditate on the truths God has revealed to you this week. Allow those truths to penetrate into your heart and to determine your actions.

To worship God is to recognize His worth or worthiness; to look God-ward, and to acknowledge in all appropriate ways the value of what we see. The Bible calls this activity “glorifying God” or “giving glory to God,” and views it as the ultimate end, and from one point of view, the whole duty of man (Ps. 29:2; 96:6; 1 Cor. 10:31).

Scripture views the glorifying of God as a six-fold activity: praising God for all that He is and all His achievements; thanking Him for His gifts and His goodness to us; asking Him to meet our own and others' needs; offering Him our gifts, our service, and ourselves; learning of Him from His Word, read and preached, and obeying His voice; telling others of His worth, both by public confession and testimony to what He has done for us. Thus we might say that the basic formulas of worship are these: “Lord, you are wonderful”; “Thank you, Lord”; “Please, Lord”; “Take this, Lord”; “Yes, Lord”; “Listen everybody!”

This then is worship in its largest sense: petition as well as praise, preaching as well as prayer, hearing as well as speaking, actions as well as words, obeying as well as offering, loving people as well as loving God. However, the primary acts of worship are those which focus on God directly—and we must not imagine that work for God in the world is a substitute for direct fellowship with Him in praise and prayer and devotion.

Worship Him today!