

## CORE COMPETENCIES

### Core Beliefs

- Trinity
- Salvation by Grace
- Authority of Bible
- Personal God
- 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**

**"I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes."**

### Core Virtues

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

### MEMORY VERSE

Now I am about to go the way of all the earth. You know with all your heart and soul that not one of all the good promises the LORD your God gave you has failed. Every promise has been fulfilled; not one has failed."  
Joshua 23:14

**W**ow, it has been a great journey through this book of Joshua, hasn't it? It's hard to believe that we began this journey just eight weeks ago with Joshua and the people of Israel at the entrance to the land of promise, and now we find Joshua, years later, near the end of his life. These parting words from Joshua are not just about his own journey, however. He stands as a representative of God Himself delivering a strong challenge and serious warnings to the people of Israel. Even though he knows the potential for failure and falling away is quite high, he offers the opportunity to each person and to the community to make good choices. He remains a great reminder to us that, no matter what others may choose around us, we have the opportunity and responsibility to make godly choices ourselves.

I pray you have been helped, challenged and encouraged by this book and by your investment in God's Word. I pray it has inspired you to keep digging and to continue to discover the great treasures God has given us in His Word. Again, many, many thanks to the amazing team who puts this guide together and makes it available to you. It's my privilege to simply introduce their great work to you and watch God at work.

**So what's next?** We won't have an Engage for next week— I'd encourage you to spend some time reviewing your study in Joshua and being reminded of what it has taught you. You could also start reading in our next book study—1 John. The following week's Engage will be an overview of 1 John to prepare us for this next great study of Scripture. It's going to be great. I hope you'll continue to join us for our study of God's Word!

In His Grace,

**Richard Gotthardt, Pastor of Spiritual Formation**

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

Included in the *Engage* for July 10<sup>th</sup> is an Appendix to our series in Joshua. You may access it through the Grace Community Church web site [www.gracecommunityaz.org](http://www.gracecommunityaz.org). Simply click on the "Messages" button and "Download Study Guide" for July 10<sup>th</sup>. 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 23

Last week we looked at the first part of Joshua's final address to the nation of Israel. Joshua 23 contains a very clear warning to the children of Israel and concurrently to us as the children of God. They, and we, live among great and strong "nations" who serve other gods. Joshua called the people, and us, to be exceedingly firm, secure and urgent in our knowledge of as well as our obedience to all that is written in the Word of God. The consequences to them/us were and are unavoidable if we turn from clinging and following closely after the Lord our God to joining or staying close to the culture around us. God will always be faithful to His promises. The only appropriate response from His children is a wholehearted love and worship of Him.

**Reading Plan Assignment for this week: Joshua 22-24**

## Day 1 (Joshua 24)

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, Joshua 23:6, 14). Begin today to memorize **Joshua 24:13-15**.

Remember 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).

As we go to God's Word to be renewed in mind and transformed in heart and life, it is spiritually essential that we pray and ask God to reveal Himself to us and to be our Teacher. Ask Him to disclose to you how His truth needs to be applied in your life today.

This week we will look at the final chapter of Joshua and his final words of exhortation to the children of Israel. Read through this chapter one time and as you are doing so, note who is speaking and to whom. This will help you recognize how the chapter divides and the main truths to be observed within each segment.

Now go back and read the chapter several times. Remember to actually read the text, not just look for certain words! The marking of the following 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 because you have more carefully observed the details, it helps you to more accurately interpret the meaning of the passage within the context. It is only as we observe carefully and interpret accurately, that we can apply correctly! 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 also began (and each week we have added to) making 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-four. This chapter is rich with insights regarding God, His character and His ways. Allow your observations to lead your heart to rejoice in what an amazing God we have!

## Day 2 (Joshua 24)

### **Pray first!**

Today as you read through Joshua 24, mark all references to the *people of Israel* (including pronouns).

- Now, go back through the chapter and note the time phrases that help you to understand the history lessons presented in this chapter. Briefly outline the events that God highlights for the people in verses one through thirteen. One helpful tool you might use is to note contrasts that are presented within the text. Simply mark each occurrence of the word "*but*" and note the contrast being drawn.
- Go back through the first thirteen verses and list below those things that God credits the people of Israel for doing.
- Look carefully at vs. 13 and list below the provisions of God and the people's contribution.

- Spend some time now allowing God to recount for you **“His” story in your life**. Reflect on the verbs that are used repeatedly in this text referring to God’s action on their/our behalf: *He took, He led, He gave (6 times), He assigned, He sent, He afflicted, He brought, He put, He did, He destroyed, He blessed, He delivered*.
- Write out below a brief history of **God’s activity in your life**. As you are doing this, make sure to recognize that just as the children of Israel were incapable of doing anything besides calling out for God’s help and then witnessing His mighty acts on their behalf, so we are wholly dependent on this Holy and All-Powerful God.

### **Day 3 – (Joshua 24, Jeremiah 36, Romans 7 & 8)**

#### **Pray first!**

- Verse fourteen is a pivotal verse in Joshua 24. Verses one through thirteen contain a recounting by God to all the tribes of Israel of His intervention and provision for them from ancient times until now. Vs. 14 in the New American Standard translation begins, “Now, therefore,” and signals, with this term of conclusion, that a charge, an exhortation, a call to response from the people is to follow. Who gives the charge in vs. 14? How do you know?

Today we will look closely at that charge from Joshua and seek to apply the truths God reveals to our lives as well.

- Read through vs. 14-33 marking these two new key words (add them to your bookmark too!)  
*Serve, witness(es)*
- From these verses, make a list below of everything you observe about serving.
  
- What did you learn from marking the word “witness(es)”? Who or what was a witness? To whom? When, why or how?
  
- We see from this section of scripture that the time had come for each person and each family to make a decision for themselves as to whom they would serve. What options were presented in vs. 15?
- How can this truth be applied to your life? What are your options? Have you made your choice?
  
- According to vs. 16-18, on what basis did the people make their choice?

- Who initiated the relationship?
- Who responded to the loving acts?
- Do you see that their choice to serve is made out of “relationship” – the serving did not lead to relationship? What significance does this have to you?
- Now look closely at vs. 19. How does God categorize our choice to serve other gods?
- What character traits of God are listed in vs. 19?
- How do these traits and our choices affect our relationship with Him?
- What is the statement that Joshua says to the people after they have made their choice (vs. 19)?
- The Hebrew words used here convey the idea that there was an absolute prohibition, an inability, the lack of strength, power or endurance to be able to accomplish what they chose. How could this be?
- Read the promises of God in Jeremiah 36:26-27 as well as Paul’s words from Romans 7:18-8:11. What insights do these two passages give regarding God’s provision for you to be able to serve Him?

That’s enough studying for today. However, I challenge you to write out your memory verses on a piece of paper and reflect on it continuously. Allow God’s Word to penetrate your heart and your life! Respond to His intervention in your life and to His initiation of relationship!

#### **Day 4 – (Joshua 24, Deuteronomy 29)**

##### **Pray first!**

Today we will begin our time looking more closely at some Hebrew word meanings. Allow God to expand and apply truth to our heart and life.

Read through the following definitions.<sup>1</sup> Write a personal and specific paraphrase of this section of scripture (vs. 14-27) to reflect the scope of God’s call to you and your response to Him. If you have internet capabilities, you may want to also log onto [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com), and read through these verses in several modern translations.

<sup>1</sup>Strong, 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.) (H5493). Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship.

- **“fear”**: to fear, revere, be afraid, to stand in awe of, be awed, to reverence, honor, respect.
- **“serve”**: to work, serve, to labor, work, do work, to work for another, serve another by labor, to serve as subjects, to make oneself a servant.
- **“faithfulness”**: this word is actually two Hebrew words, translated as **“sincerity”** and **“truth”** in the New American Standard version.
- **“sincerity”**: complete, whole, entire, sound, healthful, unimpaired, innocent, having integrity, what is complete or entirely in accord with truth and fact.
- **“truth”**: firmness, faithfulness, truth. sureness, reliability, stability, continuance.
- **“put away”** (v. 14 and 23): to turn aside, depart, avoid, to be removed, to come to an end, depose, reject, abolish.
- **“undesirable”**: to be bad, be evil, to be displeasing, to be sad, to be injurious, to do an injury or hurt.
- **“forsake”**: to leave, loose, forsake, to depart from, leave behind, let alone, to abandon, neglect, apostatize, to let loose.
- **“forgive”**: to lift, bear up, carry, take, to bear, carry, support, sustain, endure, to take, take away, carry off, forgive.
- **“rebellion”**: transgression, rebellion.
- **“sin”**: sin, sinful, condition of sin, guilt of sin, punishment for sin.

To close out your study time today, read Deuteronomy 29. Record any additional insights regarding Joshua 24 you gained from this additional passage.

- Record what you understand to be the main theme of Joshua 24.

## Day 5

What an amazing journey we have had with Joshua and the children of Israel! I pray God has journeyed with you and taught you many things, as He has me! As Joshua closes out his final charge to the people, we too, must receive a final charge from God and a time that requires a decision. Just as Joshua called on the people to choose that day...whom would they serve, to whom would they give their life...each of us must make that decision and take full responsibility for the consequences.

The Core Competency we will address this week is the practice of **Giving Away My Life**. Our creed states it this way, **“I give away my life to fulfill God’s purposes.”** The key verse is one that you are probably familiar with and challenges each of us.

**Romans 12:1, 2: “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will.”**

The four Assessment Statements that correspond to the practice of “Giving Away My Life” are listed below. Use these statements to evaluate the reality of this practice in your personal life:

1. I am living out God’s purposes for my life.
2. I give up what I want to meet the needs of others.
3. I give away things I possess, when I am so led by God.
4. I serve God through my daily work.

Let me close with a quote from Kay Arthur in her book entitled *Choosing Victory – Overcoming Defeat*.

*“Joshua, Caleb, Rahab, Achan, and the heads of the 12 tribes were all faced with decisions—decision as to whom they were going to believe and, thus, serve. With each decision there was a course of action that followed and there was a consequence for that action. I wonder what would happen if we, as children of God, would stop and prayerfully contemplate the direction in which we are about to move, what God says about it, and what the consequences of our decision will be? Think about it, my friend. It is more than worth the time. Such action could change the course of a life ... and even the course of a people or a nation.*”

*What would have happened to the children of Israel had Joshua not chosen to be strong and courageous and observe to do all God had commanded him?*

*What will happen to you, to your loved ones, to your people, to your nation if you choose to serve the LORD God, love the Lord your God, and walk in all His ways? What will happen if you choose not to keep His commandments, to hold fast to Him, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul? Don't take a chance. Be strong and courageous! Try it and find out."*

## Commentary on Joshua 24

**24:1**...Now that the land had been conquered, Joshua calls the Israelites together at Shechem to reestablish the covenant between God and His people. Notice the similarities between the following verses and Moses' covenant commitment in Deuteronomy 30:15-20. In many ways, Joshua is reiterating the words of his mentor.

**24:1-13**...The great and memorable verse of this final chapter comes in verse 14 to "fear the Lord." However, it is important to note that this call to obedience does not come out of thin air. It comes only after God recounts all that He had done already for the Israelites. This pattern is of utmost importance for God's people to understand: grace precedes obedience. This is the pattern in Exodus 20 in the giving of the 10 Commandments. Before the commandments are given, God reminds the people of the grace He had shown them in the Exodus. We also see this pattern in Paul's epistles. For example, Romans 12 begins with "Therefore, in view of God's mercies, offer your bodies as living sacrifices..." But the first 11 chapters of Romans are Paul's theological treatise.

**24:14-18**... Carson comments on verses 14-18:

"The ancient vassal treaties essentially stipulated exclusive loyalty to the Great King. One Hittite treaty commands: 'Do not turn your eyes to anyone else!' So also here. Fear the Lord (14a) entails waving a white flag of surrender before the Lord's law, of submitting oneself to His commandments. One cannot 'fear Him' and at the same time serve other gods (cf. 2 Ki. 17:32-34); these idols must be thrown away (14b; cf. Gen. 35:2-4). Israel's jealous God tolerates no rival. Neither does Jesus (cf. Mt. 6:24; Lk. 14:26). The reference to Egypt (14b) adds to the Pentateuch that Israel's redemption from Egypt was spiritual, not just political (see Ezk. 20:5-10; 23:1-4). God demands that the people choose where their allegiance lies, either with the old gods of Terah, the new gods of Canaan or with Himself (15; cf. 1 Ki. 18:21; Rev. 3:16), an offer of options that assumes Israel's freedom before God. Entrance into this covenant was a matter for each individual family to decide, as seen in Joshua's famous resolve (15b). Although Israel functioned as a nation, the covenant was essentially a family matter, and still is (cf. Acts. 16:31). As eyewitnesses of the acts recited in the prologue and so able to confirm its accuracy, that generation appropriately formed the foundation for the old covenant relationship with God. After this the covenant will be passed on by the mouth of one generation and received in the heart of the next (Deut. 31:11-14). So also the new covenant community is built on the apostles who were eyewitnesses of the life of Jesus Christ, especially His resurrection (Acts. 1:21-22; 1 Cor. 15:8), and after that the mouth confesses it and the heart receives it (Rom. 10:6-10)."<sup>2</sup>

**24:19**...Butler comments on this verse:

"The nature of God Himself prevents Israel from serving Him. His holy purity and jealous love both tie Him in total devotion to His people and tie them off from fulfilling His demands. This has drastic consequences. God will not forgive Israel's sins (cf. Ex. 23:21). His expectations of them are too high. His love for them is too great. He cannot easily ignore their wrongdoings, their casual flirtations with other gods. The gods of the neighbors would simply wait for the worshiper to come back. Yahweh goes out to discipline the errant lover until she returns."<sup>3</sup>

**24:24**...This is the central verse of the chapter. Everything has led up to Israel's announcing that they will follow the Lord. This is the pinnacle of the book – all the conquests have led to it.

<sup>2</sup>Carson, D. A. (1994). *New Bible commentary: 21st century edition*. Rev. ed. of: The new Bible commentary. 3rd ed. / edited by D. Guthrie, J.A. Motyer. 1970. (4th ed.) (Jos 24:14). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill., USA: Inter-Varsity Press.

<sup>3</sup>Butler, T. C. (2002). *Vol. 7: Word Biblical Commentary: Joshua*. Word Biblical Commentary (Page 275). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.