

Learning from Joshua

Anna Frederick

So, Joshua is a pretty neat character in the Old Testament, and seemingly popular. I mean, he's got a whole book written about him, so he must be pretty cool. But, I believe that there are many things that we can learn and be encouraged about through Joshua and his walk with our Creator. Let's take a few minutes and look at them.

In the book of Exodus we see Joshua as Moses' assistant. Through his actions he becomes one of two possible candidates for Moses' position after Moses' death. He and this other guy Caleb, were two people, out of twelve that were sent to spy out the Promised Land and come back to bring a report. The other ten men came back and said that there were giants living in the land and that they all might as well turn back around and head back to Egypt, because captivity was better than being killed by giants. However, Joshua and Caleb were the only two who wanted to act in faith and go take the land. They were the two who believed that God was with them, so who could be against them! However, Joshua, at this point was still a young man, and no matter how hard he pushed for the people to go take the land, he couldn't convince them. Talk about a frustrating situation!



You see, Joshua knew God. Back in Exodus 33 we read that those who were seeking the LORD would go outside the camp to the tabernacle. Joshua went outside the camp to the tabernacle. Moses would go there and speak with God face to face, and we see that Joshua would go with him. Joshua was seeking after God, and wanted to meet with God. Even after Moses would leave the tabernacle, Joshua would stay behind in the tent and meet with the LORD. We don't know how long he stayed there, but we get the idea that Joshua thought that meeting with God was more important than anything else that life in the wilderness had to offer. He was learning the reality that God is just better, better than anything else on the earth. We can apply that to ourselves. What types of things are we seeking after? And if we're not seeking after God, than what kinds of battles are we not fighting and being victorious in because His power is not real in our lives?

So, Joshua knew God and he knew that God was big enough to help them take the Promised Land and take care of any giants that might happen to be there. But, because the majority of the people were not seeking after God, and did not know God the way that Joshua knew Him, they didn't listen to him and chose to accept God's punishment of wandering in the desert for a really long time. As was mentioned earlier, this must have been pretty frustrating for Joshua and you may even know how he felt. Sometimes it's like we *know* that God has this plan for us or the church or a ministry we're involved in and that it could be easily executed.... If only we could get a little cooperation! We feel frustrated and discouraged because nobody wants to go with us and with God. But, sometimes, it's possible that God allows us these times of frustration in order to help us.

Joshua was told to wait. That's a bad word in our vocabulary. We don't like to hear "wait". We don't like to be told to hold on, sit back, and wait for something that we know is going to be better than what we have now. See, Joshua was wandering around in the desert, living with thousands of other people in tents, and eating things like manna and quail. He didn't want to wait to go into a land that was rich with food, and places to establish a home, and known to be "flowing with milk and honey". To Joshua, this place sounded a lot better than the desert. But, he was told to wait. He'd get there sooner or later, but he had to trust God on this one. During Joshua's waiting period we see that God was preparing him to be the leader of this nation and also, building him up in so many ways and on so many levels.



In Numbers 27, we see Moses was told by God to lay his hands on Joshua and appoint him as his successor. As was mentioned earlier, Joshua was apparently one of two candidates for this position, but he is the one that was chosen. There were a couple of reasons why Joshua was chosen. First of all, he did have faith to try and persuade the children of Israel to take the Promised Land, and God didn't overlook that fact. Also, God told Moses that he was a "man who has the Spirit in him (Numbers 27:18)". Even in the New Testament a spiritual leader must be led by the Spirit. Joshua was that kind of a young man and God honored him greatly for his character. So, we see that as the young man that he was aspiring to be, Joshua was rewarded. All of this also happened (by the way) while Joshua was waiting to go into the Promised Land.

As it was nearing time for Joshua's wait to come to an end, Moses called him to talk to him. Moses was nearing death and Joshua was getting ready to step up and take his place. In Deuteronomy 31 Moses said to Joshua, "Be strong and of good courage, for you must go with this people to the land which the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall cause them to inherit it. And the LORD, He is the One who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed." We can kind of imagine what it must have been like for Joshua during this time. Excited about actually getting to allow God to fulfill His promise of so many years, but then scared that Moses was getting ready to die and he'd be all alone to carry out the Lord's orders. But, as Joshua came to this moment it was time for him to draw from the many years of waiting and learning from God and Moses himself and put into action the things that he knew. He was well prepared for the things that were coming, and it must have been exciting!

So, what can we take from all of this? We're young, we've got plans and dreams and ideas, but sometimes it's like those things are never going to come to fruition. Sometimes we feel like Joshua, and we're frustrated and discouraged. But, we can learn from Joshua and countless other biblical illustrations that when God says to wait, it is well worth it. Also, just because we're waiting it doesn't mean that it's a time to slack off and be a bum. It's a time of preparation, a time to learn and grow closer to God. The Lord I think will oftentimes give us these seasons of waiting because He wants us to focus on Him... that's what *He's* waiting for! So, as we wait on the Lord, as we wait patiently on the Lord, let's continue seeking after Him, learning more about Him, let's sit at His feet and soak Him in! Let us look to the leaders of the faith right now and learn from them. Let's continue to dream big, but live life right now, in this very moment, even bigger!