



A Systematic Expository Study on the book of JOSHUA

STUDY 1: THE TRAINING AND PREPARATION OF A LEADER

Joshua 1:1,2.

Most people who read the book of Joshua think we are hearing of him for the first time. No, years of training and preparation preceded his calling to the great responsibility of leadership. We see the first mention of Joshua in Exodus chapter 17. Even that account shows that he had had some training and recognition before the event. He proved himself trustworthy and dependable from the time of passing through the Red Sea, till the time of Israel's entry into the Promised Land. If we hope to do any notable work for Christ, we must allow Him to train and prepare us in His own appointed way.

Joshua was formerly named Oshea (Numbers 13:8) meaning "salvation" but the name was changed to "Jehoshua" meaning "he by whom Jehovah will save" (Numbers 13:16). He by whom God will do great exploits must have his nature changed. If we passionately desire to do great things for God and His people, we must earnestly and fervently pray for change of nature – a change that is known, meaningful, permanent, appropriate and broad in scope as this new name is!

CONSECRATION AND SUBMISSION DURING TRAINING

Exodus 17:8-14; Numbers 32:11,12; 14:6-10.

This first mention of Joshua shows that he had already proved that he was competent to be captain over others. The first mention also reveals his calling – a call to fight against the enemies of God. Those who would "earnestly contend for the faith" later in life-time ministry must begin early to "fight the good fight of faith". When he received this first assignment from God through Moses we see signs of a worker who would become a mighty warrior; the marks of a disciple who would become a great apostle: consecration, prompt obedience, courage, willingness to sacrifice, submission, persistence, dependence on God and his human leader. Later he was also chosen to be part of the team that spied out the land of Canaan. He was not assigned to lead the team but he worked with others without any attitude of pride or superiority. Humility and ability to work quietly in the team are leadership qualities.

When ten of the spies brought an evil report, with Caleb, he demonstrated faith in God, a heart that is fixed on the promised land, and steadfastness in standing on God's side even though it meant casting his lot with the minority against a violent, aggressive majority. God testified of him with Caleb that "they have wholly followed" Him. Christian leadership training does not only train the head, but the heart. Our training must make us have a fixed heart that is ready to wholeheartedly follow the Lord, whatever the cost.

COMPANIONSHIP AND SPIRITUALITY OF THE TRAINEE

Exodus 24:12-18; Hebrews 12:18-21; Exodus 32:15-18; 33:7-11.

Joshua's training took many years. He was carrying out some important assignments while undergoing training at the same time. This part of Joshua's life and training is not well known to most students of the Bible. When God called Moses to come up to "the mount of God" to receive the Ten Commandments, Joshua went with him! Joshua was not in the camp when Israel backslid. Though it was a fearful sight yet Joshua drew near to God in communion and supplication. Our training will be defective if private praying, or secret communion with God is missing.

Joshua was left alone for "forty days and forty nights" (Exodus 24:18) without food or friends – only in fellowship with the invisible God! While Israel was impatient in waiting for Moses, Joshua was patient. What a contrast! God must train us to have patience if we are to "fulfill the ministry" He is preparing us for. He was alone without feeling lonely! Exodus 32:15-18 is proof that Joshua remained in the mount during those forty days and nights. He did not know what had happened in the camp.

When Moses and Joshua returned from the mount and Moses pitched the tabernacle without the camp, "Joshua departed not out of the tabernacle." He desired to be a man who "dwelt in the house of the Lord" continually. He took delight in "dwelling in the secret place of the most High." This is where he got spiritual strength, vision and zeal for the Lord, conviction of his divine call! What a training Joshua had! It is more than Seminary training that often trains the head but leaves the hidden man of the heart unprepared for spiritual assignment.

COMMISSION AND CHARGE OF THE TRAINED

Numbers 27:15-23; 34:16-18; Deuteronomy 1:38; 3:21,22,28; 31:7,8; 34:9.

Joshua had been called “Moses’ minister” or “servant of Moses” (Exodus 24:13; Numbers 11:28) for many years while undergoing God’s training under his leader, Moses. With the training he had received he was now about to be commissioned and given the charge of leading Israel to the Promised Land. What a ministry! The height and scope of our life ministry will be limited to the depth and extent of the training we have received. He who had humbly received instruction, who had faithfully performed his duty, who had fully followed the Lord, who had zealously cherished communion with God, who had diligently trod the path of obedience, who had stood firm and fearless in a day of prevailing unbelief and general apostasy, was, at last, ready to be commissioned for public ministry.

So it was, so it is and so it always should be. Moses was to encourage him, command him, charge him and minister to him to have the Spirit of wisdom. Joshua received the promise of divine presence and became “full of the Spirit of wisdom” in readiness for the ministry God had appointed for him. Without Him and His Spirit, we can do nothing. With Him and His Spirit in us we can do all things which He appoints for us to do.

*If you are blessed by these bible study outlines, we'd like to hear from you.
You can email the pastor@deeperlife-liverpool.org.uk with your comments.*