

# FEARLESS LEADERSHIP

INSIGHTS INTO THE LIFE OF JOSHUA



GENE GETZ



*Fearless Leadership: Insights into the Life of Joshua*

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# CONTENTS

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LESSON	TITLE	PAGE
1	BASIC TRAINING FOR LIFE	8
2	SUPERNATURAL COURAGE & BLESSING	18
3	GOD'S TRANSFORMING POWER	26
4	A MIRACLE OF FAITH	34
5	THE FIASCO OF FORGETTING	42
6	RECAPTURED ALLEGIANCE	50
7	A RADICAL WRECKING BALL	58
8	THE TRAP OF LUST & SELFISHNESS	66
9	SECOND CHANCES WITH GOD	76
10	BACK TO BASICS	84
11	EXCEPTIONAL DECEPTION	92
12	A STRONG FINISH	102
13	DECISIVE DECISION REQUIRED	110

# FEARLESS LEADERSHIP

## A STUDY OF THE LIFE OF JOSHUA

Our battlefield is very different from the one Joshua fought on, but *faith is still the ultimate weapon!* Joshua was a dynamic leader, yet he literally trembled when God called him to succeed Moses. At times he was fearful, weak, or prone to bad judgments. Despite his humanness, an open heart, teachable spirit, humility, and faith, enabled him to learn from God how to be a great leader, fearlessly facing many of the same challenges we struggle with today. Whether leading in our homes, businesses, churches, or communities, God is calling us to step up, grasp His hand, and learn to lead a victorious Christian life.

The Men of Purpose series focuses on the lives of men in the Bible who provide poignant examples of godly masculinity. Each of these leaders faced trials, frustration, and failure, yet was inspired by God to achieve great goals. In a world where Christian male role models seem increasingly rare, this series reminds us that some of the most worthy examples of godly character can be found in the biblical figures who brought power, wisdom, and inspiration to God's people throughout the ages.

As you and your group approach each study, do so with the same spiritual passion and personal integrity that have characterized Dr. Getz throughout his lifetime. Let the goals of every group meeting be to understand biblical truths, to grapple with Dr. Getz' principles to live by, and to commit to helping each other apply what you learn in your daily lives. This is the supreme act of a disciple—being doers of God's Word (James 1:22-25).

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

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While this Bible study may be used individually, it is designed to be used within the context of small groups. Each group meeting should include all elements of the following “three-part agenda.”

**Icebreaker:** Fun, history-giving questions are designed to warm up the group and build understanding between group members. You may choose to use all of the Icebreaker questions, especially if there is a new group member that will need help in feeling comfortable with the group.

One of the purposes of this book is to begin and to then solidify a group. Therefore, getting to know one another and bonding together are essential to the success of this effort. The Icebreaker segment in each group session is designed to help you become better acquainted, greatly enhancing your group experience.

**Bible Study:** The heart of each meeting is your examination together of the Bible. The questions are open discovery questions that lead to further inquiry. Reference notes are provided to give everyone a “level playing field” and provide deeper insights into the biblical story. This section emphasizes understanding what the Bible says and applying its truth to real life. The questions for each session build on one another. There are always “going deeper” questions provided. You should always leave time for the last of the “questions for interaction.” You may elect to use the optional “going deeper” questions to lead you in applying what the group has learned. This segment also satisfies the desire for more challenging questions in groups that have been together for a while.

To help your men connect as a group, it is important for everyone to participate in the Bible study. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions. Participants should strive to make all of the other group members feel comfortable during the Bible Study time. Because we all have differing levels of biblical knowledge, it is essential that we understand and appreciate the personal context from which each one of us responds. We don't have to know much about theology and history to bring our own perspectives to bear on the truths contained in the Scriptures. It is vital to keep encouraging all group members to share what they are observing as you work through these important Bible passages.

**Caring Time:** All study should lead us to action. Each session ends with prayer and direction in caring for the needs of individual group members. You can choose between the various questions provided, or use them all.

Small groups help the larger body of Christ in many ways: caring for individuals, holding one another up in prayer, providing emotional support, and bringing new men into the church family. Each week it is important to remember to pray for those whom God would bring to your group.

## HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THIS BOOK

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Begin by reviewing the following ground rules and talk about the importance of “sharing your story” (see below).

### GROUND RULES

- **Priority:** While you are in the group, give the group meeting priority.
- **Participation:** Everyone participates and no one dominates.
- **Respect:** Everyone is given the right to their own opinion and all questions are encouraged ... and respected.
- **Confidentiality:** Anything that is said in the meeting is never repeated outside the meeting.
- **Empty Chair:** The group stays open to inviting new men to every meeting. The empty chair in your circle symbolizes those men you need to invite.
- **Support:** Permission is given to call upon each other in time of need—even in the middle of the night.
- **Advice Giving:** Unsolicited advice is not allowed.
- **Mission:** We agree to do everything in our power to work toward starting a new group—a vital part of our mission.

## SHARING YOUR STORY

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These sessions are designed to assist group members to share a little of their personal lives each time the group meets. Through a number of special techniques, each member is encouraged to move from low risk, less personal sharing to higher risk responses. This helps develop authentic community and facilitates care giving within your group.

It is only when group members begin to share their own stories that the group bonds at levels deep enough for life-change to take place.

# PERSONAL NOTES

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# BASIC TRAINING FOR LIFE

## WELCOME

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Perhaps more than any other Old Testament man, Joshua exemplifies for each of us how to live a victorious Christian life. He walked through the battlefields of the Old Testament as a godly man. Though he certainly made mistakes, he lived an exemplary life. God developed courageous leadership in his life that enabled him to fight and conquer daunting enemy armies.

What can a 21<sup>st</sup> century man living in a vastly different culture learn from a man like Joshua? His life demonstrates how men in any age can become courageous leaders “strengthened by the Lord and by His vast strength.” You, like Joshua, can “put on the full armor of God” in order to defeat “the world powers of this darkness” and “the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens” (Eph. 6:10-12).



## ICEBREAKER

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Maturing is a lifelong adventure. It takes time. One of the fundamental lessons we need to learn is how to faithfully handle present responsibilities. Success at one level prepares us for success at the next level.

What a hard lesson to learn! We start life focused on ourselves and on having fun right here, right now. The transition to living this day in light of the unfolding drama of our entire lifetime is a major task of adulthood. *How are you doing?*

1. When you were a boy, if you wanted to learn to operate a yo-yo or some new electronic gadget, how did you go about it?
  - a. Studied and practiced on my own until I had it perfect
  - b. Worked at it hard for a few days and gave up
  - c. Took a class or read a how-to book
  - d. Hung out with my friends and picked up whatever they knew
  - e. Was content to play at a basic level
  - f. Other \_\_\_\_\_

2. What have been some key periods of time or key experiences that God has used to provide you the “basic training” required for your present adult life?
3. Who are some of the people God has used to provide your “basic training,” shaping the way you handle adulthood?

## BIBLICAL FOUNDATION

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Joshua was born in Egypt, when the “new king, who had not known Joseph, came to power” (Ex. 1:8). Life was not easy in his early years. His father and mother were slaves along with all the children of Israel who were victimized by this Pharaoh. When Joshua grew older, he too became a “working” slave.

Joshua evidently was the firstborn son of his family (1 Chron. 7:27). He would remember all his life the horrific night and subsequent morning of the Passover (Ex. 12–13). By then he may already have started serving Moses, for we read that Joshua, the son of Nun, was an “assistant to Moses since his youth” (Num. 11:28).

Joshua served a long period of apprenticeship during which Moses developed unusual confidence in his young lieutenant. This is demonstrated in three unique experiences Joshua was given during the 40 years that he walked alongside Moses in the wasteland between Egypt and the promised land in Canaan.

### Lessons from the Frontline

<sup>8</sup> At Rephidim, Amalek came and fought against Israel. <sup>9</sup> Moses said to Joshua, “Select some men for us, and go fight against Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the hilltop with God’s staff in my hand.”

<sup>10</sup> Joshua did as Moses had told him, and fought against Amalek, while Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. <sup>11</sup> While Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed, but whenever he put his hand down, Amalek prevailed. <sup>12</sup> When Moses’ hands grew heavy, they took a stone and put [it] under him, and he sat down on it. Then Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side and one on the other so that his hands remained steady until the sun went down. <sup>13</sup> So Joshua defeated Amalek and his army with the sword.

<sup>14</sup> The Lord then said to Moses, “Write this down on a scroll as a reminder and recite it to Joshua: I will completely blot out the memory of Amalek under heaven.”

*Exodus 17:8-14*

## Lessons from Mount Sinai

<sup>12</sup> The Lord said to Moses, “Come up to Me on the mountain and stay there so that I may give you the stone tablets with the law and commands I have written for their instruction.”

<sup>13</sup> So Moses arose with his assistant Joshua, and went up the mountain of God. <sup>14</sup> He told the elders, “Wait here for us until we return to you. Aaron and Hur are here with you. Whoever has a dispute should go to them.”

*Exodus 24:12-14*

<sup>7</sup> Now Moses took a tent and set it up outside the camp, far away from the camp; he called it the tent of meeting. Anyone who wanted to consult the LORD would go to the tent of meeting that was outside the camp. <sup>8</sup> Whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people would stand up, each one at the door of his tent, and they would watch Moses until he entered the tent. <sup>9</sup> When Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and remain at the entrance to the tent, and [the LORD] would speak with Moses. <sup>10</sup> As all the people saw the pillar of cloud remaining at the entrance to the tent, they would stand up, then bow in worship, each one at the door of his tent. <sup>11</sup> The LORD spoke with Moses face to face, just as a man speaks with his friend. Then Moses would return to the camp, but his assistant, the young man Joshua son of Nun, would not leave the inside of the tent.

*Exodus 33:7-11*

## Lessons from the Spy Mission

<sup>1</sup> The LORD spoke to Moses: <sup>2</sup> Send men to scout out the land of Canaan I am giving to the Israelites. Send one man who is a leader among them from each of their ancestral tribes. ... <sup>16</sup> These were the names of the men Moses sent to scout out the land, and Moses renamed Hoshea son of Nun, Joshua.

<sup>17</sup> When Moses sent them to scout out the land of Canaan, he told them, “Go up this way to the Negev, then go up into the hill country. <sup>18</sup> See what the land is like, and whether the people who live there are strong or weak, few or many. <sup>19</sup> Is the land they live in good or bad? Are the cities they live in encampments or fortifications? <sup>20</sup> Is the land fertile or unproductive? Are there trees in it or not? Be courageous. Bring back some fruit from the land.” ...

<sup>26</sup> The men went back to Moses, Aaron, and the entire Israelite community in the Wilderness of Paran at Kadesh. They brought back a report for them and the whole community, and they showed them the

fruit of the land. ... <sup>30</sup> Then Caleb quieted the people in the presence of Moses and said, “We must go up and take possession of the land because we can certainly conquer it!”

<sup>31</sup> But the men who had gone up with him responded, “We can’t go up against the people because they are stronger than we are!” <sup>32</sup> So they gave a negative report to the Israelites about the land they had scouted: “The land we passed through to explore is one that devours its inhabitants, and all the people we saw in it are men of great size.” ...

<sup>6</sup> Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among those who scouted out the land, tore their clothes<sup>7</sup> and said to the entire Israelite community: “The land we passed through and explored is an extremely good land. <sup>8</sup> If the LORD is pleased with us, He will bring us into this land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and give it to us.” ...

<sup>10</sup> While the whole community threatened to stone them, the glory of the LORD appeared to all the Israelites at the tent of meeting.

*Numbers 13:1-2, 16-20a, 26, 30-32; 14:6-8, 10*

## PRINCIPLES TO LIVE BY

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At some point, perhaps after the 12 spies returned from their mission in Canaan, Moses renamed his protégé. Originally his name had been Hoshea (Num. 13:8), but Moses began to call him Joshua (v. 16). Hoshea meant “salvation,” while Joshua meant “the Lord is salvation.” From a human point of view, Hoshea would save Israel, but from a divine point of view, *God* would lead Israel safely and victoriously into Canaan.

After a lengthy period of “basic training,” Joshua clearly learned that God was the Savior of His people. Joshua’s new name reflected the completion of his spiritual curriculum and continued to emphasize throughout his life this important truth that God alone was the source of power and salvation. He was now ready to allow God to use his abilities, skills, and all he had learned during his years of preparation.

### PRINCIPLE 1

IT TAKES TIME TO PREPARE TO BE A FAITHFUL LEADER OF OTHERS.

Joshua’s prominence in Israel came only after many years of dedicated service, both to the Lord and His commandments. Joshua faithfully served Moses, God’s appointed leader, and proved himself worthy of trust.

Many men today want to bypass the process of demonstrating faithfulness over a period of time. In this sense, we're a product of our culture. We want instant recognition, instant prominence, and instant responsibility for fulfilling important leadership roles in God's great army, the Body of Christ. Furthermore, many of us already in leadership positions are too quick to appoint people to important spiritual responsibilities (see 1 Tim. 5:22).

#### PRINCIPLE 2

AS CHRISTIAN MEN, WE MUST REALIZE THE UNIQUE BALANCE BETWEEN DEPENDENCE ON GOD AND CONFIDENCE IN THE STRENGTHS AND ABILITIES THAT HE HAS CREATED IN US.

Without question God used the *man* Joshua to achieve His redemptive goals. But Joshua knew it was *God* Himself who would truly guide and direct Israel. It was His power that rolled back the waters of the Jordan (Josh. 3), His strength that caused the walls of Jericho to collapse (Josh. 6), and His wisdom that enabled Joshua to strategize against the enemies of Israel time and again.

This is a divine mystery. God *does* use our faithfulness, our commitment, and our human capacities and capabilities. But in reality, without Him, we'll accomplish little, and what we do achieve may turn out to be "wood, hay, or straw" with no lasting results (1 Cor. 3:12).

#### PRINCIPLE 3

WE MUST BEGIN TO SERVE GOD NOW IN ORDER TO PREPARE FOR FUTURE RESPONSIBILITY.

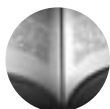
It takes time and preparation to equip us to handle important spiritual responsibilities. Spend time faithfully serving God in less demanding roles and learning from more mature and experienced men. In this sense, we all need mentors. Joshua's strength was deeply rooted in the lessons he learned from Moses. Just as Moses was his example, role model, and spiritual shepherd, we can all gain strength from a godly mentor.

Note also that Joshua served faithfully without even knowing that someday he would take over Moses' leadership role. This highlights another reason why God chose him and used him. Not only did he learn his lessons well, but his motives were pure.

## QUESTIONS FOR INTERACTION

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1. When you hear that Joshua spent 40 years in basic training as he prepared to succeed Moses, what is your first reaction? (Circle the best answer.)
  - a. I could never wait that long. I want to lead now.
  - b. Maybe there's hope for me out there someday.
  - c. Patient faithfulness pays off.
  - d. I have no interest in filling shoes that big.
  - e. Other \_\_\_\_\_.
2. How do you feel about the idea of being mentored by a more seasoned leader in preparation for the future? (Again, circle your answer.)
  - a. I learn better without someone looking over my shoulder.
  - b. I would like to be able to consult with an experienced leader.
  - c. I don't function well in groups.
  - d. I'd like someone to give me regular feedback on my performance.
  - e. I'd like to learn to lead through a discipling relationship.
  - f. Other \_\_\_\_\_.
3. According to Exodus 17:8-14, what were Joshua's responsibilities in the battle against Amalek? Moses' responsibilities? God's responsibilities?
4. What early lessons about leadership do you think God wanted Joshua to learn from the encounter with Amalek?
5. What privileged access to the presence of the Lord did Joshua enjoy as Moses' assistant (Ex. 24:13; 33:11)?
6. What do you think God wanted Joshua to learn about leadership through observing Moses' relationship with Him?
7. What was the basic dispute between the Joshua/Caleb duo and the other 10 spies (Num. 13:26, 30-32; 14:6-8)?
8. What do you think God wanted Joshua to learn about leadership in Israel from the spying episode?
9. How did Joshua's training prepare him to have greater confidence both in God and in himself as God's man?



## GOING DEEPER

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10. How does a man learn faithfulness in our modern world?
11. How can we balance both confidence in God *and* confidence in our training and God-given abilities?
12. What things has God given you to do now that might be training you for greater responsibility in the future? What makes you think so?



## CARING TIME

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In this group we are engaged in each other's "basic training" as we prepare for God's next assignments and future responsibilities. That's why we give the group high priority in our schedules, participate freely, respect one another's confidence, and support one another in every way we can.

1. What battles are you fighting in the world where you need someone to be lifting you up in prayer, just as Moses lifted his hands to God on Joshua' behalf (Ex. 17:11)?
2. How can we ensure that we share openly about the needs of our lives, and give one another support as we grow in Christ throughout this study on the life of Joshua?
3. Let's conclude by having each of us pray aloud one after the other for the man to our right, that he will benefit greatly from studying the life of Joshua.

## NEXT WEEK

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Next week we will find Joshua facing the daunting task of replacing the recently deceased Moses, Israel's deliverer and lawgiver. Joshua must have felt overwhelmed by the sheer magnitude of his new responsibility. God stepped in with a call to courage. Joshua already had absolute confidence in God's power and faithfulness. What he needed was the inner strength to step out in that faith. Too often we find it easier to verbalize our faith than to act on it. We too need to respond to God's call to be strong and courageous.

## SCRIPTURE NOTES

### EXODUS 17:8-14

**17:8 Amalek.** This was a nomadic tribe descended from Esau's grandson Amalek (Gen. 36:12, 16). Because Amalek attacked Israel without provocation as Israel traveled to Sinai, God decreed Amalek's destruction (Ex. 17:14).

**17:9 Joshua.** Moses chose a man who possessed military prowess. Both this incident and the conquest of Canaan 40 years later confirmed that Moses had picked the right man for the job. Joshua's faith in God made him a worthy leader of the Israelites (Deut. 34:9).

**17:11 held up his hand.** The soldiers fought the battle, but God determined the outcome. Moses held his staff above his head to appeal for God's help and to demonstrate Israel's total dependence on God for victory.

**17:14 recite it to Joshua.** During the invasion of Canaan, the Israelites under Joshua regarded Amalek as an enemy worthy of special attention because of God's message through Moses.

### EXODUS 24:12-14; 33:7-11

**24:12 instruction.** The law and commands are not merely codes of conduct to be posted on a wall. They are divine commands to be taken seriously and to be studied and followed.

**24:13 assistant.** "Assistant" translates the Hebrew word for an elevated servant. Joshua was an invaluable aide to Moses in every area of his life and work. The Hebrew term does not have the idea of "slave," although Joseph, who was a slave, achieved the status of assistant or personal attendant in Potiphar's house (Gen. 39:4). Levites, first in the tabernacle and later the temple, wore this title as ministers or servants of God (Deut. 10:8; 1 Kings 8:11). In these passages, various English words appear to capture the elusive sense of this Hebrew noun.

**33:7 tent.** The tent mentioned here was different from the tabernacle. It was probably Moses' own tent which was a shrine, a place to pray and inquire of God. It sat outside of camp rather than in the center of it as did the tabernacle. The plans for the tabernacle were given to Moses starting in Exodus 25. The construction of the tabernacle is described starting in Exodus 35.

**33:8 the people would stand up.** The people were looking to God in reverence. They stood off at a distance in awe of God.

**33:9 the pillar of cloud.** The presence of God was always visible in the Israelite camp during the 40-year journey from Egypt to Canaan. God displayed His presence as a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night (Ex. 13:21). When the cloud or fire moved, the Israelites followed; when it stopped, they pitched camp (Num. 9:15-23).

**33:11 as a man speaks with his friend.** By this time, Moses had walked a long journey with God by his side. He had seen God in a burning bush, a cloud, and a pillar of fire. He had met with God on a mountain, in a desert, and in the middle of a miraculously dry seabed. He was a friend of God, an intimate friend. **Joshua.** Following Moses, Joshua was the soldier who led the people to conquer the promised land.

NUMBERS 13:1-2, 16-20A, 26, 30-32; 14:6-8, 10

**13:2 from each of their ancestral tribes.** This effort was organized much as was the census at the beginning of the book of Numbers. Selecting one from each tribe would give credibility and unity to their report. Caleb represented the tribe of Judah (v. 6) and Joshua represented the tribe of Ephraim (v. 8), historically the two dominant tribes of Israel.

**13:17-20 strong or weak, few or many.** Moses had very explicit instructions for the group of spies who were being sent to Canaan. The spies were not only to bring back a report of the land itself but also of the type of people who occupied the land.

**13:30 Caleb.** Only Caleb is mentioned here, but we know that Joshua also believed that they should trust God and enter the land of Canaan because 10 spies brought a negative report and there were 12 spies in all.

**13:32 a negative report.** The people had endured hardships (and not happily) to come to this place God had promised them, only to hear that the Canaanites could easily destroy them. Their sense of disappointment reflected a serious lack of faith. The word buzzing around camp was that God had brought them this far only to forsake them. From the time of Abraham, God had required that His people live by faith. But this cynical report rattled the people so they were doubtful and dismayed.

**14:6 tore their clothes.** Joshua and Caleb felt deep distress over the disobedience of their fellow Israelites and expressed their grief in the most vivid way they knew within their culture. Ripping their clothes captured the attention of the multitude and gave the two loyal spies a dramatic opportunity to speak on behalf of the promises of God.

**14:10 glory of the LORD.** God makes Himself known to all people. The Israelites were fuming and fussing, not about the leadership of Moses and Aaron, but against God Himself.