

Dealing With (and Growing Through) Overwhelming Responsibilities

Question: What are some of the responsibilities that life throws our way that can make us feel overwhelmed?

Question: How do overwhelming responsibilities affect you physically? Emotionally? Mentally? Spiritually?

Biblical Case Study: Joshua

Joshua was originally name Hoshea (which means “salvation”), but was renamed Joshua by Moses (Numbers 13:16). Joshua means “The Lord Saves” or “The Lord Gives Victory”; the Greek form of the name is Jesus. Joshua was a godly man of faith and developed great leadership effectiveness with God’s help. But Joshua’s path was not easy, and he inherited a very challenging situation with overwhelming responsibilities.

Background:

Joshua was Moses’ right hand man, and was the appointed successor to lead the people of Israel once Moses died. Moses, who led the Israelites out of Egyptian captivity, was also the leader for the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness – which was God’s consequence for their lack of faith to enter the Promised Land (BTW: Joshua and Caleb were the two spies out of the 12 that had the faith the Israel with God’s help could conquer the Promised Land of Canaan – Numbers 13 & 14).

Moses dies, and Joshua becomes the leader and is tasked with leading the Israelites into the Promised Land. This was a tremendously overwhelming responsibility. Why? Here are some of the reasons:

- 1) Moses the beloved leader was dead.
- 2) Joshua was the brand new top leader.
- 3) There were over 2 million people to lead!
- 4) The people had some shortcoming and challenges. For example:
 - a. The people lacked faith (which is why they has been spending 40 years wandering in the wilderness - Numbers 13 & 14)

- b. Some were complainers (e.g. complained about the manna and Quail that God was providing – Numbers 11/Exodus 16)
 - c. Some were greedy (e.g. tried hoarding manna – Exodus 16)
 - d. Many were spiritually adulterous (e.g. worshipped the golden calf – Exodus 32).
 - e. Other?
- 5) The Israelites were going to be facing dangers and challenges as they entered and tried to control the Promised Land. Including would be battles and wars with current inhabitants.

Key Learning's from Joshua 1:1-11

Put yourself in Joshua's shoes. What fears, doubts and concerns might you have in this situation?

God provides to Joshua (and us!) several keys to be successful when facing overwhelming responsibilities. Important keys to success include:

- God uses mere humans like us to accomplish His purposes (1:1-2)
- Remember that when we are following God's leading, He will never leave or forsake us! (1:5)
- We need to be strong and courageous when following God (1:6)
- Obeying ALL of God's word leads to success (1:7)
- We need to 1) learn (meditate) on God's word AND 2) apply completely. Then we will be successful and prosperous (1:8)
- We should be strong and courageous, not terrified and discouraged. Why? Because God is with us! (1:9)
- There comes a time for action – just do it! (1:10-11)
- Other?

Key Learning's from Joshua 5:13-6:5, 20

After safely crossing the Jordan River, the Israelites camp in sight of the walled city of Jericho, the next obstacle to occupying the Promised Land. Before the first big battle, what do you think would have been going through Joshua's mind?

From the battle of Jericho we can learn some key principles that help us with the "battles" we face. Key principles include:

- God has supernatural power and resources to help us
- No matter how big our challenges, with God's help we can succeed
- Obeying God leads to successful results
- Other?

Key Learning's from Joshua 23:1-16; 24:14-15, 28-31

With God's help Israel did take control of the Promised Land. As Joshua was nearing the end of his life (at age 110) he gave an important farewell address to the people of Israel. What are the key encouragements that Joshua gives to the people – and that are valuable to us today?

Included are:

- We should remember the good things that God has done for us in the past
- God fights for us (helps us)
- God fulfills His promises
- We need to carefully obey ALL of God's words
- We need to be faithful for God, and avoid all false gods (avoid spiritual adultery)
- We need to carefully love God
- If we violate God's commands, we will likely suffer negative consequences
- We need to fear God, and serve him faithfully
- We need to intentionally choose who we will serve – the Lord or the false "gods" of our culture
- Other?

Joshua lived well and died well. He has a very positive influence on people while he lived, and his positive influence extended beyond his death (including to the present day!)