



1

God Calls Joshua

Key Theme

- God requires and rewards obedience.

Key Passages

- Joshua 1:1–9; Matthew 4:1–10

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Recognize the importance of obeying God's commands.
- Describe how Jesus is an example of obeying God's commands.



Lesson Overview



Come On In

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Students will place bookmarks at Joshua 1 and Matthew 4. Students will put the Memory Verse Strips into order and then practice saying the verse together and/or with a partner.



Activity 1: God Calls Joshua Class Notes

page 5

Students will fill out the God Calls Joshua Class Notes as you study the lesson.



Studying God's Word

page 6

God called Joshua to take the Israelites into the Promised Land. God promised to be with Joshua but warned him that he must obey all the commandments given through Moses in order to receive the help and blessing from God he would need. Jesus also had to obey the law in order to provide our redemption. He is our example for obedience and for relying on God's Word for strength when we are tempted.



Activity 2: A Project with Potential

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Students will act out a skit that demonstrates some of the similarities between Joshua and Jesus discussed in the lesson.

Lesson Preparation

WHAT YOU WILL DO

WHAT YOU WILL NEED



COME ON IN

- Cut paper strips for each student. They will mark Joshua 1 and Matthew 4 in their Bibles.
- Print and cut out the Memory Verse Strips from the Resource DVD-ROM for every 2–3 students.
- Put complete sets into envelopes or small plastic bags.

- Paper strips
- Memory Verse Strips in envelopes or small plastic bags
- Memory Verse Poster
- If you want to do this as an individual activity, make one set per student



GOD CALLS JOSHUA CLASS NOTES

- Print one God Calls Joshua Class Notes from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student. Keep the answer key for your use.

- God Calls Joshua Class Notes
- God Calls Joshua Class Notes Answer Key
- Pencils or pens



STUDYING GOD'S WORD

- Study the Prepare to Share section.
- Go Before the Throne.

- Student Take Home Sheets



A PROJECT WITH POTENTIAL

- Print three A Project with Potential Scripts from the Resource DVD-ROM, one copy for each part in the skit and one copy for you.

- A Project with Potential Scripts

Memory Verse

Joshua 1:9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

► **Pace your lesson!** Use the clocks to mark the time you want to finish each section. This will help you stay on track and finish on time. You may need to shorten or drop sections as necessary.





Prepare to Share

SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

Before you begin to prepare for your lesson this week, please prepare your heart and mind by reading Joshua 1, Matthew 4:1–11, and 1 Corinthians 16:13–14.

In the book of Joshua, we learn that the time had finally come for the Israelites to cross the Jordan into the land that had been promised by God to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their descendants (Genesis 12:7, 26:2–3, 35:11–12).

As background, God had previously led Israel out of Egypt in the Exodus and had brought them to the borders of the land they were to possess. But at that time, only Caleb and Joshua showed faith and confidence that God would fulfill His promise and give this land along with its giants into their hands (Numbers 13). Only Joshua and Caleb spoke favorably of the land, pleading with the Israelites to have courage and faith in God's promises—and to trust that the Lord was with them—there was nothing to fear (Numbers 14:6–9). But the people would not heed their pleas.

Because the people refused to obey God and enter the Promised Land, God sentenced the entire generation, all those aged 20 years and older (except for Joshua and Caleb), to die in the wilderness (Numbers 14:28–30).

Now that generation was gone. And God was about to fulfill the promise made to His people so long ago. In Joshua 1, after the death of Moses, the Lord spoke to Joshua (Joshua 1:1). God reassured him that He would be with him (Joshua 1:9). That promise, however, was coupled with the command to be obedient—to “observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you” (Joshua 1:7). God's fixed purpose was to honor the covenant He had made to the people and to bring them into their promised possession. God's purpose would stand, but He would demand obedience from the Israelites in order for them to see the fulfillment of His promises. He commanded Joshua to consider His Word, to meditate on it day and night, and to observe to do it. Only then would his way be prosperous and only then would God grant him success (Joshua 1:8).

It may seem mysterious to us that God has fixed purposes that do not change and will be fulfilled, and that these purposes are bound to conditions of obedience. God demands obedience in order for us to see His promises fulfilled, just as He required the

obedience of His own Son to bring redemption to sinners. For Jesus's perfect sacrifice on the Cross was by the “determined purpose and foreknowledge of God” (Acts 2:23), and yet it was fulfilled through Jesus's perfect obedience (Philippians 2:8).

Had Jesus failed to obey the will of His loving Father in heaven when He was tempted by Satan (Matthew 4:1–11), He would have been disqualified as our Redeemer. Had Joshua and the Israelites failed to obey God's commands (Joshua 1:6–8), they would have been disqualified to enter the Promised Land. Obedience is necessary to see the fulfillment of God's promises.

As we look into these two accounts of obedience to God, we recognize similarities. In Joshua's case, his obedience is tied to his knowledge and commitment to the Book of the Law (Joshua 1:8). In Jesus's case, His temptations were overcome and His obedience was demonstrated by His understanding and confidence in the truth of God's Word. He repeatedly put the devil off by reciting the Word of God (Matthew 4:4, 4:7, 4:10).

In both cases, knowledge of and obedience to God's Word provided the strength and courage to persevere. In both cases, obedience led through extremely difficult circumstances to reap immense blessings. Joshua and Israel would fight and sacrifice to possess the Promised Land (Joshua 1:14–15). Jesus would suffer and die for the redemption of His people for all eternity (1 Peter 3:18).

Joshua knew God's Word. Joshua believed God's promises. And Joshua knew that receiving God's promises of blessings depended on his obedience to God's Word.

Jesus knew God's Word. Jesus believed God's promise for redemption. And Jesus knew that the redemption and forgiveness of sins for all who would believe in Him would be fulfilled as He was obedient to His Father's will.

The Word of God is truly living and powerful. As we mature in our Christian walk, we will see more clearly that it is knowing the Word of God, meditating on it day and night, and being careful to do everything written in it that leads to obedience to our holy God. We will learn that obedience is often difficult and costs much by the world's standards. But it is only by the obedience wrought through God's holy Word, by His Holy Spirit, that we are given the opportunity and privilege to be used of God in accomplishing His perfect will.

HISTORICAL/APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

The overthrow of Canaan by Israel—in battle, by destroying those living there—is often a historical detail that people of our time struggle to accept. Is the destruction of these tribes really consistent with a God of love who provided the great sacrifice of His own Son to purchase the forgiveness of sinners? In Deuteronomy 9:5 and 18:12 (read in context), it is clear that Israel's possession of the land is part of God's judgment on the idolatry and wickedness of these nations. The nations Israel was commanded to drive out had for many generations practiced witchcraft, human sacrifice, and much wickedness (see Deuteronomy 18:9–11). Many generations had joined in these practices, and God used Israel to accomplish the judgment He had ordained for these nations. Remember that God's righteousness demands that all sin is judged. God's judgment is a serious and a righteous matter. It is sobering to think of the judgment visited upon these idolatrous nations, but it is perfectly consistent with God's holiness and repeated promises that judgment on sin is sure. The destruction of these nations is not arbitrary or harsh; it is the display in history of the truth that "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). This verse goes on to say "but the gift

of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Let us praise our mighty Savior for the gift of eternal life for all who trust in Him.

For more information on this topic, see the Online Resource Page.



BEFORE THE THRONE

Lord Jesus, you are the Word made flesh. I read about your life and marvel. You gave us the perfect model of how to wield the Sword of the Spirit! My heart's desire is to use your Word to fend off temptation and draw the lost to you. Please continue to humble me and use me to teach my students to treasure every word you have given us. Help them to recognize that you have a perfect will that you want to accomplish through them. Use your Word, the example of Joshua, and this lesson to inspire them to live out their faith with strength and courage. For those who are still unsure about who you are, have mercy on them, Lord, and draw them to yourself.



COME ON IN

As students arrive . . .

- They will mark their Bibles at Joshua 1 and Matthew 4 with strips of paper.
- They will put Memory Verse Strips in order and recite the verse together and/or to each other. They may work individually or in teams.

Use this time at the beginning of class to review the memory verse. We have provided a template on the Resource DVD-ROM you can use to make Memory Verse Strips to be put in order each week. You may have other ideas and ways to encourage your students to memorize the verse.



After all the students arrive, pray with them before beginning the lesson.



REVIEW

Use the Lesson Theme Posters provided with each lesson throughout the year to quickly review the previous lesson(s) with your students. Take 5 to 10 minutes before each lesson to reinforce the important truths the students have heard in the lessons.

Ask the children questions about the previous lessons as you display the Lesson Theme Posters. Reflect briefly on the passages you read, bringing the objectives and themes back into focus. This will refresh the truths in your students' minds and maintain continuity as you teach through the lessons.



God Calls Joshua Class Notes

MATERIALS

- God Calls Joshua Class Notes
- God Calls Joshua Class Notes Answer Key
- Pencils

INSTRUCTIONS

Pass out the God Calls Joshua Class Notes at the beginning of class. The students will fill in the blanks as you study Joshua 1:1–9.

We will be filling in these class notes as we study the Bible passages today. Try not to

work ahead. I'll let you know when you are to fill in a blank.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

As we complete our class notes today during class, we will hear about some important promises God made to Joshua. The Lord wanted to prepare Joshua for the difficult days ahead. God wants to prepare us for difficult days as well. We need to remember God's faithfulness to His promises to Joshua—and know that He is the same faithful God today.



Studying God's Word

READ THE WORD

► Use the History of Israel Poster included with your teacher kit to show your class where the biblical accounts you study chronologically fit into this timeline.

Before we read our passage today, let's review what has happened in our earlier lessons. Remember, Moses brought the Israelite people out of Egypt, they crossed the Red Sea, and God provided all of their needs as they journeyed through the wilderness. They finally made it to the Promised Land. God promised to send an angel to protect them and go before them into the land of their enemies—the land God had promised them. Moses sent 12 spies into the Promised Land. Only the young men Joshua and Caleb had faith in the one true God. They believed that God would protect them as they went in to conquer their enemies. However, the people would not listen to Joshua and Caleb. They were afraid and did not put their trust in the God who had brought them out of Egypt.

Because of their fear, they did not go into the Promised Land. And because they disobeyed God, they were made to wander in the wilderness for 40 more years. Most of the people, including Moses, would die and never set foot in the Promised Land. Only Joshua, Caleb, and the young people among them would ever see the land that God had promised so faithfully.

After Moses died in the land of Moab, God raised up Joshua as the new leader. The Bible tells us that Joshua was full of the spirit of wisdom. The Lord had provided Joshua to be the new leader of the Israelites.

Please turn in your Bibles to chapter one of the book of Joshua in the Old Testament. We're going to read Joshua 1:1–9. This was a very important time for the Israelites. God was about to lead them—with Joshua—into the Promised Land.

Joshua 1:1–4

Let's read our passage and see what important words God spoke to Joshua. Let's start by reading the first four verses. *Choose a student to read Joshua 1:1–4 aloud.*

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

► As the students fill out the class notes, you may want to write the words on the board so those who don't write and/or spell well, can copy easily.

? Let's get started. You will be filling in your class notes now. First of all, this is a historical account. It is real history—an actual event that happened in the past. Who are the two characters in this passage? *Joshua 1:1. God and Joshua. Have students complete #1 on the class notes.*

? God was speaking to Joshua. What had happened before this? Who had died? *Joshua 1:1. Moses had died. Have students complete #2 on the class notes.*

- ? Yes, once Moses died, the Lord commanded Joshua to do something.
What was it? *Joshua 1:2. Take the people across the Jordan River into the Promised Land. Have students complete #3 on the class notes.*

This is getting exciting! God was trusting Joshua with a big job. Finally, the new generation was ready to enter the land of Canaan! Keep in mind that many different large cities already existed in the land. This was no vacant lot!

- ? Let's move on to Joshua 1:5–9 now. Who can read those verses for the class? *Choose a student or students to read the passage.*
- ? Good! So what encouraging words did the Lord say to Joshua in verse five?
Joshua 1:5. God promised He would never leave him or forsake him. Have students complete # 4 on the class notes.

Yes! The Lord was really encouraging Joshua with those promises. He would be with Joshua and give him the power, the strength, and the courage he would need. He would never leave him or forsake him.

- ? Now look at the end of Joshua 1:6. What does God mean that He swore the land to the Israelites' forefathers? Can someone tell me? *Read that section if necessary. Allow for discussion.*

God is pointing out that the land is the fulfillment of what He promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob back in the book of Genesis. *Refer to the Seven C's Timeline.* God made the promise of this land to Abraham in about 1921 BC. Joshua will finally enter the Promised Land in 1452 BC. This is nearly 500 years later! *Have students complete #5 on the class notes.*

This was a promise God made to Abraham. And finally, 500 years later, it was coming to pass. God always accomplishes His will. Look on your class notes at #6. That is the first biblical principle. *God always accomplishes His will. Have students complete #6 on the class notes.* Let's read that biblical principle together. It is very important and is found throughout the Bible. *Read #6 together.*

- ? Now look in your Bibles again. God was telling Joshua how he was to lead the people into the Promised Land. God repeated something in verses 6, 7, and 9. What did God tell Joshua he must do? *Have one or more students re-read the verses. Joshua 1:6, 1:7, and 1:9. Be strong and of good courage. Have students complete #7 on the class notes.*

The Israelites had wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. And now God was telling them it was time to take their land and conquer the people who lived there. I'm not sure they were completely equipped to go to war against strong enemies.

- ? How were the Israelites to do this? How were they to be strong and courageous against these powerful cities? Look in verse 9 and tell me what would give these people the strength and courage they would need? Who would be with them? *Joshua 1:9. The Lord God would be with them. Have students complete #8 on the class notes.*

? We know what the Lord promised to do—to be with them. But God also commanded Joshua and the people to do something. Take a look at Joshua 1:7–8. What did God want them to do? *Read the verses with the students. Joshua 1:7–8. Allow discussion for the answer. Answer should include God wanted them to obey the law by “observing” the law.*

God told them to obey the law! *Have students complete #9 on the class notes.*

? God wanted Joshua to obey the law. God repeated that five different ways in Joshua 1:7–8. What are the five different ways that the Lord repeated the idea that Joshua must keep the law? Look carefully at the verses in your Bibles. Look at your class notes, too. Fill in the blanks there. *Observe to do according to all the law; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left; this Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth; meditate in it day and night; observe to do according to all that is written in it. Have students complete #10 on the class notes. Briefly discuss how each of these refers to obedience.*

? Great! God just gave Joshua the secret to being strong and courageous. Take another look at what we just discussed. What was God telling the people to do? See #9 on your class notes for a hint. *Allow for discussion. Obey His Law.*

God wants us to know and obey His Word. We must know it so we can keep it! Look at #11 on your class notes. Fill in the blanks for biblical principle #2. *Have students complete biblical principle #2, which is #11 on the class notes. Have students repeat the principle out loud. God wants us to know and obey His Word.*

So you see, God commanded Joshua to be strong and courageous. And then the Lord told him how to do that. God told Joshua that the strength and courage would come as he studied and meditated on God’s Law. God told Joshua to be obedient to God’s Word and God’s Law. Joshua understood that knowing the Word of God would bring strength and courage to do what God had commanded him. Fill in #12—biblical principle #3—on your class notes. *Have students complete biblical principle #3 on the class notes. Knowing the Word of God brings strength and courage.*

? God also promised Joshua blessings in return for his obedience. What did God promise Joshua in Joshua 1:8? *Have students read Joshua 1:8. God would grant him success and make his way prosperous.*

Discover the Truth

Do you see? God told Joshua to be strong and courageous. But Joshua was in a situation that was very dangerous. God made it clear how Joshua could be strong, courageous, and eventually be successful in accomplishing God’s will. God demanded obedience from Joshua. God demanded that Joshua observe the law and do all that was written in it. God told him that he should meditate on it and obey it every day. That would give Joshua the strength and courage he needed to be successful in taking the Promised Land for God’s people.

God will always accomplish His will. God uses people to accomplish His will but they must be obedient to Him.

? As we studied, we saw three biblical principles that are repeated throughout the entire Bible. Who can tell me what

those are? *Have three students read the three biblical principles from the class notes—#6, #11, #12.*



READ THE WORD

God promised Joshua success if he would believe and obey God's Law. Only then would Joshua defeat Israel's enemies and go into the Promised Land. Jesus also obeyed and believed God's Law, and He was able to stand against the devil when the devil tried to tempt Him! Let's read about that in Matthew 4:1–10. *Have the students find the verse and follow along with you as you read.*

Matthew 4:1–10

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

- ? Who was led into the wilderness? *Matthew 4:1. Jesus.*
- ? Who was there to tempt Him? *Matthew 4:1. The devil, or Satan.*
- ? Jesus was very hungry. What did the devil tell Jesus to do? *Matthew 4:3. Make the stones into bread.*

Jesus said that man doesn't live by bread alone. Man lives by something else. What is that? *Matthew 4:4. By every word that God speaks.*

- ? Where does God speak to us? Where do we hear God's Word? *The Bible.*

Jesus read the Bible, too. It wasn't exactly the same as what we have today; Jesus only had the Old Testament—but He did read the Scriptures. And He was turning to them now, so that He would be able to obey God with strength and courage against the devil.

- ? The devil took Jesus up to a very high place. What did the devil tell Jesus to do? *Matthew 4:6. Throw Himself down.*
- ? What did Jesus say to the devil? *Matthew 4:7. "It is written again, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.'"*
- ? Jesus said, "It is written." What was He talking about? What is written? *Hold up your Bible for a clue. God's Word, the Bible.*

That's right God's Word is written. The Bible is written. Jesus was using God's Word again to give Him strength and courage to obey God.

► Have the students look at and/or re-read the verses in order to get the answers from the text.

- ? And there was one more temptation. The devil took Jesus up on a very high hill and they looked down at all the kingdoms. What did the devil tell Jesus? *Read Matthew 4:9. All these could be His if He would bow down and worship the devil.*
- ? The devil was telling Jesus to bow down to him and worship him. And what did Jesus say? *Matthew 4:10. Away with you. It is written "You shall worship God only!"*

Again Jesus said, "It is written." Do you see? Satan was trying to get Jesus to disobey God. The devil knew that Jesus had to obey God's Law perfectly in order to save us from God's punishment. Jesus's death could only forgive sins if Jesus did not sin—if Jesus was able to obey God's Law perfectly.

Discover the Truth

The devil tempted Jesus three times. And all three times Jesus went to God's Word. Jesus said, "It is written!" God's Word helped Him to obey. Jesus knew God's Word, and God's Word gave Jesus the strength and courage He needed to obey God and fight against the devil.

Jesus had to obey. If Jesus had sinned, He couldn't have been the perfect sacrifice God required. If Joshua had rebelled, the Israelites would not have successfully entered the Promised Land. There is a connection between God's will and obedience. God always accomplishes His will. But our obedience is required to fulfill it. In other words, God uses obedient people to accomplish His will.



A Project with Potential

MATERIALS

- A Project with Potential Scripts

INSTRUCTIONS

Now it's time to enjoy a short skit about what we've been talking about. Could I have some volunteers to read the skit for the class? *Choose two students for the parts.*

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

Great job everybody. I'm sure you noticed that Shelly and Trevor were excited when they saw the similarities in the ways Joshua and Jesus knew and obeyed God's Word. That's just what we have been discussing in this lesson. God's Word was important to both Joshua AND Jesus. It should be important to us, too. If we obey God and His Word, He will work out His perfect plans through us. And He will reward us for being faithful to Him.





Applying God's Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

Today we read the Lord's words to Joshua. They reminded us how important obedience to God's Law is. God promised to be with Joshua and to give him success as they entered the land of Canaan. God's covenant to Abraham was being fulfilled and renewed with a new generation of Israelites.

We also read that Jesus knew and believed God's Word, too. When Satan tried to tempt Jesus, He remembered God's Word and it gave Him strength and courage to say no to the devil! Jesus knew that He had to obey God's Word perfectly in order to save us and forgive us of our sins.

- ? Glance at your class notes and tell me which points were the most important to you today. *Make sure all the biblical principles are mentioned. 1. God always accomplishes His will. 2. Knowing and obeying God's Word is very important to the Lord. We must know it and keep it! 3. Knowing the Word of God brings strength and courage.*

By now you know very well how God feels about our obedience to His Word. Obedience is important in order for God's will to be fulfilled. Joshua and Jesus are examples of men in history who knew God's Word, believed God's Word, and obeyed God's Word. We also saw how God's Word helped them to overcome very difficult situations and how God perfectly accomplished His will through them.

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

Did you know that Joshua only had the first five books of the Bible to read and obey? While Jesus lived, He studied the Scriptures we call the Old Testament—that is just 39 of the books of the Bible. Well, God has given us 66 books! God has given us His complete Word in the Old and New Testaments. The only way we can get to know Him and obey Him is to read His Word, study it, and memorize it. The Bible gives us everything we need to know to live in obedience with strength and courage every day.

- ? What kinds of things do you encounter in your lives that make it difficult to obey God's Word? *Peer pressure, temptations, lack of interest, etc.*

➤ Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind the students to practice the memory verse this week.

If we're honest, we'll recognize the fact that living a life of obedience to God is hard and unpopular. Studying God's Word and living it out every day can't be done in our own strength. The Bible is living and active. The Holy Spirit moves through the words and pages of the Bible to help us understand and live a life of obedience like Joshua. Ask the Lord to give you the desire to study and obey His Word. Then God will use you to accomplish His perfect will AND He will give you the strength and courage you will need to do whatever He asks.



MEMORY VERSE

Joshua 1:9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.



GROUP PRAYER TIME

- Praise God for who He is—our Father who wants what is best for His children.
- Thank God for the way He has revealed His will to us in His holy Word.
- Pray that the students will desire to know God's Word well so they can be strong in the Lord like Joshua, even when obedience is very hard.