

# JOSHUA

One of the greatest challenges facing leaders is to replace themselves, training others to become leaders. Many outstanding accomplishments have been started by someone with great ability whose life or career ended before the vision became reality. The fulfillment of that dream then became the responsibility of that person's successor. Death is the ultimate deadline for leadership. One of the best tests of our leadership is our willingness and ability to train another for our position.

Moses made an excellent decision when he chose Joshua as his assistant. That choice was later confirmed by God himself when he instructed Moses to commission Joshua as his successor (Numbers 27:15-23). Joshua had played a key role in the exodus from Egypt. Introduced as the field general of Israel's army, he was the only person allowed to accompany Moses partway up the mountain when Moses received the law. Joshua and Caleb were the only two among the 12 spies to bring back an encouraging report after being sent into the promised land the first time. Other references show him to have been Moses' constant shadow. His basic training was living with Moses - experiencing firsthand what it meant to lead God's people. This was modeling at its best!

Who is your Moses? Who is your Joshua? You are part of the chain of God's ongoing work in the world. You are modeling yourself after others, and others are patterning their lives after you. How important is God to those you want to be like? Do those who are watching you see God reflected in every area of your life? Ask God to lead you to a trustworthy Moses. Ask him to make you a good Joshua.

## **Strengths and accomplishments:**

- Moses' assistant and successor.
- One of only two adults who experienced Egyptian slavery and lived to enter the promised land.
- Led the Israelites into their God-given homeland.
- Brilliant military strategist.
- Faithful to ask God's direction in the challenges he faced.

## **Lessons from his life:**

- Effective leadership is often the product of good preparation and encouragement.
- The persons after whom we pattern ourselves will have a definite effect on us.
- A person committed to God provides the best model for us.

## **Vital statistics:**

- Where: Egypt, the Desert of Sinai, and Canaan (the promised land).
- Occupations: Special assistant to Moses, warrior, leader.
- Relative: Father: Nun
- Contemporaries: Moses, Caleb, Miriam, Aaron.

## **Key verses:**

*"Moses did as the Lord commanded him. He took Joshua and had him stand before Eleazar the priest and the whole assembly. Then he laid his hands on him and commissioned him, as the Lord instructed through Moses" (Numbers 27:22,23).*

## **"EXAMPLE"**

### **1. Being an influence on others vs. being influenced by others**

*"This is the account of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God." (Genesis 6:9)*

To say that Noah was righteous and blameless does not mean that he never sinned (the Bible records one of his sins in 9.20ff). Rather it means that he wholeheartedly loved and obeyed God. For a lifetime he walked step by step in faith as a living example to his generation. Like Noah, we live in a world filled with evil. Are we influencing others or being influenced by them?

### **2. A righteous one affects others for good**

*"When he hesitated, the men grasped his hand and the hands of his wife and of his two daughters and led them safely out of the city, for the Lord was merciful to them. As soon as they had brought them out, one of them said, 'Flee for your lives! Don't look back, and don't stop anywhere in the plain! Flee to the mountains or you will be swept away!'"*

*But Lot said to them, "No, my lords, please! Your servant has found favor in your eyes, and you have shown great kindness to me in sparing my life. But I can't flee to the mountains; this disaster will overtake me, and I'll die. Look, here is a town near enough to run to, and it is small. Let me flee to it - it is very small, isn't it? Then my life will be spared."*

*He said to him, "Very well, I will grant this request too; I will not overthrow the town you speak of. But flee there quickly, because I cannot do anything until you reach it."*

*By the time Lot reached Zoar, the sun had risen over the land. Then the Lord rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah - from the Lord out of the heavens. Thus he overthrew those cities and the entire plain, including all those living in the cities - and also the vegetation in the land. But Lot's wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt." (Genesis 19:16-25)*

Notice how God's mercy toward Abraham extended to Lot and his family. Because Abraham pleaded for Lot, God was merciful and saved Lot from the fiery destruction of Sodom. A righteous person can often affect others for good. James says that the prayers of a righteous person are powerful (James 5:16). All Christians should follow Abraham's example and pray for others to be saved.

### **3. Children follow parents' example**

*"When the men of that place asked him about his wife, he said, "She is my sister," because he was afraid to say, "She is my wife." He thought, "The men of this place might kill me on account of Rebekah, because she is beautiful."*

*When Isaac had been there a long time, Abimelech king of the Philistines looked down from a window and saw Isaac caressing his wife Rebekah. So Abimelech summoned Isaac and said, "She is really your wife! Why did you say, "She is my sister?""*

*Isaac answered him, "Because I thought I might lose my life on account of her."*

*Then Abimelech said, "What is this you have done to us? One of the men might well have slept with your wife, and you would have brought guilt upon us."*

*So Abimelech gave orders to all the people: "Anyone who molests this man or his wife shall surely be put to death."*

Isaac was afraid that the men in Gerar would kill him to get his beautiful wife, Rebekah. So he lied, claiming that Rebekah was his sister. Where did he learn that trick? He may have known about the actions of his father, Abraham

*"Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to live there for a while because the famine was severe. As he was about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, "I know what a beautiful woman you are. When the Egyptians see you, they will say "This is his wife." Then they will kill me but will let you live. Say you are my sister, so that I will be treated well for your sake and my life will be spared because of you."*

*When Abram came to Egypt, the Egyptians saw that she was a very beautiful woman." Genesis 12:10-14)*

*"Now Abraham moved on from there into the region of the Negev and lived between Kadesh and Shur. For a while he stayed in Gerar, and there Abraham said of his wife Sarah, "She is my sister." Then Abimelech king of Gerar sent for Sarah and took her.*

*But God came to Abimelech in a dream one night and said to him, "You are as good as dead because of the woman you have taken; she is a married woman."*

*Now Abimelech had not gone near her, so he said, "Lord, will you destroy an innocent nation?"" Genesis 20:1-4).*

Parents help shape the world's future by the way they shape their children's values. The first step toward helping children live rightly is for the parents to live rightly. Your actions are often copied by those closest to you. What kind of example are you setting for your children?

### **4. Rising above the influence of poor models**

*"The high places, however, were not removed; the people continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense there." (2 Kings 15:4).*

Although Azariah accomplished a great deal, he failed to destroy the high places, the location of pagan shrines in Judah, just as his father Amaziah and grandfather Joash had failed to do. Azariah imitated the kings he had heard stories about and had watched while growing up. Although Azariah's father and grandfather were basically good kings, they were poor models in some important areas. To rise above the influence of poor models, we must seek better ones. Christ provides a perfect model. No matter how you were raised or who has influenced your life, you can move beyond those limitations by taking Christ as your example and consciously trying to live as he did.

### **5. Many will not follow your good example**

*"He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, just as his father Uzziah had done, but unlike him he did not enter the temple of the Lord. The people, however, continued their corrupt practices". (2 Chronicles 27:2).*

Jotham was generally a good king but his people became corrupt. Those you lead will not always follow your example, but that should not affect the way you live for God. This sinfulness of Jotham's kingdom is vividly portrayed in Isaiah 1-5.

### **6. Teaching others by example**

*"this Ezra came up from Babylon. He was a teacher well versed in the Law of Moses, which the Lord, the God of Israel, had given. The king had granted him everything he asked, for the hand of the Lord his God was on him. Some of the Israelites, including priests, Levites, singers, gatekeepers and temple servants, also came up to Jerusalem in the seventh year of King Artaxerxes.*

*Ezra arrived in Jerusalem in the fifth month of the seventh year of the king. He had begun his journey from Babylon on the first day of the first month, and he arrived in Jerusalem on the first day of the fifth month, for the gracious hand of his God was on him. For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the Lord, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel." (Ezra 7:6-10).*

Ezra demonstrates how a gifted Bible teacher can move God's people forward. He was effective because he was a well-versed student of the Law of the Lord and because he was determined to obey those laws. He taught through both his speaking and his example. Like Ezra, we should determine both to study and to obey God's Word.

*"In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us." (Titus 2:7-8).*

Paul urged Titus to be a good example to those around him so that others might see Titus's good deeds and imitate him. Paul's life would give his words greater impact. If you want someone to act a certain way, be sure that you live that way yourself. Then you will earn the right to be heard, and your life will reinforce what you teach.

### **7. Jesus resisting temptation –an example to us**

*"Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil." (Matthew 4:1).*

This temptation by the devil shows us that Jesus was human, and it gave Jesus the opportunity to reaffirm God's plan for his ministry. It also gives us an example to follow when we are tempted. Jesus' temptation was an important demonstration of his sinlessness. He would face temptation and not give in.

### **8. Why Paul was such a good example**

*"Therefore I urge you to imitate me." (1 Corinthians 4:16).*

Paul told the Corinthians to imitate him. He was able to make this statement because he walked close to God, spent time in God's Word and in prayer, and was aware of God's presence in his life at all times. God was Paul's example; therefore, Paul's life could be an example to other Christians. Paul wasn't expecting others to imitate everything he did, but they should imitate those aspects of his beliefs and conduct that were modeling Christ's way of living.

### **9. Younger believers are watching you**

*"Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God." (Titus 2:3-5).*

Women who were new Christians were to learn how to have harmony in the home by watching older women who had been Christians for some time. We have the same need today. Younger wives and mothers should learn to live in a Christian manner - loving their husbands and caring for their children - through observing exemplary women of God. If you are of an age or position where people look up to you, make sure that your example is motivating younger believers to live in a way that honors God.

### **10. Does your example make it easier for others to believe?**

*"Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. "Make level paths for your feet," so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed. (Hebrews 12:12-13).*

God is not only a disciplining parent but also a demanding coach who pushes us to our limits and requires our lives to be disciplined. Although we may not feel strong enough to push on to victory, we will be able to accomplish it as we follow Christ and draw on his strength. Then we can use our growing strength to help those around us who are weak and struggling. The word "therefore" is a clue that what follows is important! We must not live with only our own survival in mind. Others will follow our example and we have a responsibility to them if we are living for Christ, as we claim to be.

**Does your example make it easier for others to believe in and follow Christ, and to mature in Him?**

**Or would those who follow you end up confused and misled?**