

# GROWTH + GROUPS

NAVIGATE LIFE TOGETHER

Maranatha Chapel Sermon Based Study Guide  
SB 12.10.2023

FINISHING STRONG— JOSHUA 23:1-16

## Receiving the Message and Relating to the Study

What insights, principles or observations stood out to you from this week’s message? Discuss with your group.

Pastor Daniel tells us, “We’ve taken the last seven week to tease out lessons from the life of Joshua. Today, we’re going to skip ahead to the end of his story. The last two chapters of the book of Joshua are dedicated entirely to two speeches he made, first to the leaders of Israel, and then to the nation. If I were to give a title to the speeches, it would be, ‘How to finish strong.’ Joshua is someone who not only had a great start; he finished strong.” Let’s get into our lesson...

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

1. What struck you most from the Pastor Daniel’s sermon?
2. If you knew exactly when you were going to die, what is the one piece of advice you would want to impart to your family?

## Digging Deeper in God’s Word: Life Lessons

**READ JOSHUA 23:1-6**

When Joshua was nearing the final days of his life, he found himself with one last opportunity to address the people of Israel. Instead of imparting some personal wisdom or insight he had gained in His years of faithfulness to God, he took this opportunity to remind the Israelites of God’s perfect faithfulness. Joshua sought to spur the Israelites on to greater faithfulness by reminding them that God’s perfect faithfulness is demonstrated in the ways He disciplines and protects His children.

1. Why had God specially chosen Israel to be His people? Why did God bless the Israelites and give them victory over their enemies?
2. Why was Joshua concerned that the people of Israel remember that in all their previous military victories, “the Lord your God was fighting for you” (v. 3. see also vv. 9-10)?
3. Why is it important that we acknowledge the ways God has provided for us and protected us in the past? How might neglecting to do so affect your walk with Christ?
4. What did God promise to do with Israel’s remaining enemies that still occupied parts of the Promised Land (vv. 4-5)? What did Joshua command the Israelites to do in light of this knowledge (v. 6)?

Joshua hoped that by acknowledging the many times God had fought for the Israelites in the past, they would be spurred on to finish the mission He had set before them to inherit the Promised Land. If we hope to persevere in faith in the present, we must discipline ourselves to remember God’s faithfulness to provide for and protect us in the past. Acknowledging God’s perfect track record of faithfulness to His people should give us confidence to face any challenge that might come our way. We must seek to finish well!

## *“PROMISES” in 2023*

### HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHNSUA 23:7-13

1. Why was Joshua so concerned that the Israelites not “associate with these nations remaining among you”? What did Israel stand to lose by doing so (v. 7 and vv. 12-13)?
2. How does this command square with Jesus’ expectation that believers be His witnesses to all people (see Matthew 5:13-16 and Acts 1:8)?

If obeying the word is what keeps you on the right path, then one thing that will get you off course is compromise. That’s what Joshua warns against in verse 7. God called Israel to separate themselves from the surrounding nations and not intermarry with them or build alliances with them. The reason for this was to help them maintain their purity. Joshua’s fear was that in this new season of prosperity and peace, Israel might grow lax in that stance and begin to associate with them. Over time, he could see how that association might lead to forming alliances and ultimately to them bowing down and worshipping their foreign gods.

3. What things most often distract you from a sincere and exclusive devotion to Christ?

While we may not be tempted to worship pagan gods in the same way the people of Israel were in Joshua’s day, there are many things in our culture, if left unchecked, that can distract us from delighting supremely in Christ. We live in a culture that, like the pagan nations inhabiting the Promised land, is obsessed with obtaining power, success, and pleasure at all costs. In light of these temptations, we, like the Israelites, need God to strengthen us to continue obeying “all that is written in” His Word (vv. 6-7).

### HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOSHUA 23:14-16

1. What is the relationship between our obedience and God’s promises?
2. Are God’s promises always contingent upon our obedience? Why or why not?
3. Read Hebrews 12:8-11. Why is it important to note that God will be faithful to all of His promises? How do God’s faithfulness to all His promises demonstrate His love for us?

Believers are saved by grace through faith and not by works. Through the sacrifice of Christ, believers become children of God whose right standing is not based upon their obedience, but on the Lord’s faithfulness. That, however, does not mean that God will never punish us for our sin during our time here on earth. The Lord never disciplines us out of bitterness. If we are facing the consequences for our sinful actions, it is because God loves us and wants us to share in His holiness (v. 10). The discipline of the Lord may be unpleasant but is used to produce the fruit of “peace and righteousness” in our lives.

#### Applying God’s Word

What did you learn from this study and how does this personally speak to you? Discuss with your group.

## ***“PROMISES” in 2023***

**There’s a sense in which each of us is writing a story with our lives. Paul said each of us are ‘living epistles... known and read by all men.’ What kind of story do you want to tell with your life? At the end of the day, your story will either serve as a warning, or an example to others. Joshua finished strong, not because he was perfect, but because he kept going, he stayed the course, and he didn’t quit. He finished well.**

1. How has God shown His faithfulness to you and your family? How might remembering the ways God has protected and provided for you , help you and your family persevere in faith?
2. What needs to change in your life if you hope to be wholly and exclusively devoted to Christ? How might we help each other prioritize Christ in our lives?
3. What do you need to do to finish well in the Christian life?

**PRAYER: Thank God for the many ways He has protected and provided for us. Pray that we would embrace both His blessings and His discipline as good gifts from Him intended to make us more like Christ.**

**“For no matter how many promises God has made, they are ‘Yes’ in Christ. And so, through Him the ‘Amen’ is spoken by us to the glory of God.” {2nd Corinthians 1:20}**