

STUDY 2

Growing Through Overwhelming Responsibilities

JOSHUA 1:1-11; 5:13-6:5; 23:1-16

A television commercial for a headache remedy begins with a vivid description of a housewife's overwhelming responsibilities: the kids are sick, the husband slams the door as he leaves for work, mounds of dirty dishes and clothes have piled up, and then a fuse blows. We chuckle at the poor woman's dilemma, but we have to admit that we ourselves often feel overwhelmed by our responsibilities and succumb to complaints, criticism, and despair. No pill can change that.

Part of the problem is that our culture tells us we are supposed to feel happy and fulfilled all the time. We are given no allowances, no exceptions, no middle ground. Deep down, however, we feel sure that our Christian faith must give us *some* answers to help us cope when we feel overwhelmed by life's demands. That's one reason the Bible includes stories of people like Joshua, who were thrust into seemingly impossible responsibilities. God handed his people, the Israelites, over to

Joshua just after Moses, their great liberator, had died. On the verge of conquering the Promised Land, the people were leaderless.

God called Joshua to assume command. Joshua would have crumbled under the load had it not been for God's intervention and Joshua's obedience.

1. How do overwhelming responsibilities affect you physically?

emotionally?

mentally?

spiritually?

READ JOSHUA 1:1-II.

2. Imagine being in Joshua's position. What fears and doubts might you have had in this situation?

Why is God's message especially appropriate for Joshua at this time?

3. Three times God repeats his command to be strong and courageous. For what different responsibilities would Joshua need strength and courage (verses 6-9)?

4. What role was God's Law to have in Joshua's work?

Why does success for Joshua, and for us, depend on obedience to God rather than on our own strength, resources, or skills?

5. God knew what Joshua felt under his heavy load of responsibilities. What do God's words in verse 9 mean to you when you feel overwhelmed?

6. What does Joshua's response in verses 10-11 reveal about his courage and faith?

READ JOSHUA 5:13-6:5.

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

8. What do you learn about the man with the drawn sword from his conversation with Joshua?

9. Why did Joshua need this encounter *before* God gave him instructions for doing the impossible?

In what ways has God reminded you of his presence and involvement in your critical moments?

READ JOSHUA 23:1-16.

10. How do Joshua's instructions to the next generation (verses 6-11) compare with God's first instructions to him (1:6-9)?

11. At the end of his life, after faithfully leading Israel to occupy the land, Joshua summoned the leaders. What did Joshua want them to remember about the past (verses 3,9-10)?

What commands did he give in verses 6-11? Why these?

What warnings are outlined in verses 12-16? Why?

12. From Joshua's experience and wisdom, what do you learn about how to face overwhelming responsibilities?

13. What do you need to remember from the past about God's faithfulness and promises?

Which of the commands in verses 6-11 is most appropriate to your needs today?

Pray the Bible into Life

- Thank God that he knows your situation and your fears.
- Worship God for his holiness, his power, and his faithfulness to his promises.
- Ask God to help you love and obey him as you face your responsibilities in his strength.