



Part 1 Discussion Guide

Face the Issue:

This week we began a new series based on the life of Joshua. Joshua was the leader of the Hebrew nation after Moses. When they were on the edge of the land that God had promised them, they retreated. They wandered the desert for 40 years, defeated by an enemy that never fired a single shot.

Describe a time in your life when you were afraid of your circumstances.

What helped you get through that rough time?

When facing a challenge, how do you know when you're acting in faith and when you're acting foolishly?

Into the Word:

Jeremy spent part of his sermon in Joshua 1. Let's look at it in a little more detail

Read Joshua 1:1–2.

Moses' reputation loomed large and powerful. Living in that shadow was intimidating. As Joshua compared himself to Moses, he knew he did not measure up. No doubt, Joshua felt inferior. He needed to hear God say, "Joshua, Moses my servant is dead! For years, I've been preparing you for this moment. I saw great promise in you a long time ago. Quit comparing yourself. Live in the present, not in the past."

When have you seen someone's past, positive or negative, hinder his or her present?

To win a battle against enemies without often requires that we first win a battle within. Tell about a time you saw or experienced that.

Read Joshua 1:3–5.

Joshua trembled at the thought of leading a military campaign against a powerful foe. But God reminded Joshua that as he let go of the past to battle the Canaanites, he would not fight alone. God said, "As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you." Just as God had been with Moses, he would be with Joshua.

So God will also be with us. In the darkest night, he is there. In the severest battle, he is present. In the most difficult task, he will not abandon us.

By his very nature, God will not desert his people when he gives them an order, a task, or a leading. Even if the situation seems impossible, God's presence will be strongly apparent.

Describe how you would react if you were in Joshua's shoes.

Do you view God as your ally or your enemy? How does it feel to know He is present and watching?

With which statement do you find yourself agreeing most:

- 1) God expects more of me than I can handle.*
- 2) I can't wait to find out what God has planned next for me.*
- 3) I am more prepared today than I was in the past for whatever comes my way.*
- 4) I am fearful of attempting things beyond my ability.*

Why did you choose the statement you did? Do you find yourself agreeing with more than one statement? What is the difference between the four positions? What is at stake in each position?

When has knowing God is present changed the way you view your circumstances?

Apply The Word

God said, "I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses". Notice, the promise did not apply to sitters and waiters—only to people on the move. Unless Joshua and the Hebrews moved forward, they would never accomplish the task that awaited them. Insecure as he must have felt, Joshua had to get going for the impossibility of conquering Canaan to become a reality.

Give examples of ways our church needs to take action: in ministry, stewardship, outreach, building, and so on.

List opportunities we have for personal action, such as: striving for a better marriage, recommitting to spiritual growth, healing broken relationships.

Commitment to move ahead in our Christian life takes time and effort. What are you willing to give up to obey God and act on the promises he has given you?

In what ways must your view of God change to find the strength and courage you need?