

Message #2**Various Texts**

What kind of person does God use to become a great leader? Notice the question. I did not ask what kind of man do people think is a great leader. What I asked was what kind of man does God use to become a great leader? **There is a big difference in being approved by people and being approved by God.** Joshua was a man who was approved by God.

God did exciting and dramatic things with him and for him and it was no coincidence. Joshua was God's kind of man. He was the kind of man God could do great things with and we would like to meet him in this study.

There are nine Biblical qualities from Joshua's life that we would like to examine in this study, which all begin with a word that starts with the letter "S." Joshua was a very special man and these qualities have been gleaned from 201 Biblical references to Joshua:

QUALITY #1 – Joshua was a son.

On at least 24 occasions, Joshua is referred to as the "son of Nun" (pronounced "noon"). He is identified this way 10 times in Numbers; 3 times in Deuteronomy; 9 times in Joshua; 1 time in Judges and 1 time in I Kings.

We know nothing about Joshua's father except he was of the tribe of Ephraim (Num. 13:8). Ephraim was the second son of Joseph by Asenath, the daughter of Potiphara (Gen. 46:20). Ephraim was the son blessed by Jacob, even though Joseph thought the blessing should go to Manasseh (Gen. 48:14-20).

When the census was taken in the wilderness of every male 20 years of age and older, the number for the sons of Ephraim was 40,500, which ranks 10th (Num. 1:32-33; 2:18-19). At the second census, the number decreased to 32,500, which ranks 11th (Num. 26:37). We know from Numbers 26:1 that the reason for the second census was because of a plague God sent to Israel that killed many people (Num. 26:10).

What we obviously learn from this is by virtue of the fact that Joshua was still alive, he was a faithful son. He did not lapse into idolatry, but he remained faithful to the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Nun.

Great leaders for God grow up in families, many of whom are unknown. Unless "Nun" is the man named after whom the 14th letter of the Hebrew alphabet, we don't know a thing about him.

You do not have to come from some impressive pedigree to become a great leader for God; but you must be faithful to God and it is evident that Joshua was.

QUALITY #2 – Joshua was a slave.

When Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt, the Israelites were slaves of the Egyptians. **When Joshua died he was 110 years old (Josh. 24:29).** Now the conquest of the land took about 7 years and after the conquest it is estimated that the children of Israel lived in the land for 8 years, which means Joshua was $110 - 15 = 95$ -years-old when the conquest began.

We know the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 years, which means Joshua was $95 - 40 = 55$ -years-old when the wandering began. **The thing to observe about these numbers is for 55 years Joshua was a slave in Egypt.** Talk about humble beginnings. Joshua began life in a slave labor camp. For about 55 years he lived as a slave being dominated by a godless power.

You do not have to come from the right side of the tracks to become a powerful person for God. You do not have to go to some prestigious college to be a great man or woman of God. In fact, you could be in a situation that is like slave labor. **Joshua's begin to be made in slave labor camps.**

QUALITY #3 – Joshua was a soldier.

The first glimpse we get of Joshua in the Bible is in Exodus 17:8-13, and it is in the context of going to war against the Amalekites. Moses commanded Joshua to choose men to fight against Amalek, which Joshua did.

The Amalekites were a group that preyed on the weak and hurting (Deut. 25:17-18; II Sam. 1:1-2, 8-10—Satan attacks through the weak link). They were military bullies who had no fear of God or Israel. When Joshua was given this task to select men to fight, this was no easy assignment. The Israelites had been slaves, not trained soldiers. They were not experts in combat but in conformity.

When Joshua was given this command to get men for battle, he never flinched. He chose his men and he went to war and he, through the power of God, won. He was a first class soldier.

To become a great leader for God, one must be brave in the warfare for God. There will be times when you will not have the expertise or strength or even training, but you must trust God for victory and fight a good battle of faith and wage a good war.

We will face enemies that will be far more skilled than we are; but we need to be good soldiers and remember victory belongs to the Lord. That was Joshua, a good soldier for God.

We don't have to be a powerful group of soldiers; but we do need to be a faithful group of soldiers and in order to become that, we must fight in the conflict.

QUALITY #4 – Joshua was submissive.

The first glimpse we get of Joshua is one that shows up many times and that is he was always submissive to God-ordained leadership (Ex. 17:9-10). **Not one time can you ever find Joshua trying to usurp the authority of Moses**, and it is very clear that this will become a critical factor in the great way God will use him.

The original name of Joshua was “Hoshea.” It was apparently Moses who actually changed the name to Joshua that means Jehovah is salvation (Num. 13:8, 16). Moses saw these qualities in Joshua and this one is part of the reason God raised him up.

A key principle that is seen over and over again in the Scriptures is that submission to God-ordained authority is the mark of one God will use. You may rebel against authority in this world and buck the system and make a couple of what you consider to be impressive moves, but you won’t amount to anything for God.

Great leaders for God were first submissive to other authority before they became a great leader. This was true for Joseph, Daniel and Joshua.

QUALITY #5 – Joshua was a servant.

It is much more than just a coincidence that Joshua is classified as a servant of Moses until the end of the book of Joshua where God classifies him as “the servant of the LORD” (Josh. 24:29).

Joshua was the man who led Israel after the death of Moses; but prior to Moses’ death, Joshua was Moses’ servant and Moses’ minister.

In fact, in the first verse of the book Joshua 1:1, Joshua is identified as a servant of the Lord and of Moses. The first word “servant” (ebed) is one that means Joshua was a servant of God in the sense that he worshipped God and was an ambassador for God and ministered for God (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 599). The second word “servant” (Shayrat) means that Joshua was a minister who served and waited on Moses (*Ibid.*, p. 851). Joshua lived his life as a voluntary servant of God and Moses.

(Reality #1) - Joshua fought the battles Moses told him to fight (Ex. 17:8-13).

(Reality #2) - Joshua accompanied Moses to the mountain of God (Ex. 24:12-13).

He actually waited 40 days and 40 nights for Moses (Ex. 24:18; 32:7, 17).

(Reality #3) - Joshua accompanied Moses to the tent of God (Ex. 33:11).

He waited for Moses until he came out and he was a “young man” at the time. So his servant’s heart had been established for a long time.

(Reality #4) - Joshua was fiercely loyal to Moses.

He viewed him as the only man who could communicate God's Word accurately (Num. 11:28-29).

Do not miss this servant truth about Joshua. When God was looking for a man to replace Moses, He chose the one man who had been a servant to Moses.

We live in a time when this principle has been greatly abused and misused by cult leaders who demand complete loyalty. As a result, we have, at times, overreacted and we say you don't follow a man. Well, Biblically speaking that is not quite true.

Great men of God become great men of God because they have followed some man that God truly did raise up. When we read, for example, II Sam. 23:8-39 there are 37 names of faithful men who were faithful to David. Until a person develops a loyalty to a God-ordained leader, that person will never become much of anything for God.

Elijah had Elisha. Jesus had Peter, James, and John. Paul had Timothy. Scofield had Chafer. This is the way it works. Great leaders are great servants and they work out their servanthood in regard to other people of God.

QUALITY #6 – Joshua was a spy.

When the children of Israel, under Moses ministry, came to Kadesh-Barnea, approximately 2 ½ years after the Exodus from Egypt, twelve spies were elected to have a reconnaissance mission in the Promised Land to investigate the land, the food production, the military size and strength. Joshua was one of the twelve who spent 40 days spying out the land (Num. 13:16, 25).

Of the twelve spies, ten of them said difficulties were too great and they should return to Egypt. However, only Joshua and Caleb said the land was good and God could give victory and that they should go to the land and take it. Only Joshua and Caleb said it was a violation of God's Word and rebellion against God's will not to do this (Num. 13:30; 14:6-9*). Also it was only Joshua and Caleb who were blessed by God and taken to the new land. The rest were rebellious.

Josephus said that the ten spies used four negative arguments for not obeying God:

- 1) Rivers were so wide and deep they could not be safely crossed.
- 2) Hills were so high that they could not be easily traversed.
- 3) Cities were so strong with massive walls that they could not be conquered.
- 4) People were giants who were too powerful and prosperous to conquer.

(The Complete Works of Josephus, p. 83)

Now the majority of the people of Israel listened to the majority of the ten spies versus the minority of the two and the majority missed out on all the blessings of God.

For the next 37 ½ years the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness in a life that was fruitless and barren because they would not listen to Joshua and Caleb.

The majority of the spies were wrong and the majority of the people listened to the majority of the spies. This whole nation would have been blessed if they would have listened to Joshua and Caleb. Joshua was the one spy who eventually would become leader of Israel.

Great leaders often stand out and stand alone and most of the time they are in the minority.

QUALITY #7 – Joshua was a student.

Joshua was a student of God's Word. He learned it at the feet of Moses (Num. 11:29). When Moses would speak the Word of God, Joshua was right there (Deut. 32:44-45). Joshua got his encouragement and strength from hearing God's Word spoken by Moses (Deut. 1:38; 3:28).

Now keep in mind Joshua was not the Biblical scholar Moses was. In fact, Joshua was more a warrior than a scholar. However, the point is that he wanted to know and understand the Word of God. In fact, when he first took over Israel, God commanded him to this very thing (Josh. 1:8).

No one will ever become a great warrior for God without a deep love and grasp of the Word of God. It is a deep grasp of God's Word that is part of spiritual armor. Those who will do great things for God in any dispensation will have a love for the Word of God.

QUALITY #8 – Joshua was the successor.

There is no name any bigger in the program of God than Moses, and the one man and the only man God selected to replace him was Joshua (Deut. 34:9). God chooses His replacements and it is all of the qualities we have examined that were reasons God chose Joshua.

QUALITY #9 – Joshua was the spokesperson.

Joshua went from being a slave in the labor camps of Israel to becoming a spokesperson for the living God (I Kings 16:34). Think of this—this “son of Nun” became the man who ended up leading and speaking to the entire nation of Israel. He went from a slave to a spokesperson.