

=THE LIFE OF JOSHUA=

Lesson 2

God Commissions a Leader

AIM: to teach my pupils what God expects of one who assumes a place of leadership.

POINT OF CONTACT: Everyone is curious to find out the meaning of his name and his friends' names. To get the attention of the class, you may have the pupils call off their names, and in many cases, you can tell the child the meaning of his name. This goes along with the fact that the name "Joshua" was of special significant meaning. It means "saviour." If he had lived in the New Testament times, his name would have been "Jesus," for "Joshua" of the Old Testament is the same word as "Jesus" in the New Testament. It might even be wise to take a few minutes longer and see if you can give the meaning of the names of some of the pupils' friends or brothers and sisters. A few minutes on this should be enough. Use it only until you have the attention of the pupils. (The meanings of many names are given in Bro. Hyles' book, How to Rear Infants.)

INTRODUCTION: Last week's lesson dealt with the preparation of a leader and the qualities God gives to a man as He prepares him to lead. This week's lesson deals with God's commission to a leader. These are not qualities that should necessarily be present for one's preparation, but rather, they are qualities assumed or given at least by the time of the leader's commission. Everyone is a leader of something or somebody. A man is the leader of his house. A lady is the leader of children. A teacher is the leader of a class. A captain is the leader of a team. Ask the pupils what their sphere of leadership is. Maybe one is the vice-president of his class at school, or maybe another holds an office in the Sunday school class. Since everyone is a leader, one should possess in his place of leadership the qualities mentioned below:

- I. PROPER RESPECT SHOULD BE SHOWN TO THE PREVIOUS LEADER. See Joshua 1:2. Read also Joshua 1:13-17. Joshua could have said, "If I had been leader instead of Moses, we would not have wandered for 40 years." He could have criticized Moses as one who lost his temper and smote the rock twice, thereby forfeiting his right to enter the Promised Land. He could have mentioned Moses' sin in numbering the people. These things he did not do. As someone has said, "Cutting six inches off of you does not make me taller."
- II. JOSHUA WAS TO BE STRONG AND OF A GOOD COURAGE. Four times this is said in Joshua 1:6, 7, 9, 18. This must be the thing that God wanted Joshua to have the most. The words, "be strong," and "of a good courage," are very much alike. Both the word "strong" and the word "courage" are synonymous with the word "confident." The Lord is saying to Joshua, "Be strong, courageous and confident. Have faith." There's a difference between confidence and cockiness. They look so much alike to the human eye. Only two words divide them. "I can do all things!" is being cocky. "I can do all things through Christ!" is being confident. Notice Philippians 4:13. Teach the pupils that being confident "through Christ" is not being cocky. A lack of confidence is certainly not a sign of humility. This confidence does not mean a feeling of stature, of pride; but it does mean that God will teach us and enable us to know how to do what He has given us to do.
- III. JOSHUA WAS STILL TO OBEY HIS LEADER. Notice in Joshua 1:7 that God told Joshua to obey all that Moses had told him to do. No one ever outgrows the obligation to follow, no matter how great he is as a leader. Here is Joshua, the greatest man in the world at this time, and yet he is still the follower. He is still to obey what Moses told him to do.

A young preacher came to the place where he said, "I have been under Brother Hyles long enough. It is time I begin to make my own decisions." This kind of spirit will always lead to ruin, and such was the case in the life of this young preacher. His pastorate was a miserable failure. Soon he was out of the pastorate and in some other field, and now his ministry is gone. One who is to be a leader must never grow too big to follow.

- IV. THE LEADER IS NOT TO TURN TO THE RIGHT OR THE LEFT. See Joshua 1:7c. Followers may swerve and not find it a catastrophe, but leaders must stay on the main line. (Teacher, stress to your pupils that they should seek and find the will of God early in life, set a goal, and work towards it. Life's most successful people are people who knew early what they were to do and made decisions and plans in the light of their goal. So many people find shipwreck in life because of constant changes of plans, etc. By all means, encourage your class members to find the will of God early and never waiver from the goal.)
- V. A LEADER MUST PROSPER. See Joshua 1:7d. Also notice the word "success" in Joshua 1:8. This is the only place that the word "success" is mentioned in the Bible, though the word "prosper" is mentioned in various places. (Teacher, notice all the things in Joshua 1:8 that God told Joshua to do. Add them up and teach the pupils that herein is found success and prosperity.)

Go to Psalm 1 and notice God's guaranteed formula for prosperity:

1. Not walking in the counsel of the ungodly. If one is going to prosper and have success, he must take advice only from godly people.
2. Not standing in the way of sinners. If one is to have success and prosperity, he must run with the right crowd.
3. Not sitting in the seat of the scornful. If one is to have success and prosperity, he must not be of a critical nature.
4. Delighting in the law of the Lord. If one is to have success and prosperity, he must delight himself in the Bible.
5. Meditating day and night in the Word. If one is to have success and prosperity, he must meditate in the Word of God day and night. You will notice the same thing is mentioned in Joshua 1:8b, "...meditate therein day and night."

The word "meditate" in the Bible comes from "the cow chewing the cud." A cow has more than one stomach. When one sees a cow grazing in the field, the cow is not eating; the cow is storing up food that goes down into one stomach or "storage place." Later, as the need arises, the cow takes the food out of the storage place, chews it, and digests it. This is what a successful person must do with the Bible. He must meditate in the Bible day and night as a cow grazing. He must become so full of the Bible that when he is in need, he can take it back up, chew it, and digest it.

A leader cannot stand failure; hence, he will encourage proper followship. To guarantee success, one need only follow the aforementioned plan.

- VI. A LEADER MUST CLAIM THE PROMISES OF GOD. One must remember that salvation is claiming the promises of God in His Word. The same is true with any spiritual success. We must take the Word of God, claim the promises, and hold God to His Word. Notice the wonderful promises that God gave to His new leader if he would do the things that God commanded him to do:
1. God promised Joshua that He would be with him even as He was with Moses. Of course, the great secret to this is found in Joshua 1:1 where Joshua is called "Moses' minister." This is very interesting. Moses had a title; Joshua had a title. Moses' title was "the servant of the LORD." Joshua's title was "the minister of Moses." When we think of leaders, we think of titles such as doctor, reverend, master, etc. When God thinks of titles for leaders, He thinks of servants, minister, etc. (Teach the pupils the secret to God being with us as He was with our forefathers is that we minister to those who are over us.)

There's a man in the Bible called Ebed-melech. Jeremiah, the servant of God and the leader of the people, was in prison in the mire of the dungeon. Ebed-melech was not an important man. He was not a leader himself, but he got burdened about Jeremiah's condition. He went to the king and persuaded the king to let cords down into the muck and mire of the prison to let Jeremiah out. He

took some cast clouts and rotten rags and put them under the cords and let them down to Jeremiah. He told Jeremiah that if he put these old rotten rags under his arms the rope would not pain him so much. Here we have just old rotten rags and a simple fellow named Ebed-melech, but he was a servant of God's man! (Teacher, ask the class how many people in the Bible become great because they had been servants. Everybody wants to be a leader; everybody wants to be powerful and mighty, but the way to become such is to be a servant.)

2. God promised Joshua that He would keep His promises which He made to Moses. See Joshua 1:1-3. Notice in verse 2 that Moses was dead, but the work was not dead, and God's promises were not dead. Notice the last words in verse 3, "that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses." Joshua was one with Moses in the work; hence, God's promises were to Joshua as well as to Moses because they were one in the work.
3. God promised him success and prosperity. Notice Joshua 1:7, 8.
4. God gave him the fellowship He had given to Moses. Notice in Joshua 1:16-18 the different things that people said they would do for Joshua:
 - 1) "All that thou commandest us we will do."
 - 2) "...withersoever thou sendest us, we will go."
 - 3) "According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee."
 - 4) "...only the LORD thy God be with thee, as he was with Moses." Because Joshua was what he ought to be to Moses and became one with him, God gave Joshua Moses' promises, God gave Joshua Moses' people, and God gave Joshua the loyalty of Moses' people. We are learning over and over again that in a strange sense, God gives us what we sow. If we sow loyalty to our leaders, we shall have loyalty from our followers. If we sow faithfulness and humility to our leaders, then God will give us faithful and humble followers. If we work hard for those who lead us, God will give us folks who will work hard and will follow us.

CONCLUSION: Bring the class back to the introduction. Each of us is a leader in some way. If we would be the kind of leaders we ought to be, we must be commissioned as was Joshua.