

Rest

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Joshua 1

We were made for rest. The pattern was established in **Genesis 2:2-3**. God rested from His work of creating all things.

However, burnout/exhaustion/restlessness are characteristic of our times, perhaps all times. We see it in social media reels and video clips every day: “*Here’s how to overcome all three!*” Buy this exercise implement. Take this pill. Go on this vacation. Deploy this framework. Do this thing. The promise is “buy this” and receive rest! It’s the oldest lie wearing this season’s newest fashion — that you can get for yourself what only God can give.

The book of Joshua shows us a rest that’s given and doesn’t last. The real question becomes, how do we achieve rest? It starts with the admission that I can’t, and Joshua shows us that, too.

So, what is this “rest” Joshua and the Bible speak of, and can it be found?

I. What does the LORD Give? (Joshua 1:2-5)

A. His Gift (Joshua 1:2-4)

1. Arise, go over Jordan (**Joshua 1:2**).
2. We walk, God gives (**Joshua 1:3-4**) (Note: “Given” is past tense)

B. His Promise (Joshua 1:5)

1. No enemy shall prevail (**5a**)
2. “*I will not leave you. I will not forsake you.*” (See also: **Gen 28:15; 1 Chron 28:20; Heb 13:5**)

II. What does the LORD Require (Joshua 1:6-9)

1. Be strong and courageous because of His promise (**Joshua 1:6**) (Note: The gift “given” precedes the command. Courage does not come with the gift; Courage is how a believer walks, confident that God will do what He says every time He says it.)
2. Be strong and courageous in obedience (**Joshua 1:7**). (God’s standards of right living have not wavered. **Matthew 5:6, 17-20; 1 Peter 1:13-16**)
3. Be strong and courageous in His Word (**Joshua 1:8-9**) (See also: **Psalm 1:2; Phil 4:8; Col 3:2**).
 - a) “*Courage is not something we muster to win the victory, but something that grows from faith in the victory God has already promised.*”

III. What does Joshua Command? (Joshua 1:10-15)

A. Preparation (Joshua 1:11; See also: Exodus 14:21-22)

B. Unity (Joshua 1:12-15; See also: Numbers 32:20-28)

1. Notice “rest” in verse 13 and 15. This “land-rest” is real but only provisional. It was a rest that could be lost, which means it is not THE rest. (**Hebrews 4:8-9**, *For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on. 9 So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God,*)

IV. What do the People Answer? (Joshua 1:16-18)

A. Submitted to God, His Word, and Joshua, our leader (Joshua 1:16-17)

B. Rebellion will not be tolerated (Joshua 1:18) (How does this work out for Israel? Well-intended, but it ends in failure. The grace of God must be present!)

V. What is The Light for Our Path?

A. The lesson of Joshua 1 can’t be, “Go out on Monday and be strong and courageous for the Lord.” That ends in failure just like it did for Israel in the book of Joshua.

B. But look again at what God promised. Not ‘be strong, and I’ll meet you halfway.’ Listen to verse 5 —”

1. “*I will not leave you or forsake you.*” But what makes that promise real and deliverable?
2. *On the cross, the greater Joshua was forsaken — forsaken in judgment, not in love. The penalty fell; the bond held. He was treated as the curse so that you would hear ‘I will never forsake you’ and know it was paid for.*
 - a) Moses & law could show Israel the land, and Moses died outside of it. (Law can point you to rest; it cannot deliver rest to you)
 - b) The first Joshua could win the land and leave the people restless in it (Judges).

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- c) But there is a greater Joshua. He crossed the Jordan of death, conquered, and rose again. He is not urging you to “try harder” today!
 - d) **Matthew 11:28-30**
 - (1) Jesus did not say to achieve ‘*rest*.’ Instead, he says, ‘*I will give you rest.*’
 - (2) Our courage grows out of a rest Christ has already finished: ‘*It is finished.*’
3. Our Prayer: *Lord Jesus — our greater Joshua — You did not show us the land from a distance and leave us outside. You went down into the Jordan of death, and You came up, and You opened the way. You were forsaken in judgment so that we would hear 'I will never forsake you' and know it is true.*

We have spent our lives marching, striving, trying to be strong enough to deserve our rest — and today You tell us the conquest is already won, in You. So we lay down the striving. We stop trying to earn a place You have already given. We come — weary, heavy-laden, exactly as we are — and we rest in You. You are our rest that Canaan could only sketch. You are the One whose name is salvation. And to You, the last Joshua, the priest upon His throne, be all the glory and all the praise. Amen.

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- C. The people respond to Joshua with classic submission (the submit, commit, and close ranks). Yet, there is a real problem we immediately detect if we observe closely and don't just fly right by it. We know the problem! Because it's our problem! We mean it on Sunday and we can't carry it to Tuesday. We promise to be strong and we wake up tired.
 - D. And here's the trap. The easy lesson from this chapter is, '*Go be strong and courageous like Joshua.*' But stop and feel that for a second. Joshua had God standing in front of him, handing him the promise face to face. You and I have a long Thursday and an empty tank. If this chapter is finally a lesson about mustering up our own courage, then it worked great for Joshua — and it crushes the rest of us, because we already know we can't keep it up. So it can't finally be about our strength. Look at what God actually promised —
 - E. But look again at what God actually promised. Not 'be strong and I'll meet you halfway.' Listen to verse 5 —
 - F. [Read Joshua 1:5 in full — listening cue first]
 - G. [NEW] "Hear what God ties Himself to:" — "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee."
 - H. [NEW] "'I will not forsake thee.' Hold that word. Because there was one day in history when God did forsake — when the true and greater Joshua hung on a cross and cried, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' He was forsaken in judgment so that you never will be. The penalty fell on Him; the promise holds for you. That's how 'I will never leave thee' becomes a promise you can actually stand on — it was purchased."
 - I. [Pivot to the Moses / first-Joshua / last-Joshua movement — this is the climb]
 - J. [NEW] "Walk the whole story with me for one minute. Moses could show them the land — and die outside it. The law can point you to the rest. It cannot carry you in. The first Joshua could win the land — and still leave the people restless in it. Enemies came back. The inheritance slipped. It was a rest you could lose, which means it was never the rest.
 - K. But there is a last Joshua. He bears the name 'the LORD saves' because He is the LORD who saves. And He did not stop at the riverbank. He crossed into death itself, He conquered, and He came back to lead His people home. The rest you are straining toward — He has already entered. He is not standing on the far bank shouting 'march harder.' He is holding the door."
 - L. [Read Matthew 11:28–30 in full — this is your destination text, let it breathe]
 - M. [NEW] "And here is His own voice, the only One who can say it:" — "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."
 - N. [NEW] "Notice — He doesn't say 'achieve rest.' He says 'I will give you rest.' You don't manufacture it. You receive it. The courage in Joshua 1 was never a force the people produced to unlock God's blessing. It grew out of a rest God had already promised. And your courage today grows out of a rest Christ has already finished. 'It is finished' is the conquest cry. The strength comes after the rest, not before it."

FOR MY REFERENCE ONLY:

I. Rest

- A. The Pattern Established (Genesis 2:2-3)
- B. The Pattern Institutionalized (Exodus 20:8-11)
 - 1. Remember your bondage (Deut 5:15a)
 - 2. Remember your deliverance (Deut 5:15b)
- C. The Pattern Defined (Matthew 11:28-30)
 - 1. Rest is not solely defined as inactivity or the absence of movement.
 - 2. It also pictures finality, victory, and salvation. It is "rest" from our enemies.
- D. The Pattern Reframed
 - 1. Rest is established for men, not men for the Sabbath (Mark 2:27-28)
 - 2. Jesus promises rest and is the only One who can deliver rest as finality.

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- E. The Pattern Completed
 - 1. What is anticipated in the historical Joshua finds its fulfillment in the greater Joshua (Jesus)
 - 2. **This is confirmed in Hebrews 4:9-11.**
 - F. The Pattern Fulfilled
 - 1. In the Lost (Revelation 14:11)
 - 2. In the Redeemed (Revelation 14:13)
 - a) We will rest from the burden of this present evil world
 - b) We will rest from the burden of this flesh.
 - c) We will rest from the burden of our enemy, the devil.