

## **Leadership from the Life of Joshua for Today**

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In the Holy Bible we see a number of pictures of outstanding persons who have ideal characteristics for a good leader. Out of many, in this paper, I will try to look at the life and characteristics of Joshua as a model for the good leader in our context. Joshua was a member of one of the largest tribes in Israel, the tribe of Ephraim. His name originally was 'Hoshea' (salvation), but Moses renames him 'Joshua', which means 'Yahweh saves' (Num. 13:16). He was the successor of the great leader Moses, and he led the people of Israelite into the land of Canaan as the Lord had promised to them. By studying him we can see how leaders are made and what qualities a leader should have.

Now let us look into the life and characters of Joshua which are relevant for today's leader in our church and society.

### **1. He was a Well Trained and Experienced Person**

Moses shortly before death, by Jehovah's direction, solemnly invested Joshua with authority as his successor (Duet. 31:7; 34:9). The most salient fact about Joshua's life and personality is that he was a well trained leader. Joshua was a leader, trained by the master, taught by experience. He had an experience in leading the army of Israelite in a war against other nations (Exod. 17:9). Like the great leader Moses, his master, he had been most carefully trained and proven faithful before he became leader in the place of Moses. He learnt that success does not ultimately come from one's own efforts. Success comes from the Lord. It comes through the direct intervention of God Himself. He was filled with the spirit of wisdom (Num. 27:18) which came from the Lord. He probably was about eighty years old when he took command of the Israelites.

In our today's context also, we need a leader who had experiences before he/she was appointed as a leader. Like Joshua had experienced the presence of spirit of God upon his people, the leader of our today's church also must have the experience of the presence of God in him or her. It can be detrimental for the congregation to appoint the leader because of their high secular degree or quality but who has no experience from the previous leaders and from God.

### **2. He was Obedient to the Word of God**

God said to Joshua, *"Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swear unto their fathers to give them. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest"* (Josh. 1:6-7). He must do what was written without exception, and to encourage him in obedience, God assured him that his way would be prosperous. Joshua obeyed God and observed the law accordingly and he followed God's instructions exactly. Joshua must not only govern by law and see that the people observe the law, but he must observe it himself. Because of his obedience to God, Joshua enjoyed the presence of God (Josh. 1:5; 6:27) and he could fulfill the promise of God in the end to bring the people of Israelites into the land of Canaan.

Today, one of the biggest problems in some leaders is the lack of obedience to the teaching of the Word of God. Many leaders spend time trying to explain away the true meaning of God's Word to make it suit our social standards or preconceived ideas of

religious concepts, which at the end resulted in frustration and confusion. We must remember that God's Word is our standard. Like Joshua, the leader must obey first the word of God, which are revealed to him/her through the written Word, the Bible, and not turn from it to the right hand or to the left. Only then the presence of God would come to him/her. The leader must remember that the secret fulfillment of God's promise is obedience to His Word, His will and His purpose.

### **3. He has an Optimistic View**

Moses sent twelve spies to Canaan to see what the land looks, is the soil fertile, and which kind of people are dwelling in there, and to examine the city (Num. 13:17-20). After forty days, the spies returned and the ten spies out of twelve reported that the land was excellent to occupy, but believed that they could not attack the people since they look great and strong. So, the people of Israelite criticized Moses since they thought that they would all die in the hands of the Canaanites. Then, Joshua and Caleb said that God would bring them into that land, and give it them; a land which flowed with milk and honey (Num. 13:25-14:9). They two alone of the 12 brought a good report, and encouraged the people not to fear the inhabitants for the Lord was with Israel. The ten other spies were smitten with the plague and died. Joshua and Caleb alone of all that generation above 20 years of age survived the 40 years' wilderness wanderings that ensued.

Here we see the optimistic view of Joshua. He saw what the other ten had seen too, the great size of Canaanite people and the prosperous land. He was not threatened by the great size of the people, rather he viewed that the land with milk and honey is going to be theirs after they won all the great men there. Joshua's optimistic view is very important for our today's church leaders. The leader must try to see the bright future even there are problems or hindrances now. He/She must not think that the obstacle which he/she is facing now is a stumbling block, but a stepping stone. Many organizations fell down these days because when they face hardships in their way, they think that it was the end road. In such situation, the leader must encourage the members to wait the appearance of sunshine after rain.

### **4. He was a Well Planner.**

When LORD told Joshua to stretch forth his spear toward Ai and capture it. He was told to ambush the city of Ai. Joshua then planned how to ambush the city of Ai. He chose thirty thousand warriors who would lie behind the city and to stay alert. Then he and all the people who are with him will approach the city. And when the armies of Ai come out against them, they shall flee before them until they had drawn them away from the city; then those who lie behind the city shall rise up from the ambush and seize the city and set the city on fire. As Joshua's plan, the city of Ai was captured and burnt into fire (Josh. 8: 1-19).

From this event, we can learn that Joshua was a well planner and a well organizer. He already set all the strategy before to attack the city of Ai. He told each army what they should perform in the battle, how and in which time they would perform their duty. So, we may realize the importance of well planning and arrangement for any organization. The Leader must have a well vision and propose a well plan to achieve their goal. In our church today also, the pastor and the elders must arrange the plan for the growth, betterment, and development of the church spiritually and physically.

## 5. He Trusts in the Lord

One of the characters of Joshua which we can find from our Holy Bible is his trust in the Lord. In the day when the Israelites fought against the army of Amorites, Joshua knew that they would not be able to conquer their enemies before the sun set, but he trust in the Lord so much that if he asked God to lengthen the day, the Lord would answer his prayer. Then he spoke to the Lord in the sight of Israel, and said “Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon” (Josh. 10:12). Here Joshua prayed the prayer of faith, and this prayer was answered. The daylight was miraculously lengthened until Israel was avenged of their enemies. The sun refused to go down until he had witnessed the victory for God. Israel pursued the host of the enemy through the pass of Beth-horon to Azekah and Makkedah.

In order to lead the church and its congregation, the pastor as well as the leaders in the church must have ultimate faith; they must not cease praying to God. It seems that many pastors prayed just for the sake of tradition, without having real faith in the Lord. But the good leader of the church must have a genuine trust in God knowing that all things are possible with God. And the leader must remember that if God is not answering his/her prayer as the way he/she asked, God has been preparing another way to answer his/her prayer.

## 6. He was a Courageous Person

In [Joshua 1:6](#), God said to Joshua, “*Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swear unto their fathers to give them.*” Joshua did follow this God’s command unto him. God repeated this three times to Joshua, for He knew Joshua and his men would need it. He was so courageous in leading the people of Israel. He faced many battle against other nations, but he was never discouraged. Because of his courageous, God blessed him and helped him that he could lead the people of Israelites into the land of Canaan.

In today’s context also, the leader must know that God wants victory and success in the lives of His people, and that he/she must not lose any courageous opportunity which would make him/her what God intended he/she should be. The courage of the leader is to be good, cheerful and noble. It takes courage to stand against the force of temptation and opposition. The leader must courage enough to lead the people whom he/she is leading to attain their destination even in the time of hardships, criticisms, troubles, and breakdowns.

### Conclusion:

From this paper we could see some of the characters of Joshua which are significant for our leaders in the church and society. Joshua, a virtuous warrior, who learned to command in advanced age by obeying when a youth, ever looking up to God with childlike faith and see bright future with hope, a well planner of strategy, who fought with courage for the people of God, teaches us an important quality for the good leader.