

The History Channel
Brothers in Arms: The Conquest of Canaan
Joshua 1

The book of Joshua is an unusual book because in the Hebrew old testament it begins with the word and. That is an indication that Joshua is a continuation of all that God had been doing in the first five books. When you come to the book of Joshua you come to a Lord whose orders are Press On. The word from God for me and you is clear unless we are pressing on the God who is always pressing on will leave us behind. There are some principals that fall out of the passage to speak to us in a day when our culture cries out give up, give in, don't commit.

1. Press on despite life's disappointments: Joshua 1:1-2a

The book of Deuteronomy ends with a grave in Moab across the Jordan from Jericho. Over against the quietness of that grave where God by His own hand had buried his might man Moses at 120 years of age. Contrast that picture with a bustling camp of God's Hebrew people who needed to press on. Human leadership and human companionship changes, but God tells us to press on. In verse 2 these words carry a huge amount of emotion. Moses my servant is dead. The emotion, the calamity, and the change that those words signified to the Hebrew people were enormous. For eighty years Moses has lead the Hebrew people. The entire generation that camped at the east side of the Jordan had known nothing except Moses. He was God's might mountain man; the title contains it, where it says Moses my servant. This word is not used in the usual use of the word servant. This word means my mighty mediator, my ambassador, my vice regent is dead. The Israelites grieved for Moses on the plains of Moab for 30 days. Here was the man who the bible called the most humbled man who walked on the face of the earth, dead. Here was the man who had stood toe to toe with Pharaoh, dead. Moses seems to have disappeared when they need him most. The situation had not changed in the last 40 years. The people were still as big and the cities still walled from the last time the children of Israel came to the threshold of the promise land. God is giving the children of Israel the challenge to press on in contrast to the loss of Moses.

The death of Franklin Roosevelt probably comes closest to something in this century to the magnitude of the death of Moses. Franklin Roosevelt was president for almost 13 years through one of the darkest periods in the life of our country. His presidency spanned from the great depression to the end of WWII. With the media's ability to keep President Roosevelt's illness a secret, his death was a sudden blow to people around the world. People stopped what they were doing and were stunned. His death came just as the 2nd world war was coming to a close, and there was not clear leadership. He died on April 12, 1945. One month later, we signed the treaty to end the war in Europe.

As devastating as President Roosevelt's death was in 1945, it is a fraction of the devastation the Israelites felt.

Has personal disappointment kept you from pressing on? Disappointment comes to us in so many ways. It can be unmet expectations where life does not turn out like you planned. It can come through the death of a spouse or friend. It can come through events out of your control like a hurricane. Life is full of disappointments.

Joshua knew the sting of disappointment. Joshua was Moses' God appointed replacement. Here was a man whose very DNA was pressing on.

You remember the story of Joshua and Caleb. They were part of the 12 that went to scout out the land. Even though the land was full of giants and the cities were walled, they took God at his word and said we can take the land. But, at the awful committee meeting where the people chose to believe the 10 rather than the two, Joshua's dreams were crushed. He had to eat the dust of the desert for 40 years knowing it didn't have to be that way. Now, at 85 years old, he once again comes to the Promised Land where he and Caleb walked, and he hears God's challenge to press on.

2. Press on despite life's circumstances: (Joshua 1:2b)

Joshua and the children of Israel are commanded by God to press on into the promise land. They are camped on the east side of the Jordan. Chapter 3:15 says, "Now the Jordan is at flood stage all during harvest. When the spring rains come and the snow melts from Mt. Hermon the Jordan becomes a raging flooding river that was almost impossible for a grown man to cross let alone women, children, livestock, and possessions. The Israelites did not have a plan to cross the Jordan but God would lead the way.

What does it mean to press on despite the circumstances? It does not mean you will not face difficulty or hardship. It means there will be times when you just don't have answers. To build a home for Christ, to raise children that love the Lord and fear him is unbelievably difficult in this day and age. It means that God has commanded you to cross over into the promise land despite the raging flooding rivers in your life.

3. Press on in light of God's promises and provision (Joshua 1:8-9)

In verse 8 and 9 God gives Joshua the promise and the provision that gives him the ability to press on despite the disappointments and circumstances. The promise is in verse 5 and 8. I will never leave you nor forsake you. In the Hebrew, it means I will never relax my grasp on you, I will never let you sink, and I will never abandon you. This is a promise consistent throughout scripture. In Deuteronomy 31:8, Moses said to Joshua, "The Lord will never leave you nor

forsake you.” In 1 Chronicles 28, when the old man David is about to die and he is handling the responsibility of building the temple he said to the young man Solomon, “He will never leave you nor forsake you.” In Matthew 28, when the Lord stood on the mountain and looked at those ready to send them out he recalled the words of Moses to Joshua and David to Solomon, and he told them, “Lo, I am with you always even until the end of the age,” go and press on. The promise comes with a contingency. The promise is if we take the Word of God and write it upon our hearts and make it the bedrock of our lives, then we will be prosperous and successful. We will be able to claim every place we place our foot, and God will never leave us nor forsake us. Verse 8 makes the promise and verse 9 makes the provision. If we have placed our lives on the bedrock of the Word of God the living word Jesus himself, then we are given the provision of the presence of God which is the Holy Spirit.

4. **The practicality of pressing on (Joshua 3:14-16).**

The application for the children of Israel of God’s challenge to press on was the crossing of the Jordan. It is interesting that they had been camped by this river for three days. The plan was for the priests to lead the way. They were to carry the Ark of the Covenant which symbolized the presence of God. As soon as the priest’s feet touched the water the water stopped flowing upstream and the priests stood on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan as the people crossed over.

- A. **Pressing on means not having all the answers.** The children of Israel did not know the plan for those three days; all they knew was that God would provide a way for them to cross the Jordan.
- B. **Pressing on means we fulfill the role of a priest.**
- C. **Pressing on means remembering the spiritual markers.**