

Overview

Biblical Passage	Joshua 1:1-9
Supporting Passages	Ephesians 6:1-10, Deuteronomy 21:23, Matthew 28:16-20
Memory Verse	Joshua 1:9
Biblical Truth	Because we do not have the option to not engage the world, God has promised to be with us every step of the way.
Context	<p>It was never God’s intention that humanity should live and act independent from Him. His promise was and is that He will be there and will never leave us nor forsake us. As Joshua was preparing to lead the Israelites into the land God had promised, it was important for him to remember that the God who had maintained His presence among the people and had guided the steps of Moses would also do the same for Joshua and the people. In this last lesson of the Squeeze series, students will see that God has handed us the task of going into the world and presenting ourselves as His witnesses. His promise continues: “I am with you always.”</p>
Learning Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore: Your students will understand that no matter what the circumstances are and no matter what God’s assignment is, His promise is to go before us, go with us, and never leave us.• Transform: Your students will begin to value God’s promise that He is faithful to remain with us no matter what we are going through.
Prayer Suggestions	<p>As you prepare to teach this lesson, pray for your students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pray that your students will understand that the Lord’s presence will be with them through every endeavor.• Pray that your students will be able to communicate to others how the Lord’s presence sustains them.• Pray that your students will step out and accomplish great things for the Lord as His presence strengthens them for His work.

Biblical Commentary

Investigation

No one knows who wrote the book of Joshua or exactly when it was written, but parts of it were likely written down shortly after Joshua's death. The book can easily be divided into three uneven parts. The first 12 chapters recount how the Hebrews invaded the land of Canaan. Chapters 13-22 record how they distributed the land among the 12 tribes of Israel. The final two chapters present Joshua's farewell address to the people and his death.

Although the book of Joshua is primarily a book of history, it does not simply recount facts. This book presents the powerful message that if the Hebrews would follow God and obey His commands, then they would be able to conquer the land of **Canaan** and dwell safely there. Joshua is the central character of the book that bears his name. Joshua became the leader of the Hebrews upon the death of Moses. Joshua possessed military expertise that Moses did not. Under Joshua's capable leadership, the Hebrews conquered the land that God had promised them.

This passage tells how the Lord exhorted Joshua to replace Moses as the new leader of the Hebrew people and lead them to conquer the Promised Land. God promised Joshua and the people that they would be successful if they would meditate on God's Word and then commit themselves to following God's instructions to Moses. God promised never to leave or forsake His people as they sought to follow Him.

Importance

This passage teaches the Essential Truth that **People are God's Treasure**. God wants us to obey Him no matter how difficult it might be to do so. The Hebrews would face many challenges as they sought to settle in the land of Canaan. Yet God promised them success if they would act in obedience to His laws. God had outlined His very best by displaying His own character and handing it down to Israel through Moses, calling them to the obedience of His Word and His ways. He had designated Israel to be His own people because He so valued and treasured them, desiring to use them as a light and a blessing to the nations of the world (Gen. 12:3).

God keeps His promises, and His promise to Israel's people was that they would have and know His eternal presence. That promise is extended to all who are part of the people of God.

This passage also teaches the Essential Truth that **The Bible is God's Word**.

Interpretation

Joshua 1:1 Moses, the great leader of the Hebrews who delivered them from slavery in Egypt, had died. The Hebrews had lost their great leader and had entered a time of transition. When there is a change of leadership, it can be an anxious time for people especially if the former leader was a heroic figure like Moses. Yet a new generation of Israelites was ready to follow their new leader. Although Joshua had different abilities than Moses, he had gained the confidence of the people.

Moses is referred to in this verse as the “servant of the Lord,” a phrase that occurs often in the book of Joshua when referring to Moses. The description of Moses as servant not only emphasized his close personal relationship with the Lord but also his willingness to serve his people. Moses led by being a servant, not by lording it over the Israelites. Joshua actually learned how to be a leader from Moses due to the close relationship that they enjoyed. Earlier, Joshua had ascended the mountain of God with Moses and had served as his assistant during the wilderness wanderings. Now God spoke directly to Joshua just as He had with Moses, confirming Joshua’s special role as Moses’ successor.

Joshua 1:2-3 The Lord reminded Joshua of the death of Moses in order to confirm that Joshua must now step forward and lead the Israelites. God informed Joshua that He had given the land of Canaan as a gift to His people—but they were supposed to take the initiative and move forward and cross the Jordan River to begin the settlement process. Wherever they set their feet, they would possess that territory. God had made the promise earlier to the patriarchs in Genesis and reconfirmed it with Moses, as He mentioned in this verse. Now the Lord told Joshua that the promise would come true through Joshua’s leadership. God spoke to the people through Joshua because he would be their new leader.

Joshua 1:4 The Lord explained to Joshua the boundaries of the land that the Israelites would eventually settle. They would occupy the desert region that lay south and east of Canaan. “Lebanon” included the mountain ranges in north Canaan. **Mount Hermon** was the highest peak in these mountain ranges. The **Euphrates River** lay to the northeast of Canaan. “The land of the **Hittites**” referred to Syria, which at the time was under Hittite control. The western boundary of the land was the “Great Sea.” This is, of course, a reference to the **Mediterranean Sea**. The boundaries described here were not realized until the time of King David as David either conquered these areas or exercised influence over them if he did not incorporate them into his kingdom.

Joshua 1:5 As Joshua and the Israelites entered the land of Canaan, they would be opposed by the inhabitants who in no way would welcome the new settlers. The Lord promised Joshua that no one would be able to stand against the Israelites. The Lord did not promise Joshua that taking the land would be an easy affair. He merely promised him that he would be victorious against all opponents. In the end, it would not be through military strength that the Hebrews would take the land but through the mighty power of the Lord. The Lord would be with Joshua in the same way that He had been with Moses. The Lord’s abiding presence would be a source of comfort to Joshua no matter what difficulties he faced.

Joshua 1:6 God’s steadfast presence would enable Joshua to be strong and courageous. Joshua and the Israelites would have to battle against enemies who were more powerful, more numerous, and had superior weaponry. There would be many battles fought over a long period of time. The conquest of Canaan was not for the frail and timid. Israel would need a strong and confident leader who could inspire and challenge them to do what God had commanded.

Joshua 1:7-8 One important aspect of courage would be for the people to follow God’s commands as given by Moses. All of the people whom the Israelites subdued in the land of Canaan would not have any desire to live according to God’s commands. The Israelites would be tempted to adopt the lifestyle of the pagan Canaanites. The Israelites could not get sidetracked and turn to the left or the right and cease following the Law. If they kept God’s commands and did not waver, then they would live successfully in the land. Of course, if they failed to take the Law of God seriously and acted in disobedience to God’s instructions, then they would not prosper in the land. The Lord did not tell Joshua that political acumen or military expertise was the key to victory, but keeping God’s instructions would bring forth His blessings. In order to keep God’s commands, the people would first need to become familiar with them. God told Joshua to talk about the **Book of the Law** constantly, to teach it to others, and to **meditate** upon it day and night. The Law had to be in Joshua’s mind and heart if he was to be an effective leader. He must make certain that the people knew God’s laws as well so that they could be successful as well.

Joshua 1:9 This verse serves as a summary of the previous eight verses. Just to make sure that Joshua understood that he had been chosen for a very important mission, God underscored that Joshua was to be courageous and not be afraid or discouraged by setbacks. Joshua could be courageous not because of his own special abilities or because his path was an easy one but rather because he could demonstrate boldness by knowing that the Lord would go with him wherever he went. If Joshua had been asked to go at his task alone, he would have faltered—but with the sustaining presence of the Lord, Joshua was capable of completing his task and leading the people to take and inhabit the land.

Implications

We live in a culture and society in which individualism is emphasized. Consequently, people deal with a lot of loneliness and a lot of depression. This way of thinking even affects our churches in how they perceive themselves and God. Our students have grown up in churches that have somehow forgotten that God never intended for them to live independent of Him. Oh, this isn’t overt behavior, but you find the thinking in such statements like, “God wants you to do such and such for Him” or “What is God’s will for my life?” as though His will is only directed toward you. The fact is that God has chosen us to live in relationship with Him, and He empowers us to do His will wherever we’re at. It’s not all about Him pointing out His will for our lives and then sending us off to do it in our own strength. The fact is that it can’t be done. It is all about living in the relationship, being obedient to Him, and then watching as He does His work through us.

Our students need a mind change. They need for us to teach them that it’s not all about God’s will for us, but it’s about us living in relationship with Him, living out His will as He accomplishes that will through our lives. That means that He will never leave us nor forsake us, and when something is accomplished, we can never assume the credit but should instead realize that it could never be done in the first place without His eternal presence in our lives. What an awesome thought!

Teaching Plan

Connect Activity

Review Questions: Push Through It

(5–8 minutes, easy set-up)

Students will answer five review questions from the previous lesson.

(5–8 minutes, easy set-up)

Download the “Review Questions” activity sheet. Print one copy for your own use.

After greeting students, use the review questions to test what they can recall from the previous lesson as well as to provide context for today’s lesson.

Drama: I’ll Be With You

(5–10 minutes, easy set-up)

Students will watch a drama about someone who is frozen because of fear.

(5–10 minutes, easy set-up)

Download the drama script. Prior to the session, enlist three students to enact the drama. Give copies of the script to cast members ahead of time so that they will be ready to perform it.

Prompt students to perform the drama. Afterward, ask: **Do you ever feel like Jeff—just frozen and unable to do something because of fear? How does it help when someone says, “I’ll help” or “I’ll go with you?”** Allow students to respond. Then say: **God assured Joshua that he could be strong and courageous because He would always be with Joshua. That assurance is ours today, and we’ll discover just how serious God is about His promise.**

Media Option: Be Moses

(3–5 minutes, Reverb Media Pass required)

Students will watch a video about Joshua’s charge to succeed Moses as the leader of the people of Israel.

(3–5 minutes, Reverb Media Pass required)

If your church has purchased the Reverb Media Pass or the Reverb DVD, preview and arrange to show the “Be Moses” video. (If your church has not purchased the Reverb Media Pass, you can purchase this single video through the “Media” tab.)

Play the video for your students. When the video is over, ask students for their reactions. Prompt students to put themselves in Joshua’s shoes. Ask: **What parts of the presentation presented to**

Joshua would be tempting to embrace? Explain to students that God never promised to make Joshua great on his own—only through God would Joshua be great. Say: **It's the same with us. Today we will learn that no matter what the circumstances are and no matter what God's assignment is, God promises to go before us, go with us, and never leave us.**

Explore Activity

Master Teacher Key Study: More Than On Our Own

(10-15 minutes, easy set-up)

Students will study Joshua 1:1-9 to understand God's promise to Joshua not to ever leave him.

(10-15 minutes, easy set-up)

Download the Master Teacher Key Study. Print one copy for your own use. Also download the Master Teacher Student Worksheet. Print a copy for each learner. Also provide pens.

Learning Goal: Your students will understand that no matter what the circumstances are and no matter what God's assignment is, His promise is to go before us, go with us, and never leave us.

Pass out pens and copies of the Master Teacher Student Worksheet. Then use the Master Teacher Key Study to teach Joshua 1:1-9.

Transform Activity

Deeper Discussion

(10 minutes, easy set-up)

Students will discuss the assurance they have that God is with them.

(10 minutes, easy set-up)

Learning Goal: Your students will begin to value God's promise that He is faithful to remain with us no matter what we are going through.

Say: **God's consistent message is one of enduring love and forgiveness.** Then ask the following discussion questions.

- **Why would God's promise to always be with Joshua and Israel be any different for us today?**
- **When has God ever called someone to do something and then left him or her alone to do**

it?

- **Why do we need God’s presence with us always?**
- **What would it be like to suddenly know that God was not there?**
- **What assurances do you have that God is with you?**

Help students deal with any doubts that God is present and wanting to become a part of the daily lives of those who do not know Him.

Creative Prayer

(10 minutes, easy set-up)

Students will pray to God to thank Him for never leaving them.

(10 minutes, easy set-up)

Learning Goal: Your students will begin to value God’s promise that He is faithful to remain with us no matter what we are going through.

Invite students to pair off. Then lead them to open their Bibles to Joshua 1:5 and Joshua 1:9. Say: **Take this opportunity to pray these Scripture passages back to God and ask Him to make these verses a reality in your lives.** Provide the following examples of how to do this.

- “Lord, as you were with so many in Scripture, will you help Becca know that you will always be with her? Will you help her realize that you will never leave her nor forsake her?”
- “Father, help Blake to be strong and courageous and not terrified or discouraged. Please give him your assurance that you will be with him wherever he goes.”

Once students have completed their time of prayer, take the opportunity to pray for your students that they would know the assurance of God’s presence in their lives through every situation, whether joyful or sad, in great abundance or great need, or in peace or unrest.

Reverb Student Book Option: Your Commission

(10 minutes, Reverb student book required)

Students will complete an activity about being commissioned for service to God.

(10 minutes, Reverb student book required)

If your church has purchased the Reverb student book, preview the activity on page 313. If possible, provide a copy of the book to reference as you mention the activity to students.

Learning Goal: Your students will begin to value God’s promise that He is faithful to remain with us no matter what we are going through.

As students work through pages 308–313 in the *Reverb* student book this week, challenge them to take about 10–15 minutes and read through the activity on page 313. Say: **We’ve come to the end of Reverb. You’ve had the chance to consider your place in God’s mission, how you are empowered with the Holy Spirit, and how God has equipped you to share your faith and engage the world. You’ve discovered that you have a special protection that guards you from spiritual oppression,**

and now you stand at the edge of a proverbial land that is yours for the taking. God will give you that land as you engage its people. It's time to be commissioned for the task.

Squeeze 6, "More Than on Our Own"
Review Questions

1. In Paul's letter to the church at Philippi, he described himself as _____.
 - a. perfect
 - b. pressing on
 - c. a quitter
 - d. a failure

2. Paul said that a believer's citizenship is _____.
 - a. in Heaven
 - b. on earth
 - c. in the good ole U. S. of A.
 - d. between Heaven and earth

3. Paul refers to those for whom he feels deeply as _____.
 - a. "my brothers"
 - b. "my joy and crown"
 - c. "dear friends"
 - d. all of the above

4. Paul described those who live contrary to Christ as _____.
 - a. "unbelievers"
 - b. "fools"
 - c. "enemies of the cross of Christ"
 - d. "the deceived"

5. What did Paul tell the Philippians that he did with his past?
 - a. He left it in the past.
 - b. He always remembered it.
 - c. He forgot it and pressed forward.
 - d. He embraced it.

Squeeze 6, "More Than on Our Own"
Answers

1. In Paul's letter to the church at Philippi, he described himself as _____. (Lesson 5)
 - a. perfect
 - b. pressing on**
 - c. a quitter
 - d. a failure

2. Paul said that a believer's citizenship is _____. (Lesson 5)
 - a. in Heaven**
 - b. on earth
 - c. in the good ole U. S. of A.
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 - a. "my brothers"
 - b. "my joy and crown"
 - c. "dear friends"
 - d. all of the above**

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 - a. "unbelievers"
 - b. "fools"
 - c. "enemies of the cross of Christ"**
 - d. "the deceived"

5. What did Paul tell the Philippians that he did with his past? (Lesson 5)
 - a. He left it in the past.
 - b. He always remembered it.
 - c. He forgot it and pressed forward.**
 - d. He embraced it.

Squeeze 6, "More Than On Our Own"
Drama

I'll Be With You

Characters:

JEFF
MITCH
KATE

Props: none

Costumes: typical street clothes

Creative Note: Kate should only talk to Jeff even though Mitch is the only one speaking for him.

(Two guys, JEFF and MITCH, stand on stage. JEFF is frantically pacing back and forth. MITCH is calm and collected.)

JEFF: I can't do it. I can't.

MITCH: Yes, you can.

JEFF: No. I'm serious. This is beyond me.

MITCH: No, it's not. You can totally handle it.

JEFF: Nope. I'm not going to do it. I'm not.

MITCH: Yes, you are.

JEFF: Are you listening to me? I'm a wreck here!

(MITCH grabs JEFF, stopping him in his tracks.)

MITCH: You are not a wreck! You're just nervous and probably a little scared.

JEFF: A little? I'm totally freaking out. I'm terrified.

MITCH: Okay. You're terrified. But so what? You've been building up to this for a long time.

MITCH: You've finally got the opportunity,

and you're not going to let it pass you buy. I'm not going to let you let it pass you by.

JEFF: Oh, come on, man. Please! It'll be much easier if I just go home and wallow in my own pathetic existence.

MITCH: Sorry. Not an option.

JEFF: But I don't think you understand.

MITCH: No. I do understand. Completely. I've been exactly where you are. I know exactly how you're feeling and exactly what it's going to be like.

JEFF: But what if it doesn't work out? I mean, what if it doesn't go like I want it to?

MITCH: It might not. That's the risk you take. But that's life. And you've got to live life. Otherwise, you're just a dead man.

JEFF: But I don't know what to do or what to say or . . . anything really. I don't know anything.

MITCH: I know, but it's okay. I tell you what. I'll help you out.

JEFF: You will?

MITCH: Absolutely.

(JEFF embraces MITCH and doesn't let go.)

JEFF: Oh, thank you thank you thank you thank you!

(MITCH struggles loose from JEFF'S embrace.)

MITCH: No problem.

JEFF: How are you going to help?

MITCH: However you need. Trust me. I'll be with you the whole time.

(KATE enters.)

MITCH: Okay. There she is.
(JEFF turns and looks at KATE.)

JEFF: Okay. Here we go.
(JEFF begins walking off in the opposite direction from where KATE is. MITCH stops him and begins pushing him in KATE'S direction.)

KATE: Oh, hi, Jeff.
(JEFF stands there speechless. He tries to say something, but nothing comes out. He's completely frozen up.)

MITCH: Jeff says, "hi."

KATE: Oh. How'd you do on that algebra test?
(JEFF continues to be unable to speak.)

MITCH: He got a B. How about you?

KATE: Oh, I got an A.

MITCH: Jeff thinks that's great. Congratulations.

KATE: Thanks . . . So, are you going to Mal's party this weekend?
(JEFF still can't seem to form a sentence.)

MITCH: Actually, he was wanting to talk to you about that.

KATE: Oh, really?

MITCH: Yeah. He was wondering if you might want to go with him?

KATE: Like as a date?

MITCH: Yes. As a date.

KATE: Yeah. Yeah, I'd love to.

MITCH: Perfect.

KATE: I've actually got to get going, but just text me later, and we can work out the details.

MITCH: Sure thing. He'll do that.

KATE: Cool. Well, bye.
(JEFF is now just standing there, dumbfounded.)

MITCH: Jeff says, "bye."
(KATE exits, and JEFF finally comes around.)

JEFF: I don't believe it. I just don't believe it. I did it! I really did it!!

MITCH: You sure did. Good job.

JEFF: Come on. Let's go.

MITCH: Where are we going?

JEFF: We gotta get ready for that text later.

MITCH: Sure. Right. Of course we do.
(They both exit.)
(The End)

Master Teacher Key Study MORE THAN ON OUR OWN

(15–20 minutes, easy set-up)

Use this outline and any of the corresponding activities to share the Biblical Truth with students.

Intro: Promise and trust form a relationship that points to hope.

Description: Moses had not been allowed to lead his people into the Promised Land. Instead, Moses died and Joshua became Israel's leader to take them into the Promised Land. Joshua would know the relationship with God that Moses had known.

Illustration: Actress Natasha Richardson died in 2009 due to a skiing accident in Canada. Her death ended a 17-year-long marriage to actor Liam Neeson. Even Hollywood admitted that this had been a long relationship for the culture in which it took place. But all indicators point to the fact that Richardson and Neeson had known a relationship of promise and trust that kept their love fresh and alive. This is not a characteristic of the superficial relationships that Hollywood often produces.

1. Promises kept build trust (Josh. 1:1–4).

Description: Joshua had every reason to trust God because God had fulfilled every promise He had ever made to Israel, and now He was about to fulfill the greatest promise of all—the one He had made to Abraham to give Israel a land to build a nation of blessing and hope.

Illustration: There's not much that hurts worse than broken promises. A treaty is often forged with a great amount of expense and diplomacy, usually with someone or some country mediating. Then big ceremonies are held in order for presidents, kings, prime ministers, or other heads of state to sign the treaty. But when promises are broken and the treaty breaks down, people discover that the promise of the treaty is not worthy any more than the paper it was written on.

Application: God has kept every promise that He has ever made known to humanity in Scripture. He is faithful, and we have no reason not to trust that He will do what He has promised.

2. The glue of relationship is loyalty and obedience (Josh. 1:5–8).

Description: The Law revealed to Israel who God is. His nature and character revealed His expectations for them. If they really trusted Him, then they would remain loyal and obedient to His expectations.

Illustration: When a man and a woman get married, they exchange vows. These usually have something to do with the loyalty and devotion that they commit to one another until they die. More traditional vows use a statement that says they will "honor, cherish, and obey" one another.

Application: If we want to have a right relationship with God, we have to stick with Him in obedience that translates into love.

3. Relationships built on loyalty and obedience lead to hope (Josh. 1:9).

Description: God's promise to Joshua was this: "I will never leave you nor forsake you." He also told Joshua to "be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."

Illustration: After major tragedies, such as the 9/11 terrorist attacks, people often return to church, longing for a renewed closeness with God. Why? Because ultimately they know that He is their only hope. They know that when life presents them with circumstances they can't handle on their own, God can handle them. There is hope.

Application: Because God is who He is and will never change, we can look to our future with great *hope* if we stay close to Him in a relationship.

Conclusion: God's assurance to His people is that He will always be with them.

Description: God's promises do not change throughout all of Scripture. Jesus told His disciples to "remain" in Him, and He would "remain" in them (John 15:4). He also told them in His Great Commission that He would be with them until the end of the age (Matt. 28:20). God has never changed.

Application: God never made us to live independent from Him but to live in relationship with Him. His intention is to always be at our side, communing with us and working through us.

REVERB::SQUEEZE::lesson six

MORE THAN ON OUR OWN

biblical passage: Joshua 1:1–9

memory verse: Joshua 1:1–9 “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.”

MORE THAN ON OUR OWN

1. Promises _____ build _____ (Josh. 1:1–4).
2. The glue of relationship is _____ and _____ (Josh. 1:5–8).
3. Relationships _____ on loyalty and obedience lead to _____ (Josh. 1:9).

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why would God’s promise to always be with Joshua and Israel be any different for us today?
- When has God ever called someone to do something and then left him or her alone to do it?
- Why do we need God’s presence with us always?
- What would it be like to suddenly know that God was not there?
- What assurances do you have that God is with you?