

# VICTORY!

## A STUDY OF JOSHUA

### FINISH WELL

Can you imagine working your entire life to get to the Olympics just to trip over another runner's feet during your race? How might you respond? Lashing out in anger, shouting obscenities, open weeping, maybe all the above! That happened to Isaiah Jewett and Nijel Amos in their 800m race.

Scan the QR code to see their response. As they get up, you can see initial disappointment in their body language. Then, clapping hands they help each other to their feet to finish the race at a jog.



So much of what happened embodies the Olympic spirit. Not only did they help one another rise up, they didn't quit. This is not a fairy tale, come from behind, story. They lost, but they finished. However, just by finishing they have a chance to move on to the next round. As the commentator said, "If they want to petition for any spot in the final...they have to finish."

If you study the Bible cover to cover, only 30% of all leaders finished well. 70% fell short of God's plan for their lives. As we'll see in today's study, finishing well is hard.

#### JOSHUA 13:1

Now Joshua was old and advanced in years, and the Lord said to him, "You are old and advanced in years, and there remains yet very much land to possess."

#### JOSHUA 24:19-24

<sup>19</sup> But Joshua said to the people, "You are not able to serve the Lord, for he is a holy God. He is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions or your sins. <sup>20</sup> If you forsake the Lord and serve foreign gods, then he will turn and do you harm and consume you, after having done you good." <sup>21</sup> And the people said to Joshua, "No, but we will serve the Lord." <sup>22</sup> Then Joshua said to the people, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the Lord, to serve him." And they said, "We are witnesses." <sup>23</sup> He said, "Then put away the foreign gods that are among you, and incline your heart to the Lord, the God of Israel." <sup>24</sup> And the people said to Joshua, "The Lord our God we will serve, and his voice we will obey."

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Only 30% of all the leaders in the Bible finished well. Really? The QR code unpacks that idea with an article that lists several ways people finished, why many didn't finish well, and most importantly how we can learn to succeed from their mistakes.

Although this article was written to pastors, it applies to everyone. If you want to finish well, we must battle sin and follow Christ. He has already won the victory! God wants you to finish well, and he's made it possible.



### DISCUSSION

Joshua was a great leader. What appreciation or encouragement can you give your coach for leading this study?

ICEBREAKER

1. What did Joshua warn the people? (19-20)
2. How did the people respond? (21)
3. How did Joshua answer them? (22-23)
4. How did the people respond to Joshua's challenge? (24)

OBSERVATION

5. How did the distraction of foreign gods (20, 23) turn the hearts of the people away from the Lord?

INTERPRETATION

6. How has this study challenged you to fight your battles, to put away distractions, and trust the Lord?

APPLICATION

"Leave it all on the field." We hear that all the time. As it relates to this study, don't leave anything unsaid. If you made a decision or have a struggle, talk to your coach today.



## A STUDY OF JOSHUA

### STUDY NOTES

#### “I COULD HAVE GOT MORE”

During the Nazi’s ruthless execution of over six million Jews in WW2, one wealthy war profiteer-turned-industrialist, Oskar Schindler, eventually made it his life’s mission to save Jews from Hitler’s Holocaust. His story became popularly known through Steven Spielberg’s powerful 1993 film, *Schindler’s List*, starring Liam Neeson in the title role. Take a moment and watch this 6-minute clip.



This scene, one of the most powerful ever captured on film, illustrates the deep, heartfelt agony of regret. When it occurs to us that this is *not* just a movie, but truly happened, we feel Schindler’s grief. *“The car, 10 people. This pin, 2 people, at least 1...one more person. A person who’s dead.”*

In the end, Schindler’s values changed. Schindler started the war profiting off the property stolen from the Jews—he was just out to make money. The pin he later regretted, started as a badge of honor. His affiliation with the Nazi’s allowed him to make great wealth. Eventually, however, he discovered that the Jewish population weren’t a means for wealth, they were a people needing saving. He had the means and opportunity to save—and, in the end, he melted in agony at the fact he wasted money instead of investing it in saving lives.

Like Schindler leaving his factory, one day we will leave this earth. When we stand before Jesus, will we regret every missed opportunity, or will we rest knowing that we invested everything we could into saving lives for eternity?

#### VICTORY REQUIRES PURPOSE

Although Last Week’s passage ended on a high note that the Land could rest from war, we discussed how this statement didn’t mean the fight was over completely. The next chapter states ***“Now Joshua was old and advanced in years, and the Lord said to him, ‘You are old and advanced in years, and there remains yet very much land to possess.’”***

The apparent contradiction between Joshua 11:23 and 13:1 can easily be explained. Joshua and his army took control of the whole land by destroying the key cities with their kings and people. However, Israel didn’t take every little city or slay every citizen or ruler. They did enough to break the power of the enemy and establish control over the land.

Once accomplished, the land enjoyed rest. Following the events studied so far, starting in chapter 13, Joshua assigned each tribe

its inheritance. However, within each inheritance, the tribes had to gain mastery over the non-Israeli inhabitants still remaining in it. Even after the death of Joshua and his officers, additional land still needed to be conquered.

The problem was that instead of eradicating the enemies of God, the people settled in and tolerated them. God had warned them if they didn’t remove the inhabitants, bad things would happen—and they did.

Eventually, at the end of Joshua’s life he rebukes the nation that had turned from God. In chapter 24, verse 15 Joshua frustratedly said, *“Choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”* Although we see part of this verse on signs above doorways, it’s not a friendly greeting. It’s a sharp rebuke against those who’s hearts had strayed.

After Joshua’s challenge, the people made a strong re-commitment to the Lord. ***The people said to Joshua, “No, but we will serve the Lord.” Then Joshua said to the people, “You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the Lord, to serve him.” And they said, “We are witnesses.”***

Unfortunately, it didn’t take long for the commitment to waiver. The book of Judges records Joshua’s death and makes the tragic statement, *“And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers. And there arose another generation after them who did not know the Lord or the work that he had done for Israel” (2:10).*

#### PURPOSE MUST ENDURE

A former professor once said, “If the mission of your life can be accomplished in a single lifetime, you’re aiming too small.” In the case of Israel after Joshua, they failed so completely that the next generation didn’t even know the Lord. Let our aim be a work that is so great it lasts for generations after we die.

Our hope in this study is that you walk away understanding several things. *First*, you will fight spiritual battles your whole life. You can never stop fighting. *Second*, life is a series of battles some you will win and some you will lose—how you respond in either situation matters a lot. *Third*, don’t run from the battles, trust the Lord to hit them head on. The *Art of War* says, “Appear at points which the enemy must hasten to defend; march swiftly to places where you are not expected.” In other words, don’t wait to be attacked, hurry the attack as you see opportunity.

*Finally*, start the fight *now*. You’re young, so what? Old people don’t change the world—revival can start with you right now.

