

Growth Group Guide: Joshua 23 - The Farewell Charge

Opening Question:

What is the most important piece of life advice, or "farewell charge," you have ever received from an elder or mentor?

Key Scripture:

- **Joshua 23:1 (CSB):** "A long time after the Lord had given Israel rest from all the enemies around them, Joshua was old, advanced in age."
- **Joshua 23:3 (CSB):** "...and you have seen for yourselves everything the Lord your God did to all these nations on your account, because it was the Lord your God who was fighting for you."
- **Joshua 23:14 (CSB):** "I am now going the way of the whole earth, and you know with all your heart and all your soul that none of the good promises the Lord your God made to you has failed. Everything was fulfilled for you; not one promise has failed."
- **Joshua 23:15 (CSB):** "Since every good thing the Lord your God promised you has come about, so he will bring on you every bad thing until he has annihilated you from this good land the Lord your God has given you."
- **Psalms 119:11 (CSB):** "I have treasured your word in my heart so that I may not sin against you."

Main Points:

1. **Remembering God's Fidelity (v. 1-5, 14):** Joshua begins his farewell address by emphasizing that the "rest" and success Israel experienced was **100% God's work** ("the Lord your God was fighting for you," v. 3). His closing argument is irrefutable: God has kept every promise. This encourages the Israelites (and us) to be **thankful for what God has already done**.
2. **The Call to Commitment (v. 6, 8):** The response to God's faithfulness is a renewed commitment. Joshua charges them to be "very strong" (v. 6) and to **cling to the Lord your God**. This isn't passive attachment but an active, loyal devotion. What matters isn't where you come from, but **whom you serve**.
3. **Warning Against Compromise (v. 7, 12):** Joshua warns against the three main threats to their loyalty: **Intermarriage, Integration, and Idolatry**. Associating with the remaining nations or serving their gods is the slippery slope that leads to breaking the covenant. The smallest compromises begin a drift away from God's commands.
4. **The Two Sides of the Covenant (v. 15-16):** Joshua delivers a sobering truth: God keeps **ALL** His promises—both blessings and **admonitions**. The same fidelity that brought them success will bring judgment if they turn away. This duality underscores that God's justice is as certain as His love.
5. **Active Pursuit of Purity:** The only defense against the allure of the world is an **active love for God's Law** and His Word. This is about establishing intentional, dedicated practices to keep our way pure (Psalm 119:9-16) and prevent us from wandering.

Key Takeaways:

- **Remember God's Fight:** The "rest" they received was a result of God fighting for them, not their own strength.
- **The Power of Clinging:** Our faith must be an active **clinging** (loyal service) to God, not just a passive belief.
- **Small Compromises Lead to Quick Disappearance:** What starts as small integration with the world leads to quick annihilation of faith.
- **Love God's Word:** Treasuring God's Word in our heart is the primary way to guard against sin (Psalm 119:11).

Discussion Questions:

1. Joshua says, "none of the good promises the Lord your God made to you has failed" (v. 14). What is one specific promise from God's Word you have seen fulfilled in your own life or in the life of someone you know?
2. Joshua warns against **Intermarriage, Integration, and Idolatry** (v. 7, 12). If we apply this warning to today, what are the modern ways we are tempted to **integrate** our lives with the values or practices of the surrounding culture that compromise our faith?
3. Joshua calls the people to "cling to the Lord your God" (v. 8). What does active **clinging** look like in your daily life? Is it different from simply believing?
4. Joshua reminds the people that God's fidelity extends to both the **blessings and the admonitions** (v. 15). How does remembering the certainty of God's justice impact the seriousness with which you approach obedience?
5. The guide suggests we need an "Active Pursuit of Purity." Beyond reading the Bible, what intentional, practical steps (like those mentioned in Psalm 119) can you or your group implement to keep God's Word central and guard your heart against sin?

Next Steps:

This week, join us in prayer: Ask God to give you a burning desire to "**cling**" to Him and His Word, preventing compromise and securing your loyalty.

- **Individual:** Identify one area of your life where you feel compromise or **integration** with the world is starting to creep in (e.g., entertainment, language, attitude). Pray and ask God how to reverse that drift.
- **Accountability:** Share your commitment to a new "Passionate Practice" (e.g., memorizing Psalm 119:11, starting a daily devotion) with your group and ask them to check in with you next week.
- **Scripture:** Memorize **Joshua 23:14 (CSB):** "I am now going the way of the whole earth, and you know with all your heart and all your soul that none of the good promises the Lord your God made to you has failed. Everything was fulfilled for you; not one promise has failed."