

## **Q&A with Max Lucado, author of *Glory Days: Living Your Promised Land Life Now***

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**Q: First off, tell us what you mean by “glory days.”**

**A:** It's a reference to the Glory Days of Israel. On the time line of your Bible, it's a seven year era that glistens between the difficult days of Exodus and the dark age of the judges. Moses had just died, and the Hebrews were beginning their fifth decade as Bedouin in the badlands. And sometime around 1400 BC, God spoke, Joshua listened, and the Glory Days began. The Jordan River opened up. The Jericho walls fell down. The sun stood still, and the kings of Canaan were forced into early retirement. Evil was booted and hope rebooted. By the end of the campaign, the homeless wanderers became hope-filled homesteaders. A nation of shepherds began to quarry a future out of the Canaanite hills. They built farms, villages, and vineyards. The accomplishments were massive.

**Q: And so this new book explores the story of Joshua and how it can apply to our lives today?**

**A:** Absolutely. The book of Joshua dares us to believe our best days are ahead of us. God has a Promised Land for us to take, just like the Israelites.

**Q: Give us a quick recap of the journey of the Israelites.**

**A:** The Promised Land was the third stop on the Hebrews' iconic itinerary. Their pilgrimage began in Egypt, continued through the wilderness, and concluded in Canaan. Each land represents a different condition of life. Geography is theology. In Egypt the Hebrews were enslaved to Pharaoh. In the wilderness they were free from Pharaoh but still enslaved to fear. They refused to enter the Promised Land and languished in the desert. Only in Canaan did they discover victory. Egypt, the wilderness, and Canaan. Slaves to Pharaoh, slaves to fear, and, finally, people of the promise.

**Q: How does our contemporary journey as believers correlate with the Hebrews'?**

**A:** We, too, have traveled this itinerary. Egypt represents our days before salvation. We were in bondage to sin. We wore the leg irons of guilt and death. But then came our Deliverer, Jesus Christ. By his grace and in his power, we crossed the Red Sea. He liberated us from the old life and offered a brand-new life in Canaan. Our Promised Land isn't a physical territory; it is a spiritual reality. It's not real estate but a real state of the heart and mind.

**Q: So what does it look like for us to live in this new Canaan, this Promised Land?**

**A:** Canaan is a life defined by grace, refined by challenge, and aligned with a heavenly call. In God's plan, in God's *land*, we win more often than we lose, forgive as quickly as we are offended, and give as abundantly as we receive. We serve out of our giftedness and delight in our assignments. We may stumble, but we do not collapse. We may struggle, but we defy despair. We boast only in Christ, trust only in God, lean wholly on his power. We enjoy abundant fruit and increasing faith. God invites us to enter Canaan. There is only one condition. We must turn our backs on the wilderness. Just as Canaan represents the victorious Christian life, the wilderness represents the *defeated* Christian life.

**Q: What defines the defeated Christian life?**

**A:** Interestingly enough, beginning in 2007, the REVEAL Research Project went on a search for Joshuas and surveyed the members of more than a thousand churches. They wanted to determine the percentage of churchgoers who are actually propelled by their faith to love God and love others with their whole hearts. How many Christians would describe their days as Glory Days? The answer? Eleven percent. Eleven percent! Nearly nine out of ten believers, in other words, languish in the wilderness. Saved? Yes. Empowered? No. They waste away in the worst of ways—in the Land of In-Between. Out of Egypt but not yet in Canaan. Eleven percent! If a high school graduated only 11 percent of its students, if a hospital healed only 11 percent of its patients, if a baseball team won only 11 percent of its games, if a homebuilder completed only 11 percent of his projects, wouldn't changes be made? The church has a serious deficiency.

**Q: What would happen if that deficiency could be reduced, with more Christians living in their Canaan, their Promised Land?**

**A:** About 2.2 billion people on our planet call themselves Christians. That is approximately one-third of the world's population. If the survey is any indication, about 2 billion of those Christians are chugging along on a fraction of their horsepower. Such sluggishness can only lead to weak churches and halfhearted ministries. What would happen if they got a tune-up? How would the world be different if 2 billion people came out of the wilderness? How much joy would be unleashed into the atmosphere? How much wisdom would be quarried and shared? How many

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marriages would be saved? How many wars would be prevented? How much hunger would be eliminated? How many orphanages would be built? How many orphanages would we need? If every Christian began to live the Promised Land life, how would the world be different? In Canaan you do not fight *for* victory. You fight *from* victory. In the wilderness you strive. In Canaan you trust. In the wilderness you seek God's attention. In Canaan you already have God's favor. In the wilderness you doubt your salvation. In Canaan you know you are saved. You move from wanting-to-have, to believing you already do.

**Q: God promises to meet every need, yet we still worry and fret. Why?**

**A:** I can think of a couple of *reasons*. *We don't know about our inheritance*. No one ever told us about "the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe" (Eph. 1:19). No one ever told us that we fight from victory, not for victory. No one told us that the land is already conquered. Some Christians never live out of their inheritance because they don't know they have one. And secondly, we don't believe in our inheritance. That was the problem of Joshua's ancestors. They really didn't believe that God could give them the land. The Glory Days of the Hebrews could have begun four decades earlier, a point God alluded to in his promise to Joshua: "Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses" (Josh. 1:3). The reminder? *I made this offer to the people of Moses' day, but they didn't take it. They chose the wilderness. Don't make the same mistake*. Joshua didn't.

**Q: How about some practical advice on how to live in our Glory Days...**

**A:** Engage with the Bible. Meditate on it day and night. Think and rethink about God's Word. Let it be your guide. Make it your go-to book for questions. Let it be the ultimate authority in your life. Glory Days require an ongoing trust in God's Word. Wilderness people trust Scripture just enough to escape Egypt. Canaan dwellers, on the other hand, make the Bible their go-to book for life.

**Q: But we all have a Jericho, spiritually speaking. What does that mean?**

**A:** Here is what you need to know about Joshua. He didn't bring the walls down. Joshua's soldiers never swung a hammer. His men never dislodged a brick. They never rammed a door or pried loose a stone. The shaking, quaking, rumbling, and tumbling of the thick, impervious walls? God did that for them. God will do that for you. Your Jericho is your fear. Your Jericho is your anger, bitterness, or prejudice. Your insecurity about the future. Your guilt about the past. Your negativity, anxiety, and proclivity to criticize, overanalyze, or compartmentalize. Your Jericho is any attitude or mind-set that keeps you from joy, peace, or rest. Jericho. It stands between you and your Glory Days. It mocks you and tells you to take your dreams back to the wilderness. It stands like an ogre on the bridge of progress. It is big; it is evil. It blocks your way. And its walls must fall. To live in the Promised Land, you must face your Jericho.

**Q: Joshua got to witness the impossible—he saw the walls of Jericho come down. How can this happen for us?**

**A:** We all long to see our strongholds demolished, turned into rubble once and for all, forever and ever, *ka-boom!* We long to see Jericho brought to the ground. How does this happen? By keeping God in the center. The ark of the covenant was the symbol of the Lord's presence. Joshua placed the ark in the middle of the procession. Every activity orbited around God. We don't attack our Jericho with anger, blame casting, or finger-pointing. No, we keep God center stage, using the weapons of worship, Scripture, and prayer. We employ every tool God offers: hymns, songs, communion, Scripture memorization, and petition. We turn off the TV and open the Bible more. We remember Jesus' promise: "I am with you always" (Matt. 28:20). We worry less, pray always.

**Q: Some might criticize you for being overly optimistic...what about real life problems we all face?**

**A:** Promised Land people do not deny the presence of problems. There is nothing easy about this. Troubles pounce on us like rain in a thunderstorm. Finding God amid the billows will demand every bit of discipline you can muster. But the result is worth the strain. Besides, do you really want to meditate on your misery? Will reciting your problems turn you into a better person? No. But changing your mind-set will. When troubles come our way, we can be stressed and upset, or we can trust God. Caleb could have cursed God. He didn't deserve the wilderness. He had to put his dreams on hold for four decades. Still, he didn't complain or grow sour. When the time came for him to inherit his property, he stepped forward with a God-drenched mind to receive it. You'll always face problems. But you don't have to face them in the same way. Instead: Immerse your mind in God-thoughts. Turn a deaf ear to doubters. Set your mind on a holy cause. Once you find your mountain, no giant will stop you, no age will disqualify you, no problems will defeat you.

**Q: You mention that faith is a choice.**

**A:** Yes, and Promised Land people risk the choice. When forced to stand at the crossroads of belief and unbelief, they choose belief. They place one determined step after the other on the pathway of faith. Seldom with a skip, usually with a limp. They make a conscious decision to step toward God, to lean into hope, to heed the call of heaven. They press into the promises of God. Promised Land people choose to trust God's promises. They choose to believe that God is up to something good even though all we see looks bad.

**Q: And then along with the choice to have faith, you say that God does more to enable your Glory Days living than you could ever imagine.**

**A:** He does. You were not made to quake in fear. You were not made to be beholden to your past. You were not made to limp through life as a wimp. You are a living, breathing expression of God. What's more, he fights for you. The big news of the Bible is not that you fight for God but that God fights for you. And to know this—to know that your Father fights for you—is an unparalleled source of empowerment. This is your inheritance: more victory than defeat, more joy than sadness, more hope than despair.

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***Glory Days: Living Your Promised Land Life Now***

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