

Stonewall Jackson a Life of Unconditional Faith

Study Guide:

Onward Christian Soldier

The Spiritual Journey of Stonewall

Michael Aubrecht

(Leader) “Let us cross the river and rest in the shade of the trees,” - Opening thoughts following the movie scenes.

(Leader) Definition of Unconditional: Without conditions or limitations; **absolute:**

(Leader) A dynamic warrior in Biblical times, Joshua led Israel in the conquest of Canaan, vanquishing Jericho and other cities to bring Palestine under Israelite control. Joshua’s leadership, with the divine guidance of God, was marked by courage and devotion to the law given to Moses.

In the Civil War, another brave warrior felt he was similarly led by Providence. Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson believed he was God’s instrument on Earth, and God was watching his every move. His mission was victory for the Almighty. To Jackson, there were no shades of gray: You either obeyed or disobeyed; you were either a God-fearing man or you were not. Through his strong faith, he reinforced the resolve and beliefs of fellow Southerners as he shepherded his followers into battle. (May I Quote You, Stonewall Jackson? Randall Bedwell)

Thoughts from Chapter 1. (1824 – 1842)

Question: What and who are the bases of Thomas Jackson’s Foundation?

Traumatic events that occurred in the first 17 years of Thomas Jackson's life:

Age 2 the death of his sister followed 3 weeks later by the death of his father

Ages 2 – 7 Witness his mothers illness, and marriage to an uncommitted step-father

Age 7 sent away by his mother to live with an unknown uncle

Age 7 the death of his mother

Age 8 1/2 the death of his stepfather

Age 17 the death of his only brother

(Leader) Stonewall Jackson’s Book of Maxims – Edited by James I. Robertson JR.

Loneliness and solitude were the lad’s closet companions through the formative years. The result was a boy who was shy, withdrawn, reticent. In many ways Tom Jackson was never a child; in many ways he was also the little unloved boy whose only defense in later life was to avoid close relationships that might cause him further unhappiness.

The death of a parent, brother or sister may cause a child or young person to feel some or all of the following:

- deep sadness, that may or may not be expressed in conventional ways such as crying
- a hollow, achy pain inside that is hard to put into words and may be described as hunger, boredom, fear or often feeling sick.
- loneliness and a sense of having been abandoned
- anxiety about the safety and well-being of the rest of the family, especially the surviving parent and including themselves
- that they have to become more responsible – ‘man of the house now’
- that there’s no point in anything any more, including school work
- anger and even rage at what has happened

Question: Would these events have scarred you for life, what was Thomas Jackson’s saving grace?

(Leader) Present Jackson’s Mother theory. It is my belief that Thomas Jackson’s mother was the base for his faith, his character, his quiet nature, and determined life style.

With a mixture of love and sympathy, Thomas looked on his mother as life itself. General Robert E. Lee would observe many years later of Jackson: “The early instructions of his mother, whom he seems never to have forgotten . . . had great influence in shaping his course through life. (“Stonewall Jackson” – The Man, The Soldier, The Legend, James I. Robertson, JR.)

Saying goodbye to his mother was one of the hardest things young Tom would ever have to do. He adored his mother and it broke his heart to be torn away from her. (StonewallCountry.com)

Give me a child for the first seven years, and you may do what you like with him afterwards. Author: Anonymous

(Leader) Share a scar!

Stonewall Lesson 1: We all carry the memory of wounds we have suffered through our lives. The love we receive and the values instilled at an early age, combined with God’s healing power will determine how ugly and visible the scars that remain and how we allow them to define our character.

Scripture that may have inspired young Thomas Jackson:

Psalm 116:15 (NKJV)

Precious in the sight of the LORD *Is* the death of His saints.

Proverbs 14:26 (NKJV)

In the fear of the LORD *there is* strong confidence, And His children will have a place of refuge.

Proverbs 30:5 (NKJV)

Every word of God *is* pure; He *is* a shield to those who put their trust in Him.

Proverbs 22:6 (NKJV)

Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.

Psalm 28:8 (NKJV)

The LORD *is* their strength, And He *is* the saving refuge of His anointed.

Thoughts from Chapter 2. (1842-1851)

Question: What were some of Thomas Jackson’s character trait(s) that were observed in this chapter?

- **Entry into Westpoint** *Determination/Strong Will* ► **Mexican War** *Courage* ► **Faith takes root**
- From an uncertain and bleak future as a young man of 18 to an appointment to West Point, Jackson’s life and destiny had been defined.

A prime example: God’s provision can be witnessed throughout the life of Stonewall Jackson through his entry into the West Point Military Academy.

(Leader) Attending West Point had become the most important goal for Thomas Jackson. At the time in his town there were 4 applicants for the congressional appointment. After the screening and examination process, the appointment was awarded to Gibson J. Butcher. Losing the appointment was devastating to Jackson. However 24 hours after Butcher had arrived at West Point, he was on his way back home. Through citizen petition, and the hand of God, Jackson was awarded the vacant appointment.

- Through iron willed determination, and long hours of study Jackson graduated 17th in his class of 59 cadets.
- Jackson’s mettle is tested in battle during the Mexican War.

(Leader) Jackson recalled those moments a few years later: “I was ordered to advance with a section of my battery upon a road swept by the fire of six or eight pieces of Mexican artillery at very short range. It was ticklish work, but there was nothing to be done but **to obey orders**. So I went on. As soon as [we] debouched into the main road, the

Mexicans opened fire, and at the first discharge, killed or disabled every one of the twelve horses of my two guns. We unlimbered, however, and returned their fire.”

Precisely at that moment, Lieutenant George H. Gordon and a body of cavalry rode into the area. Gordon was another of Jackson’s West Point classmates. “Never”, he stated, “shall I forget the woe-begone appearance Jackson bore, as he stood gazing at the corpses of six horses in harness attached to the foremost piece of his section. As our squadron galloped by, I had just time to salute him with: ‘Well, Old Jack, it seems to me you are in a bad way!’ and, amid the clanging of the sabers and clamor of hoofs, catch his reply of: ‘Pears I am!’”

One of Jackson’s guns was damaged to the point where it could not be moved; most of the horses were dead or dying; demoralized gunners had fled for cover behind rocks and bushes. Everyone was on the edge of panic except Jackson. He paced back and forth in the road while bullets kicked up dirt and ricocheted off boulders. “There is no danger!” he kept shouting to his scattered men. “See? I am not hit!” The men were unconvinced. So was Jackson. Later in life, he admitted that the statement was the only lie he knowingly told.
(“Stonewall Jackson” – The Man, The Soldier, The Legend, James I. Robertson, JR.)

- The roots of Jackson’s faith are believed to have been instilled by his mother; however Captain Francis Taylor commander of the First Artillery Regiment during the Mexican War was his spiritual mentor and considered the first person to speak seriously of religion.

The seeds of an active faith were now sown. Jackson read the Bible; he prayed; he meditated; he examined the nooks and crannies of scriptures and his own soul. In doing so, he began to undergo a change that would eventually create the very foundation of his being. (“Stonewall Jackson” – The Man, The Soldier, The Legend, James I. Robertson, JR.)

Stonewall Lesson 2: Be not discouraged by disappointments & difficulties but on the contrary let each stimulate you to greater exertions for attaining noble ends & an approving conscience at least will be your reward. (From a Letter fragment Jackson to Laura Arnold (sister) Date: 1844 Sept 8)

Scripture that may have inspired Cadet and Lieutenant Jackson:

Proverbs 10:16

The labor of the **righteous** leads to life, The wages of the **wicked** to sin.

Proverbs 28:1

The **wicked** flee when no one pursues, But the **righteous** are bold as a lion.

Proverbs 22:29

Do you see a man who **excels** in his work? He will stand before kings; He will not stand before unknown men.

Joshua 10:25

Then Joshua said to them, “Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed; be **strong** and of good **courage**, for thus the LORD will do to all your enemies against whom you fight.”

Thoughts from Chapter 3. (1851-1856)

From Thomas Jackson’s list of maxims: Objects to be affected by Ellie’s Death:
To eradicate ambition
To eradicate resentment
To produce humility

Question: What do you think Stonewall meant by “To eradicate ambition”, in respect to Elinor’s death?

(Leader) (NKJV) Philippians 2:3-4 *Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.* ⁴Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

- Life changing events described within this chapter
 - Jackson is examined and accepted into membership with the Lexington Presbyterian Church

(Leader) With church affiliation, Jackson underwent an instant and remarkable change. No other single event in his life equaled the impact on mind, soul and action as did the acceptance of God through Presbyterianism. Indeed, Jackson did not accept this religion: he absorbed it --- hungrily, constantly, totally.

- Loss of his Bride of only 14 months, and his unborn son.

(Leader) On the day after the death of Ellie and the baby, Jackson told his sister Laura of the dual tragedy. "I have been called to pass through the deep waters of affliction, but all has been satisfied," he wrote. "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord. It is his will that my Dearest wife and child should not longer abide with me, and as it is His holy will, I am perfectly reconciled to the sad bereavement, though I deeply mourn my loss. My Dearest Ellie breathed her last on Sunday evening, the same day on which the child was born dead. Oh! The consolations of religion! I can willingly submit to anything if God strengthens me. Oh! My Sister would that you could have Him for your God! Though all nature to me is eclipsed, yet I have joy in knowing that God withholds no good things from them that love and keep His commandments. And he will overrule this *Sad, Sad* bereavement for good."

- Scripture references are no longer speculation nearly all correspondence reference God's presence, grace and life beyond this earth.

(Prior to Elinor and his son's death)

Proverbs 3:6 (KJV)

In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

I endeavor to live in accordance with the above passage which means as I understand it, in all thy ways acknowledge God and he shall take care of you in all respects. What better protector can we desire that one who is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent and who hath promised that he will take care of us in all things, and in addition to all this the pledge coming from One who cannot lie. (VMI.edu Archives/Jackson Letter TJJ to his sister, Laura Arnold Date: 1853 February 1 - Place: Lexington, Virginia)

Stonewall Lesson 3: "I then learned an important lesson: that one who has been the subject of converting grace and is the child of God can, in the midst of the severest sufferings, fix his thoughts upon God and heavenly things, and derive great comfort and peace; but that one who had never made his peace with God would be unable to control his mind, under such sufferings, so as to understand properly the way of salvation, and repent and believe on Christ." --Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson

Underlined Scripture within Professor Jackson's Bible:

Revelation 21:4

And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more **death**, nor **sorrow**, nor **crying**. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

Romans 8:28

And we know that all things **work together** for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose.

Thoughts from Chapter 4.

- Thomas Jackson, Prayer Warrior!
 - He arose each morning at 6:00am and knelt for private prayers.
 - At precisely 7:00am, family prayers took place.
 - Jackson "said grace at every meal, with both hands uplifted; and with "childlike simplicity and earnestness."

- First attention went to the Bible, which he read daily with the same intensity as he prepared for classes.
- Jackson maintained daily prayer rituals whether in camp or on the march.

(Leader) Recall the event where General Richard S. Ewell observed Jackson in his tent on his knees praying. “If that is religion, I must have it.” – Page 31.

- Thomas Jackson, Public Speaker

Realizing his limitations and fear of public speaking Jackson joined the “Franklin Society”, a literary association in Lexington. His first attempts resulted in confused thoughts and long periods of silence. Although extremely embarrassing he would not give in to his fears and continued until the fear was conquered. History has proven that Jackson could deliver extremely passionate and articulate speeches. **Determination!**

Stonewall Lesson 4: A most personal and valuable lesson. Do not give into your fears of public prayer and speaking. Allow God to give you the voice and confidence to honor him.

Philippians 4:6-7

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; ⁷and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Thoughts from Chapter 5. (1856-1861)

Unconditional: Without conditions or limitations; **absolute:**

Question: How should the word absolute guide us in our conduct and activities as Christians?

- There were no shades of gray with Jackson; his life style was strict and well defined:
 - He did not drink
 - He did not use tobacco “in any form”
 - He did not gamble
 - He ceased his enjoyment of dancing
 - He would abstain from theaters (Today’s Television?)
 - All amusements that he felt would distract his thought from holy things
 - The Sabbath was reserved for only holy thoughts, activities, and conversation
 - He practiced 10% tithing

Question: What qualities should one seek in a marriage partner?

- During this period of Jackson’s life he was ready to fill the void left by Elinor’s passing. No doubt companionship was a motivator, but perhaps it was Anna Morrison’s ability to complete any scripture passage that he would start.

First paragraph of a letter from Jackson to Anna prior to their marriage.

“It is a great comfort to me to know that although I am not with you, yet you are in the hands of One who will not permit any evil to come nigh you. What a consoling thought it is to know that we may, with perfect confidence, commit all our friends in Jesus to the care of our Heavenly Father, with an assurance that all will be well with them!”

(Leader) Complete this thought with the loss of their first child Mary Graham – Marriage, home in Lexington, great happiness, 2nd child lost at birth. (Mary Graham)

Question: The clouds of war are gathering. Was the root cause one of slavery, states rights or a religious nature?

(Leader) Like many men of the South in 1860, Jackson was convinced that Northerners had violated principles of both the Founding Fathers and Christianity by attempting to create a new society that lacked order as well as cohesiveness. The North seemed to be striving to alter basic American structures. Such activity flew in the face of God’s preordained notion of what America should be. If the South did not resist, it would stand in failure of God’s will and possibly become subservient to Northern domination. Thus, in the words of a recent writer, much of the Confederate ideology to which Jackson subscribed “transformed God himself into a nationalist and made war for political independence into a crusade.” Drew Gilpin Faust Dean of the Radcliffe Institute and Lincoln Professor of History in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (“Stonewall Jackson” – The Man, The Soldier, The Legend, James I. Robertson, JR.)

Stonewall Lesson 5: “Unconditional faith and complete trust in the Lord conquers all vices, blesses us with joy and happiness where only darkness once appeared, and gives strength and courage in times of adversity.

Psalm 27:1-3

The LORD *is* my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The LORD *is* the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid? ²When the wicked came against me To eat up my flesh, My enemies and foes, They stumbled and fell.

³ Though an army may encamp against me, My heart shall not fear; Though war may rise against me, In this I *will be* confident.

Thoughts from Chapter 6 - 10.

--War begins & Jackson’s Parallels to Joshua

(Leader) Jackson cited Joshua for the way a commander should write his battle reports saying, " Look at Joshua... brevity, fairness, modesty, and he traces the victory to its proper source – the blessing of God."

- War made no exceptions in the faith and spiritual commitments of Stonewall Jackson. He saw to it that Sabbath services were held along with Bible study, prayer meetings, and his own personal tithing.
- Of all of the Centurion characteristics that we have studied, Jackson possessed **bold, fearless, and up front** leadership.

“Never take counsel of your fears” – Stonewall Jackson

"It was the fear of God that made him so fearless of all else" - R.L. Dabney

Joshua 1:7 (NKJV)

Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. ⁸This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. ⁹Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God *is* with you wherever you go.”

- Spiritual preparation was a major concern to Jackson, and he believed that regular prayer was essential in “mentally surviving” the war.
- Jackson appointed a personal minister to his staff, and maintained daily prayer rituals whether in camp or on the march.

Joshua 3:9-10 (NKJV)

Joshua said to the children of Israel, “Come here, and hear the words of the Lord your God.” ¹⁰And Joshua said, “By this you shall know that the living God is among you, and that He will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Hivites and the Perizzites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Jebusites:

- Jackson was known for his aggressiveness in battle, surprise flanking maneuvers, and secrecy while marching and positioning his troops.

“Sir, we’ll give them the bayonet then.” – Stonewall Jackson

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Now Joshua had commanded the people, saying, “You shall not shout or make any noise with your voice, nor shall a word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I say to you, ‘Shout!’ Then you shall shout.”

“I yield to no man sympathy for the gallant men under my command; but I am obliged to sweat them tonight, that I may save their blood tomorrow.” – Stonewall Jackson

“The hardships of forced marches are often more painful than the dangers of battle.” – Stonewall Jackson

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Joshua therefore came upon them suddenly, having marched all night from Gilgal. ¹⁰So the LORD routed them before Israel, killed them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, chased them along the road that goes to Beth Horon, and struck them down as far as Azekah and Makkedah.

“Once you get them running, you can stay on top of them, and that way a small force can defeat a large on every time.” – Stonewall Jackson

Joshua 10:19 (NKJV)

And do not stay *there* yourselves, *but* pursue your enemies, and attack their rear *guard*. Do not allow them to enter their cities, for the LORD your God has delivered them into your hand.”

Question: What does the term “Black Flag & “Give no quarter to the enemy”?”

Question: Approximately how many times did Joshua “Give no quarter to the enemy”?”

Joshua 6:21 (NKJV)

And they utterly destroyed all that *was* in the city, both man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword.

Joshua 8:22 (NKJV)

Then the others came out of the city against them; so they were *caught* in the midst of Israel, some on this side and some on that side. And they struck them down, so that they let none of them remain or escape.

Joshua 10:19 (NKJV)

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..... and many more.

Stonewall Lesson 6: Live each day boldly without fear, loving and serving the Lord our God in all things, and be prepared to leave this earth for our heavenly home at any time.

“You see me severely wounded, but not depressed—not unhappy. I believe it has been done according to God’s holy will, and I acquiesce entirely in it. You may think it strange; but you never saw me more perfectly contented than I am today; for I am sure that my Heavenly Father designs this affliction for my good. I am perfectly satisfied that either in this life, or in that which is to come, I shall discover that what is now regarded as a calamity is a blessing.”



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“Once you get them running, you can stay on top of them, and that way a small force can defeat a large on every time.” – Stonewall Jackson

Joshua 10:19 (NKJV)

And do not stay *there* yourselves, *but* pursue your enemies, and attack their rear *guard*. Do not allow them to enter their cities, for the LORD your God has delivered them into your hand.”

Question: What does the term “Black Flag & “Give no quarter to the enemy”?”

Question: Approximately how many times did Joshua “Give no quarter to the enemy”?”

Joshua 6:21 (NKJV)

And they utterly destroyed all that *was* in the city, both man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword.

Joshua 8:22 (NKJV)

Then the others came out of the city against them; so they were *caught* in the midst of Israel, some on this side and some on that side. And they struck them down, so that they let none of them remain or escape.

Joshua 10:19 (NKJV)

And do not stay *there* yourselves, *but* pursue your enemies, and attack their rear *guard*. Do not allow them to enter their cities, for the LORD your God has delivered them into your hand.”

..... and many more.

Stonewall Lesson 6: Live each day boldly without fear, loving and serving the Lord our God in all things, and be prepared to leave this earth for our heavenly home at any time.

“You see me severely wounded, but not depressed—not unhappy. I believe it has been done according to God’s holy will, and I acquiesce entirely in it. You may think it strange; but you never saw me more perfectly contented than I am today; for I am sure that my Heavenly Father designs this affliction for my good. I am perfectly satisfied that either in this life, or in that which is to come, I shall discover that what is now regarded as a calamity is a blessing.”