

# Be Strong and of Good Courage

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**Joshua 1:1–6 (NKJV) “After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, it came to pass that the Lord spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses’ assistant, saying: <sup>2</sup> “Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them—the children of Israel. <sup>3</sup> Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. <sup>4</sup> From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory. <sup>5</sup> No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you. <sup>6</sup> Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.”**

God brought Israel out of Egypt with a mighty hand. Moses was God’s servant and the agent of His power. Moses, however, would not be the one to bring them into the Promise Land. Joshua had been chosen as his replacement, yet his leadership was untested. Could God accomplish His plan through him? The answer is yes. God spoke to Joshua to encourage him to move forward in faith.

God said to Joshua, “*Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan.*” If we are going to move forward and possess the land, we must let go of the past. In Joshua’s case it meant that he must stop grieving over Moses. Moses was part of his past but not a part of his future. He had to rise up and be the leader that Israel needed him to be. The same was true with the prophet Samuel. Because of disobedience, God had rejected King Saul from being king over His people. But Samuel grieved over Saul until God rebuked him for his shortsightedness: “*Now the Lord said to Samuel, ‘How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go; I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For I have provided Myself a king among his sons.’*” (1 Samuel 6:1 NKJV) Israel’s future was not in grieving over past leaders but in anointing a new leadership for the future. The same is true today. People come and go in our past but God has not changed His mind about our future. Someone once said, “There comes a point in your life when you realize who matters, who never did, who won’t anymore, and who always will. So, don’t worry about people from your past; there’s a reason why they didn’t make it to your future.”

We will either live in the land of regrets—“What might have been” or possess the land of promise. We will never make the most of today’s opportunities by grieving over wasted days and wasted nights. We can’t look forward through the front windshield of the future by looking through the rear view mirror of the past. Paul said, “*Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. <sup>13</sup> Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, <sup>14</sup> I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*” (Philippians 3:12-14 NKJV)

Not only must we stop grieving over the past, but we resist the temptation to rest in past achievements. Joshua had wonderful memories of what God had done through him in the past. However, the greatest victories were still ahead. He had seen God work in Egypt and the wilderness but all of those things were simply to prepare him to possess the land of Canaan. When we allow past memories to steal our future dreams, we will stop short of God's intended destiny. Joshua could not lead Israel into future possession by reminiscing on past deliverances.

God challenged Joshua to reconcile his past, and then arise to lead Israel over the Jordan to possess the land. In the same way, God challenges us to get up and move forward in faith to possess His promise. It is not enough to start the race. The prize goes to the one who finishes the race.

Moving forward into our future with victory requires faith. Faith in God produces strength and courage in our hearts to face the challenges. Courage is not the absence of fear. It is taking a stand in the face of fear. Soldiers are courageous in battle when they face their fear of losing or dying in order to fight for their future. Without fear there can be no courage. Courage is facing the vulnerability of fear with the security of faith

The challenge of possessing the land required Joshua to have courage. In fact, in the first chapter of Joshua, Joshua is told four times to be strong and of good courage. First, Joshua is told to be strong and of good courage for the *people's* sake: *"Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them."* (Joshua 1:6 NKJV) We must remember that others are depending on us. The people needed Joshua to be a strong and courageous leader so that they might possess the land.

Second, Joshua is told to be strong and of good courage for the *Word's* sake: *"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."* (Joshua 1:7 NKJV) Joshua needed to be strong and courageous so that God could fulfill His promise to Israel. God requires that we be people of faith because God's Word works through our faith.

Third, Joshua is told to be strong and of good courage for the *Lord's* sake: *"Have 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."* (Joshua 1:9 NKJV) God demonstrates His power and glorifies His name through men like Joshua who put their faith in Him. In the same way, God is looking for people through whom He can glorify His name.

Fourth, Joshua is told to be strong and of good courage for the *rebel's* sake: *"So they answered Joshua, saying, 'All that you command us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go.'<sup>17</sup> Just as we heeded Moses in all things, so we will heed you. Only the Lord your God be with you, as He was with Moses.<sup>18</sup> Whoever rebels against your command and does not heed your words, in all that you command him, shall be put to death. Only be strong and of good courage."* (Joshua 1:16-18 NKJV) It takes strength and courage to stand firm against those who rebel against the Lord and threaten the work of God. God's people needed Joshua to be a leader who would stand up to them.

The promise of God is before us. As with Joshua we must reconcile our past and arise to embrace our future. We must face our fears with strength and courage. As we do, we can cross over our Jordan and possess our land of promise.

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