

VICTORY!

WEEK 1

A STUDY OF JOSHUA

BE STRONG AND COURAGEOUS

Three times in this short section, God repeats this command to Joshua—“**Be strong and courageous**”—it seems like this might be important. Like we discussed last Week, Joshua had a first-hand look at Moses and the frustration of leading stubborn, disobedient people. Joshua now led the *second* generation, the *kids* of those who escaped slavery in Egypt. This *second* generation had learned some important lessons through their parents’ failures, but the journey was not complete. They had the promise of a special land, a home for their people. Now all they had to do was take it.

Outside of maybe, “*I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength,*” “Be strong and courageous” might be the most used Bible quote in sports. It’s not bad to remind ourselves of this command to Joshua in moments when we need a little fortitude and grit (especially if we remember the source of our strength and courage is God alone). However, we’ll see in our study that the strength and courage required to play hard and win athletically pales in comparison to what God has in store for Joshua. He’s about to stare down superior armies, fortified cities, and taking a populated land of people, who because of their own sin, would not simply be removed, but killed. But, not without a fight.

JOSHUA 1:6–11

⁶Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them. ⁷Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. ⁸This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful 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 courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”

¹⁰And Joshua commanded the officers of the people, ¹¹“Pass through the midst of the camp and command the people, ‘Prepare your provisions, for within three days you are to pass over this Jordan to go in to take possession of the land that the LORD your God is giving you to possess.’”

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Usually we use this section for one of two purposes: to provide extra material or background relevant to our study. Or, to provide a worship/spiritual connection to what we have studied.

Today’s QR code is different. It features legendary basketball coach, John Wooden. In this 18 minute video is nugget after nugget of life wisdom. I hope this clip inspires you to lead—you’re never too young to lead. You can make a difference in someone’s life starting right now.



DISCUSSION

What is your most unforgettable experience of the of the last school year?

1. What did God command? How many times in verses 6-9?

2. How would Joshua express his strength and courage? (7-8a)

3. What else did God command or promise? (8b-9)

4. Why do you think God repeated this one command so often? (6-9)

5. Which of God’s promises gives you courage? Why?

6. Why is it important for you to stay in God’s Word as it relates to the above promise?

What are you hoping God will do this year? Perhaps you’re curious about a relationship with Christ. Perhaps you’re ready to lead. Whatever is next for you, talk to your coach today.

ICEBREAKER

OBSERVATION

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

VICTORY!

WEEK 1

A STUDY OF JOSHUA

STUDY NOTES OUT OF BOUNDS

“Out of bounds!” What a terrible phrase for an offensive player to hear. How many times have we seen a super-human football catch, only to have a finger or toe touch out of bounds?

God told Joshua, **“Be strong and courageous.”** It would take vast amounts of each to stay in-bounds for what God had in store for Joshua and the nation of Israel. God told Joshua, **“You shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them.”** A weak leader would buckle under the physical, social, emotional, and spiritual demands of this mission. Failure was not an option—this team *had* to stay in-bounds of face dire consequences.

God did not provide Joshua with a road map to see the whole journey beginning to end with all the hills, valleys, and pit-stops. God’s direction was more like a GPS, giving out directions as they appear. To fulfill God’s mission Joshua would have to stay in-bounds on every turn, relying on God’s promise to him. God didn’t give Joshua explanations as to how he would accomplish these things, because God’s people live on promises, not explanations.

VICTORY REQUIRES COURAGE

Although God promised to provide direction along the way, it was through his Word he provided the boundaries. God elevated his command **“Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go.”** Turning any direction aside from the Lord’s Law was out of bounds. Failure would be easy. Victory required courage.

How did God tell Joshua to stay in-bounds according to the Law? ***This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it.*** God specifically referred to the books written by Moses—the first five books of our Bible. However, for us, these words still hold true regarding Scripture, both Old and New Testaments. We should speak the Word, meditate on the Word, and continually bury it in our hearts and minds.

God made a promise to Joshua for obeying his Word, **“For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.”** This was a promise to Joshua, not to us. However, God created and ordered the world such that

living according to his word brings blessing. Christians don’t believe in karma. God’s design means that if we sow wisdom, we often reap success. As my pastor often says, “Things just work better when you do them God’s way.”

Again, God repeats ***Be strong and courageous.*** Strength and courage are not *feelings*. They are *choices* we can make or not make. God can command Joshua to be strong and courageous because Joshua can choose to obey or disobey. To drive home this very point, God added to that command by forbidding the opposite, **“Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”**

COURAGE COMES FROM GOD’S PROMISE

As we open our study, Joshua faced a call to lead. Thankfully, the people responded. They told Joshua later in verse 16, **“Just as we obeyed Moses in all things, so we will obey you.”** Remember, these are the *children* of those freed Egyptian slaves who routinely and flagrantly disobeyed. This generation watched as the Lord caused their *parents* to wander for 38 years and die in the desert until only Joshua and Caleb survived. Through their parents’ failures, God taught them an essential lesson that obedience to God was necessary to receive his blessings.

Embracing the mantle of leadership **Joshua commanded the officers of the people, “Pass through the midst of the camp and command the people, ‘Prepare your provisions, for within three days you are to pass over this Jordan to go in to take possession of the land that the LORD your God is giving you to possess.’”** Joshua believed and trusted God’s promise. He was ready to lead.

As we open our study, I know we have several types of readers. Some of you may be cracking open a Bible for the first time. You might just now be exploring God’s Words and his promises. We’re glad you’re here. We hope that you’ll see God’s truth and that your life is forever changed.

Some of you know God’s promises, but you’re “frightened and dismayed” at what it might cost of you to live sold out for Christ. You know the thing God is asking you to stop or start doing. Victory requires courage.

Likewise, others of you this semester trust God’s promise and will be called to lead. Where you walk, others will follow. I would challenge you this semester to run hard after Christ and challenge yourself to see others know him as well. Hear God’s command to Joshua, “Be strong and courageous.”