

Flying in Formation

Joshua 1:10–18

Scripture Reading

So Joshua ordered the officers of the people: “Go through the camp and tell the people, ‘Get your provisions ready. Three days from now you will cross the Jordan here to go in and take possession of the land the Lord your God is giving you for your own.’” But to the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh, Joshua said, “Remember the command that Moses the servant of the Lord gave you after he said, ‘The Lord your God will give you rest by giving you this land.’ Your wives, your children and your livestock may stay in the land that Moses gave you east of the Jordan, but all your fighting men, ready for battle, must cross over ahead of your fellow Israelites. You are to help them until the Lord gives them rest, as he has done for you, and until they too have taken possession of the land the Lord your God is giving them. After that, you may go back and occupy your own land, which Moses the servant of the Lord gave you east of the Jordan toward the sunrise.”

Then they answered Joshua, “Whatever you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. Just as we fully obeyed Moses, so we will obey you. Only may the Lord your God be with you as he was with Moses. Whoever rebels against your word and does not obey it, whatever you may command them, will be put to death. Only be strong and courageous!” (Joshua 1:10–18)

Devotional Reflection

Birds, Burdens, and Formation

Years ago, I had the chance to visit Point Pelee, a famous birding hotspot on the migratory path of countless species. It was stunning to watch—birds of all sizes filled the skies, offering a beautiful glimpse of God’s glory in creation. There is so much we can learn from creation; for example, consider how many birds fly in a **V-formation**. Scientists have found that when birds fly in this pattern, they conserve 20–30% of their energy and can travel up to 70% farther. They rotate the lead, share the burden, and cheer one another on with their noisy honks.

That picture of unity is what Joshua 1:10–18 describes. God’s people were about to cross the Jordan and face battles together. They could only succeed if they rallied, responded to their commitments, and renewed their loyalty. Alone, they would falter. Together, they could soar.

1. Rally – Gather and Mobilize (vv.10–11)

Joshua began by mobilizing the officers to pass the message to the people: *“Prepare your provisions... in three days you will cross the Jordan.”*

This wasn’t a one-man mission. Joshua learned from Moses’ example that leadership must be shared. The burden of guiding God’s people was too great for one person to carry. Instead, leaders called leaders, and leaders called the people. It was a rally cry: **Get up. Get ready. Get aligned.**

Rallying meant change—no more manna dropped from heaven. A new chapter required new readiness. Everyone had a role: packing, preparing food, sharpening swords, and most importantly, preparing hearts.

For us today, rallying looks like stepping up to serve, praying intentionally, staying mission-focused, and sharing the gospel in daily life. When the church rises together, no one carries the weight alone.

Truth to Hold: To rally is to rise as one—each stepping up to help, all stepping in together.

2. Respond – Act on Our Commitments (vv.12–15)

Joshua reminded the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh of the promise they made: even though they had land secured east of the Jordan, their fighting men were still obligated to cross with their brothers and help them take possession of their inheritance.

They had enjoyed rest and security, but that didn’t exempt them from helping others. Their commitment mattered. It wasn’t enough to say, “We’ll be there.” They had to actually show up.

We live in a world where promises are often cheap. But Scripture calls God’s people to be different: *“Let your ‘Yes’ be yes, and your ‘No’ be no”* (James 5:12). Marriage vows, commitments to raise children in the Lord, pledges to pray for someone, financial obligations—all of these are important. A promise without action is just words.

Truth to Hold: A true commitment always calls for follow-through.

3. Renew – Strengthen Loyalty and Unity (vv.16–18)

The people responded to Joshua with remarkable words: *“Whatever you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go... Only may the Lord your God be with you as he was with Moses.”*

This pledge was extraordinary. They had often grumbled against Moses, but now they declared uncomplaining loyalty. They were ready to stand united behind Joshua’s leadership—as long as he followed the Lord.

Unity like this is powerful. A divided people are a laughingstock to the world—like seagulls squabbling over scraps. But when God’s people fly in formation like geese—rotating the load,

encouraging one another, moving in step—they can go farther and accomplish more for God’s kingdom.

Sometimes short memories are a blessing. Forgetting past failures allows us to walk forward in renewed loyalty, courage, and unity.

Truth to Hold: To renew is to let go of the past, pledge fresh loyalty, and move forward together in God’s call.

Conclusion

Joshua 1:10–18 paints a picture of God’s people learning to fly in formation. They rallied together to prepare, responded by keeping their commitments, and renewed their loyalty for the mission ahead.

That’s still God’s call for us. We cannot move forward into His promises as lone rangers. We must rise, respond, and renew—together.

Reflection Questions

1. Where in your life is God calling you to rally—to step up and prepare alongside others?
 2. What commitments have you made to God, your family, or others that need renewed follow-through?
 3. How can you encourage unity in your community of faith instead of contributing to division?
 4. Who might need you to “fly in formation” with them right now—to share the burden and cheer them on?
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A Prayer for Today

Lord God, thank You for the beauty of unity in Your creation and among Your people. Teach me to rally with others, not stand alone. Help me to honor the commitments I’ve made and to live with integrity in word and deed. Renew my heart and my loyalty to You, and help me walk in step with Your people so that we can move forward together into Your promises. May my life bring strength, encouragement, and unity to others. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Challenge

This week, choose one way to “fly in formation.” Step up to share the burden—whether by praying intentionally for someone, serving in a practical way, or encouraging a leader. Let your actions strengthen the unity of God’s people and show the world that together we soar farther.