

Strong and Ready

Joshua 1:6–11

Scripture Reading

“Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them. Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” 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.’” (Joshua 1:6–11)

Devotional Reflection

Fear That Holds Us Back

What are you afraid of? Heights? Spiders? Public speaking? Change?

Not all fear is bad. Some fears are healthy—they protect us from danger and help us make wise decisions. But other fears, especially anticipatory fears about what *might* happen, can hold us back. Those “what ifs” of life—*What if I fail? What if I’m not enough? What if things go wrong?*—often keep us from stepping into the rewards and promises God has waiting for us.

Israel knew that struggle well. They had stood on the edge of the Promised Land once before, but fear of giants and fortified cities sent them wandering in the wilderness for forty years. Now, in Joshua 1, they stood on the brink again—flooded Jordan River before them, enemies beyond them, and their great leader Moses gone.

Into their fears, God gave a simple but powerful formula: **Be Strong. Stay True. Live the Word. Get Ready.**

1. Be Strong (vv.6, 7a, 9)

“Be strong and courageous...”

Strength in Scripture doesn't mean flexing muscles or hiding fear. It means depending on God when fear whispers, *"You're not enough."*

Think of plugging a lamp into a dead outlet. No matter how new the bulb is, no light shines because the power source is empty. That's what happens when we rely on ourselves. But when we plug into God's promises, His strength flows through our weakness: *"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness"* (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Courage isn't stupidity—it isn't rushing into danger without thought. Courage is choosing faith when fear is real. Israel stood where their parents once faltered—haunted by memories of a land described as devouring its inhabitants, of enemies so large they felt like grasshoppers in their own eyes, and now carrying the weight of stepping forward without the previous generation beside them. Their strength wasn't in themselves but in the God who went before them.

Truth to Hold: Strength is not self-reliance but God-dependence.

2. Stay True (v.7b)

"...do not turn from it to the right or to the left..."

Strength without direction is dangerous. God gave Joshua His Word as the compass. To stay true meant obeying God's commands without swerving into compromise.

It's like driving without checking your blind spot. One small drift can lead to disaster. Staying true means refusing to let culture redefine truth: "Do what feels right," "Everyone has their own truth," "Success equals stuff." God's Word says otherwise.

Samson was strong but strayed from God's path, using his strength for selfish gain. His story reminds us that power without obedience is destructive.

Truth to Hold: Obedience is the pathway to God's blessing and stability.

3. Live the Word (v.8)

"Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night..."

Israel's victory didn't depend on military strategy but on meditation—dwelling on God's Word until it shaped their hearts and actions.

Meditation isn't emptying your mind; it's filling it with God's truth. It's like eating daily bread—you wouldn't eat one meal a week and expect to thrive. In the same way, spiritual health requires daily intake of God's Word.

When fear clouds the future, God's Word clears the fog. It replaces confusion with confidence. James reminds us: *"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says."* (James 1:22).

Truth to Hold: God's Word doesn't just inform us; it transforms us.

4. Get Ready (vv.10–11)

"Prepare your provisions, for within three days you will cross the Jordan..."

Faith isn't passive—it prepares. Israel had to pack belongings, sharpen swords, gather food, and ready hearts. Preparation was proof of belief.

We too prepare by rooting ourselves in prayer, standing on God's promises, soaking in His Word, and stepping into obedience—even when we don't know how everything will unfold. Fear tempts us to stay in the wilderness of comfort. Courage packs for the journey into God's promises.

As Paul writes: *"My God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus."* (Philippians 4:19).

Truth to Hold: Preparation proves belief. Faith without action is empty.

Conclusion

Fear keeps us from taking hold of God's promises—fear of failure, change, insufficiency, the unknown, or loss. But God calls us to overcome fear with His clear formula: **Be Strong. Stay True. Live the Word. Get Ready.**

The Israelites had to believe God's promises enough to pack their bags. What about you?

Reflection Questions

1. What fears most often hold you back from stepping into God's promises?
 2. Where do you need to rely on God's strength instead of your own?
 3. In what areas of life are you tempted to compromise or "veer off course"?
 4. How can you make God's Word a daily source of strength and direction this week?
 5. What step of preparation do you need to take today as proof of your faith?
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A Prayer for Today

Father, thank You for Your promises that never fail. Give me courage when fear rises up. Teach me to depend on Your strength instead of my own, to stay true to Your Word, and to live it daily. Prepare my heart and hands for whatever You are calling me to step into. Help me not to shrink back in fear but to walk forward in faith, knowing You go with me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Challenge

Identify one fear that has been holding you back. This week, write down the specific promise of God that answers that fear. Pray it daily, speak it aloud when doubt comes, and take one small but concrete action to step forward in faith.