

# Sermon Notes

Practical Lessons for Understanding the Word of God



## The Courage to Obey

KEY PASSAGE: Joshua 1:1-9 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE: Deuteronomy 34:7, 10-12 | Joshua 1:10-11; 23:1-3, 6-8; 24:29-31 | Judges 21:25 | Psalm 32:8; 119:105 | Proverbs 3:5-6 | Romans 8:28 | 1 John 5:14

### SUMMARY

**Obeying God is always the right thing to do, but it isn't always the easiest.**

When His assignments seem beyond our capabilities, we need brave determination to follow through. Courage is the quality of mind and spirit enabling us to meet danger, opposition, or the challenges of life with fearlessness, calmness, and decisiveness. Joshua was a man who understood the challenges of obedience because the Lord entrusted him with the responsibility of leading the Israelites into the land He'd promised to give them. Although Joshua lived thousands of years ago, the Lord's message to him is still applicable to us today.

### SERMON POINTS

**Courage is needed to fulfill God's assignments for our lives.**

Why would Joshua need bravery to achieve the job God designed for him? He needed it because:

- **He was stepping into Moses' shoes.** After performing many miraculous signs in Pharaoh's presence, Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt and through the wilderness for forty long years. There had never been a prophet like Moses "whom the Lord knew face to face" (Deut. 34:10). Anyone who's ever had to follow a great leader knows how intimidating that can be. But Moses was now dead, and Joshua was called to take the reins of leadership.
- **Conquering the Promised Land was a seemingly impossible task.** Its walled cities were like fortresses, and the soldiers were skilled in

warfare and equipped with weapons and chariots. Furthermore, there were giants in the land. Because of all these challenges, the Lord told Joshua three times to be strong and courageous (Josh. 1:6-7, 9).

Although all of us face different situations than the one Joshua encountered, we each have areas of obedience that require courage. Perhaps it's confronting a friend who is living in sin, or responding to a boss who wants us to compromise our moral values. Or maybe God is calling us to stand up for our beliefs in a classroom or refuse to give in to peer pressure. Whatever the issue, we also need courage to do what's right.

**Courage is strengthened by God's promises to us.**

The Bible is filled with assurances that give us the boldness to move ahead in obedience. Although many of these assurances were written to people who lived long ago, the scriptural principles within them still apply to us today. To encourage and assure Joshua, the Lord gave him the following promises:

- **The land.** "Every place on which the sole of your foot treads, I have given it to you, just as I spoke to Moses" (Josh. 1:3). When God makes a promise, He sees it as already completed.
- **His powerful presence.** "No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you" (Josh. 1:5).
- **Success.** The Lord promised Joshua success in his mission if he would "be careful to do according to all the law" and "meditate on it day and night" (Josh. 1:7, 8). That was the only way Joshua would be able to guide the people wisely and protect them

from the pagan influences that would surround them. Like Joshua, we need to read the Scriptures to receive God's instructions in order to succeed.

### What does it mean when we meditate on God's Word?

Meditation is a process by which we apply Scripture to our lives. It begins with reading God's Word and asking Him questions such as: *What are You saying to me in this passage? Is there something You want me to do? Is there an area of my life You want to change?* Meditation on the Scriptures reveals any hidden areas we've reserved for ourselves, prompting us to fully surrender to the Lord.

Since God speaks to us personally through His Word, that's one way we'll find out what He wants us to do and how we are to live. When we go to His Word, the Holy Spirit interprets it for us in a way that speaks to our individual needs and circumstances.

### The key to courage is meditation upon God's Word.

When we reflect on Scripture as part of our daily lives, we can expect the following results:

- **It quiets the spirit.** Instead of fretting and becoming discouraged, we can rely on the best counselor in the world—Almighty God. His words bring comfort and peace to our souls.
- **It purifies the heart.** The Word of God is a lamp to our feet, revealing things that shouldn't be in our lives. It shows us the right way to go (Ps. 119:105).
- **It sharpens perception.** Meditation opens our minds to understand truths we'd never comprehend otherwise. When we search the Scriptures, the Lord increases our knowledge and leads us to His promises. In time, we can build a promise bank of verses that strengthen our faith and fill us with the courage to obey.
- **It clarifies direction.** Whenever the path is unclear, and we need specific direction for decisions, the Lord uses our time of meditation to speak to our hearts, guiding us to the choices He would have us make.

- **It confirms or cautions counsel.** The wisdom found in God's Word helps us evaluate the advice of others to determine if it's godly and wise or if it should be rejected.
- **It increases faith.** When the Lord blesses us for our obedience and does what He's promised, our confidence in Him and His Word increases.
- **It enlarges our view of God.** Meditation opens our eyes to who the Lord is. He's not just a God who resides in heaven, but also one who lives within us through the presence of the Holy Spirit.
- **It keeps us aware of His presence and power.** When we listen to the Lord in His Word, we'll discern that He is continually with us and is constantly displaying His power through us as He works in our lives.
- **God guides us to success.** God doesn't want us to fail. His goal is to teach us valuable lessons that will ensure that we eventually succeed. He'll take each experience and work it out for our good if we'll obey Him (Rom. 8:28).

## RESPONSE

- What types of situations are you dealing with that require courage to obey God?
- Have you meditated on God's Word today? How is He speaking to you through the Scripture you've studied?
- How can you encourage others to courageously obey God despite the difficult circumstances in their lives?

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