Joshua Leads Courageously

Josh 1:1-11
SS Lesson for 09/06/2026

Devotional Scripture: Deut 31:3-8

OUTLINE

LESSON BACKGROUND AND KEY VERSE

Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary
Key Verses: Joshua 1:9

MAJOR THEME ANALYSIS

COMMISSION THROUGH A PROMISE (JOSH 1:1-6)

Promise of a renewed purpose (1-2)

Renewed purpose to fear God and keep His commandments (Eccl 12:13)
Renewed purpose to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with God (Mic 6:8)
Renewed purpose to not lose heart, because God is renewing us daily (2 Cor 4:16)
Renewed purpose to not lose heart and grow weary in opposing sin (Heb 12:3-4)
Renewed purpose to not become weary of doing good (Gal 6:9)
Renewed purpose in seeking the kingdom of God (Matt 6:31-34)

Promise of success (3-5)

Success obtained through pleasing God (Rom 14:16-18)
Success obtained through living a life worthy of the Lord (Col 1:10)
Success obtained through working for the Lord (Col 3:23-24)
Success obtained through being a faithful servant and sharing in God's blessings (Matt 25:21)
Success obtained through trusting in God (Prov 28:25)
Success obtained through having many godly advisers (Prov 15:22)
Success obtained through committing ourselves to God (Prov 16:3)
Success obtained through abiding in God (John 15:7)

Promise of leadership (6)

Leadership that is entrusted with God's work (Titus 1:7)
Leadership that is blameless so as to encourage godliness (1 Thess 2:10-12)
Leadership that is faithful because of being given a trust (1 Cor 4:2)
Leadership that has integrity (Titus 2:7-8)
Leaders that give an account for those over whom they have authority (Heb 13:17)
Leaders that are given much, but from whom much will be required (Luke 12:48)
Leaders that have been given a trust and must be proven faithful (1 Cor 4:2)

COMMISSION OF OBEDIENCE (JOSH 1:7-11)

Obedience that leads to success (7-8)

Success based on obedience that is consistent with God's will (Isa 58:6-9)
Success based on obedience that delights God (1 Sam 15:22)
Success based on obedience that is from humble, praying, repentant people of God (2 Chron 7:14)
Success based on obedience that is bold and steadfast (Dan 3:16-18)
Success based on obedience because God is faithful (Deut 7:9)
Success based on obedience because God promised that obedience prolongs life (Prov 3:1-2)
Success based on obedience because obedience is pleasing to God (Prov 16:7)
Success based on obedience that make believers His people (Jer 7:23)
Success based on obedience because God does not allow obedience to be in vain (1 Corinthians 15:58)

Obedience that leads to God's Presence (9)

God's presence that brings rest (Exodus 33:14)
God's presence that shows that God is pleased with us and separates us from the world (Ex 33:15)
God's presence that brings joy (Ps 16:11)
God's presence that is a hiding place of refuge (Ps 31:20)
God's presence that is a light of guidance (Ps 89:15)
God's presence that responds to a godly fear of God (Nah 1:5)
God's presence that is glorious and those who are in it should be without fault (Jude 1:24)

Obedience through the leader's authority (10-11)
Leader’s authority because trouble occurs without authority (Judges 21:25)
Leader’s authority because all authority is established by God (Rom 13:1)
Leader’s authority through his willingness to be a servant (Luke 22:25-26)
Leader’s authority to be an example, not a lord (1 Peter 5:1-3)
Leader’s authority because God gave man authority because man is in God's image (Gen 1:26)
Leader’s authority because God gave man authority so that man could have food and work (Gen 9:2-3)

CONCLUSION AND OTHER THOUGHTS

COMMENTARY THOUGHTS FROM J. HAMPTON KEATHLEY, III
The Commission Given (1:1-5)
The Call to Courage (1:6-9)
CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE NIV STANDARD LESSON COMMENTARY

Lesson Background and Key Verse

Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

The Israelites had been in Egypt for 430 years (Exodus 12:40-41). During this time, the descendants of Jacob became enslaved at the hands of the Egyptians. However, God redeemed his people and provided a way for them to leave captivity. Those who left Egypt did not go directly to the land that God promised to their ancestors. Instead, they stopped at Mount Sinai, where they received the law from God and constructed the tabernacle as the center of their worship (Exodus 19-27). But rather than obey God, the Israelites tested and disobeyed him (Numbers 14:22). In the second year after leaving Egypt, the Israelites departed from Sinai and moved toward the southern edge of Canaan (Numbers 10:11-12). Moses sent twelve spies into the land (13:17), and after forty days, they returned (13:25). Ten spies demonstrated a lack of trust in God to lead them into Canaan. Only two spies, Joshua and Caleb, recommended entering the land (14:6-9). They trusted that God would be faithful to his promise that the people would possess it. As a result of the lack of faith from the ten spies, God imposed punishment. First, the people had to spend forty years in the wilderness (Numbers 14:34). Second, out of the generation who left Egypt, only the two faithful spies, Joshua and Caleb, lived to enter Canaan (1:46; 2:32; 14:30). This meant that Moses would not be a part of the generation allowed to enter the land (14:22-23; 20:12). Therefore, God and Moses established Joshua as Moses’ successor to lead the people into Canaan (27:15-23; Deuteronomy 3:28; 31:7; 34:9). As the book of Joshua begins, nearly forty years have passed since the Israelites left Egypt. At this point, they were camped in the plains of Moab at the edge of Canaan, across the Jordan River from Jericho (Numbers 22:1; 33:48-50; 36:13). Their presence in the area threatened local leaders (22:2-3). However, rather than obey the Lord and maintain holiness, some Israelites committed immoral acts and idolatry with the people of the land—an act that had deadly consequences (Numbers 25). By the time Moses died, hundreds of years had passed since God first made promises to Abraham concerning the land. The people found themselves at a crucial juncture. They had yet to settle the land. Under the leadership of the newly commissioned Joshua, they needed to follow the Lord’s commands to possess the land that had been promised to them.

Key Verses: Joshua 1:9

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."

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

Commission Through a Promise (Josh 1:1-6)

1 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:
2 "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.
3 Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses.
4 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.
5 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.
6 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.

Promise of a renewed purpose (1-2)

Renewed purpose to fear God and keep His commandments (Eccl 12:13)

> 13 Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole [duty] of man.

Renewed purpose to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with God (Mic 6:8)

> 8 He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

Renewed purpose to not lose heart, because God is renewing us daily (2 Cor 4:16)

> 16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.

Renewed purpose to not lose heart and grow weary in opposing sin (Heb 12:3-4)

> 3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. 4 In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.

Renewed purpose to not become weary of doing good (Gal 6:9)

> 9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

Renewed purpose in seeking the kingdom of God (Matt 6:31-34)

> 31 So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Promise of success (3-5)

Success obtained through pleasing God (Rom 14:16-18)

> 16 Do not allow what you consider good to be spoken of as evil. 17 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, 18 because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men.

Success obtained through living a life worthy of the Lord (Col 1:10)

> 10 And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God,

Success obtained through working for the Lord (Col 3:23-24)

23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, 24 since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

Success obtained through being a faithful servant and sharing in God's blessings (Matt 25:21)

21 "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

Success obtained through trusting in God (Prov 28:25)

25 A greedy man stirs up dissension, but he who trusts in the Lord will prosper.

Success obtained through having many godly advisers (Prov 15:22)

22 Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.

Success obtained through committing ourselves to God (Prov 16:3)

3 Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.

Success obtained through abiding in God (John 15:7)

7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.

Promise of leadership (6)

Leadership that is entrusted with God's work (Titus 1:7)

7 Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless — not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain.

Leadership that is blameless so as to encourage godliness (1 Thess 2:10-12)

10 You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. 11 For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, 12 encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

Leadership that is faithful because of being given a trust (1 Cor 4:2)

2 Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.

Leadership that has integrity (Titus 2:7-8)

7 In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness 8 and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.

Leaders that give an account for those over whom they have authority (Heb 13:17)

17 Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.

Leaders that are given much, but from whom much will be required (Luke 12:48)

48 But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.

Leaders that have been given a trust and must be proven faithful (1 Cor 4:2)

2 Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.

Commission of Obedience (Josh 1:7-11)

7 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.
8 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe 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.
9 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."
10 Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying,
11 "Pass through the camp and command the people, saying, 'Prepare provisions for yourselves, for within three days you will cross over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the Lord your God is giving you to possess.'"

Obedience that leads to success (7-8)

Success based on obedience that is consistent with God's will (Isa 58:6-9)

> 6 "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? 7 Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter — when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? 8 Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard. 9 Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I. "If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk,

Success based on obedience that delights God (1 Sam 15:22)

> 22 But Samuel replied: "Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams.

Success based on obedience that is from humble, praying, repentant people of God (2 Chron 7:14)

> 14 if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

Success based on obedience that is bold and steadfast (Dan 3:16-18)

> 16 Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. 17 If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. 18 But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."

Success based on obedience because God is faithful (Deut 7:9)

> 9 Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands.

Success based on obedience because God promised that obedience prolongs life (Prov 3:1-2)

> 3 My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, 2 for they will prolong your life many years and bring you prosperity.

Success based on obedience because obedience is pleasing to God (Prov 16:7)

> 7 When a man's ways are pleasing to the Lord, he makes even his enemies live at peace with him.

Success based on obedience that make believers His people (Jer 7:23)

> 23 but I gave them this command: Obey me, and I will be your God and you will be my people. Walk in all the ways I command you, that it may go well with you.

Success based on obedience because God does not allow obedience to be in vain (1 Corinthians 15:58)

> 58 Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

Obedience that leads to God's Presence (9)

God's presence that brings rest (Exodus 33:14)

14 The Lord replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

God's presence that shows that God is pleased with us and separates us from the world (Ex 33:15)

15 Then Moses said to him, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here.

God's presence that brings joy (Ps 16:11)

11 You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

God's presence that is a hiding place of refuge (Ps 31:20)

20 In the shelter of your presence you hide them from the intrigues of men; in your dwelling you keep them safe from accusing tongues.

God's presence that is a light of guidance (Ps 89:15)

15 Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you, who walk in the light of your presence, O Lord.

God's presence that responds to a godly fear of God (Nah 1:5)

5 The mountains quake before him and the hills melt away. The earth trembles at his presence, the world and all who live in it.

God's presence that is glorious and those who are in it should be without fault (Jude 1:24)

24 To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy—

Obedience through the leader's authority (10-11)

Leader's authority because trouble occurs without authority (Judges 21:25)

25 In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.

Leader's authority because all authority is established by God (Rom 13:1)

13 Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.

Leader's authority through his willingness to be a servant (Luke 22:25-26)

25 Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. 26 But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves.

Leader's authority to be an example, not a lord (1 Peter 5:1-3)

5 To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: 2 Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers — not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; 3 not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.

Leader's authority because God gave man authority because man is in God's image (Gen 1:26)

26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

Leader's authority because God gave man authority so that man could have food and work (Gen 9:2-3)

> 2 The fear and dread of you will fall upon all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air, upon every creature that moves along the ground, and upon all the fish of the sea; they are given into your hands. 3 Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything.

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Commentary Thoughts from J. Hampton Keathley, III

The Commission Given (1:1-5)

The victory and possession of the land which follows is a direct result of the Word of God and of man, in this case Joshua, hearing and responding to His Word. This should illustrate for us that there is absolutely no victory or chance for us to experience the blessings of our new life in Christ apart from the Word of God. Whenever any believer begins to turn away from the Word through indifference or apathy for whatever reason, he is turning away from the Lord and into defeat.

Joshua's commission comes only after the death of Moses (vss. 1-2). This is significant. The commission of Joshua and the continuation of God's purposes to move Israel into the land, for certain typological reasons, comes only after the death of Moses. Why is this?

Moses was the great lawgiver who represented the Law of Sinai, that awesome legislation which demonstrates the perfect holiness of God and the sinful condition of man who stands separated from God (Rom. 3:23). But the Law, though holy and good, could never give life or spirituality nor could it provide justification. It was instead a ministration of death that revealed man a sinner and in jail to sin (2 Cor. 3:7; Rom. 7:7; Gal. 3:19-22).

Moses portrayed the law which cannot lead us into the saving and abundant life of Christ. It was only a tutor, a temporary servant which must pass away (Gal. 3:23f). Though it did point to Christ in the tabernacle, priesthood, and sacrifices, it could not take away sin or provide deliverance from the flesh. Why? Because it was weak in that it was dependent upon man and his ability (Rom. 8:3-4). The Law provided a righteous standard, but no power or grace for the flesh or indwelling sin (Rom. 6:14; 8:3f).

Thus, Moses had to pass from the scene before Joshua could be commissioned and given orders to take the people across Jordan and into the Promised Land. A further reason is seen in Joshua's name which so clearly reminds us that "*Yahweh* is Salvation." As the Hebrew equivalent of Jesus, Joshua typifies the Lord Jesus and His saving life who provides us not only with redemption, but with the power we need to enter into the possession of our possessions in Christ.

With the mention of the death of Moses, Joshua is then told, "Now therefore arise, cross this Jordan, you and all this people." By way of application for today, the words "**Now therefore arise**," (in view of the death of Moses and what he represented) teach us the truth that no man can live the Christian life by keeping a set of laws or taboos. While the Christian life involves obedience to the principles and imperatives of the Word, it is more. It is a life to be lived by faith in the power of God. We simply cannot live the Christian life in our own energy or by our own determination. The Christian life is not just being Mr. Nice or merely keeping a set of Christian principles and rules. It is a faith relationship with God to be lived out in the power of the Spirit and in the light of the Word.

With the Words, **"arise, cross this Jordan,"** the Lord is saying, "get out of the desert and move on into Canaan." God's will for the believer is never in the wilderness. It is in Canaan, the place of deliverance and conquest. "Arise, cross" by the parallel of New Testament truth says, "take up your armor, use your supernatural resources, stop trusting in yourself, trust me and move out."

"You and all this people" illustrates that spirituality is not just for an elect few, but it is for all believers. The abundant, maturing Christian life is God's plan and will for every single believer. It is only limited by our lack of availability to His constant availability to us. Every believer is blessed with every spiritual blessing, is a priest of God with abundant grace available for every situation. We need to remember all Israel got out of Egypt the same way—by faith in God's grace, and they would all cross over Jordan in exactly the same way, by faith in God's deliverance.

The words, **"to the land which I am giving you"** and in verse 3, **"every place on which …"** illustrates the truth of Ephesians 1:3 and Colossians 2:10. "I am giving you" and "I have given it to you" shows us God was then in the process of bringing to pass that which had been theirs all along. Joshua 2:9-11 reveals that the land had virtually been theirs for 40 years. It was just waiting to be possessed. And like that, from the moment of salvation, God has provided every believer with every spiritual blessing and provision. Of course, as this book makes perfectly clear, having title deed to the land (or our blessings in Christ) does not mean our lives will be without testing, conflict, struggles, and pressures. It indeed will, but since the battle is the Lord's, since God has done the most for us in Christ, with the testings and temptations comes God's deliverance through faith and the application of the Word.

In verse 5, Joshua is given the promise, **"no man will be able to stand before you,"** but this promise is also a warning. While the land was theirs for the taking, it would not be taken without conflict or battle. And likewise, as the land of Canaan was full of fortified cities and enemies that needed to be driven out, so the Christian life is a life of conflict with enemies which must be overcome. Though the outcome is assured if we claim God's sufficiency and the saving life of Christ, we must still do battle and reckon with the fact of the enemy throughout this life. This is a wake up call, a reality that must be faced: life is full of battles and conflicts. We are not in Eden nor are we in the millennial reign of Christ. Rather we wrestle with the flesh (indwelling sin), with the devil and supernatural powers of darkness, and a world system that is antagonistic to God, to His Word, and to godly living (cf. Rom. 7:15f; Gal. 5:16f; Eph. 5:15-16; 6:10f; 1 Pet. 5:8-9).

Nevertheless, the positive side is that these words, "no man will be able to stand before you …" are also a promise of continued deliverance in battle after battle after battle. Because of the infinite sufficiency of the saving life of the Christ through His finished work on the cross, His triumphant presence at the right hand of God, our identification with Him in His death, resurrection and session in heaven, and through His gift of the Holy Spirit, there is no enemy we can possibly face which the Lord (our Joshua) has not already conquered. Our need is to appropriate what He has already done for us through the wise faith-application of His Word.

Though still active and roaming about, Satan's power has been broken and we can resist his deceptions and attacks. Though the sin principle still dwells within or the flesh is still active in our members, its power over us has been broken through our union with Christ in His death and resurrection. This means the victory of possessing our possessions is through the gift of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 6 and 8) and the sanctifying power of a Word-filled life (John 17:17; Eph. 5:18; Col. 3:16).

Application: We all entertain the desire to live in an ideal world, where life moves along smoothly without problems or stress. In fact, we were created for such and it is not wrong to long for that time which will come with the return of the Lord Jesus, our Joshua. But the doctrines of the apostasy of the last days, the evil nature of this day and time, plus the presence of our three enemies are constant reminders that such cannot be the case now any more than we can have lasting and true world peace without the return of the Lord. We must face the facts and be prepared to face life as it really is. In Christ we are super-conquerors and through His saving life we can overcome the individual battles of life, but we must be prepared to fight the good fight.

We all like to rock along without anything upsetting our schedules or forcing us out of our comfort zones. When we attempt to get away from the struggle, God jars us back into reality through some unpleasant condition or experience and we are again faced with reality. After vacation we must go back to work and face that co-worker who is so hard to get along with. We are going along and then suddenly, there is a threat to our health or that of our spouse or child. Or we may face the death of a loved one which brings heartache, loneliness, along with new pressures and responsibilities. Such is your life and mine, but the words "no man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life" intrudes into our lives with two realities: a warning and promise.

The words, **"just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you,"** call our attention to one of the great truths of the Bible. Israel would get into the land the *same way* they got out of Egypt. Likewise, we enter into the abundant life of Christ the *same way* we were delivered from wrath—by faith in the saving life of Christ. Just as we trusted in Christ and the accomplishments of the cross for justification and redemption, so we must reckon on those same accomplishments as the basis for our security and daily deliverance (Rom. 6:4-11; Col. 2:6-3:3).

The Call to Courage (1:6-9)

While the first five verses deal with Joshua's commission to take over after the death of Moses, the major thrust of verses 6-9 concerns something that was vital to Joshua's ability to do that. And what was true for Joshua is equally true for us.

There is a word or theme repeated at least three times in these verses that we need to pick up on and relate to. Three times God tells Joshua, "**be strong and courageous**" (1:6, 7, 9). Then later, as it pertains to their obedience to God, Joshua will relate the same charge to the people (1:18; 10:25) who will likewise face the challenges and fulfillment of God's purposes for the nation—dwelling in the land as a priesthood nation as God's representative to the nations.

So the issue before Joshua was a call to be strong and courageous in view of the mantle of leadership that was being passed on to him. God was calling him to a very special and difficult ministry, one with tremendous challenges and obstacles far beyond his own skill or abilities. But life for all of us is filled with such challenges so let us not pass over this without seeing the personal application this can have for each of us. Verses 6-9 are fundamental for obtaining the strength and courage anyone needs for the challenges of any ministry or responsibility.

This passage is not just for a special class of leaders like pastors or missionaries. God has called each of us to ministry. No believer is exempt. We are all gifted, we are all priests of God, and leaders in some sense with personal responsibilities to others whether elders, deacons, moms or dads, etc.

People often run from ministry or difficult situations because of fear or because of the obstacles. As the former generation of Israelites had failed to enter into the land and possess their possessions because of unbelief and fear of the giants, so we too can fail to enter into God's calling on our lives.

Application: Without God's strength and personal courage, we will fail to tackle the challenges or take on the responsibilities that God calls us to. Others, being overconfident in themselves may seek to strike out in their own steam, an equally wrong way to try to serve the Lord as we will see illustrated in chapter 7 with the defeat at Ai.

Biblically speaking, where does moral strength and courage come from and does it mean the absence of fear? Moral strength and courage come from (1) faith in the sovereignty and provision of God and (2) in the fact that we are convinced what we are doing is right and best and essential to life. But there is much more as this passage will show us. Courage is that quality of mind that enables men to encounter danger and difficulty with firmness and resolve in spite of inner fears (cf. 1 Cor. 2:3; 2 Cor. 7:5). In other words, courage is not the absence of fear. While not courting danger nor presuming on the Lord, Paul never evaded something if he knew it was God's will or that it was right. In his excellent book on spiritual leadership, J. Oswald Sanders wrote:

Courage of the highest order is demanded of a spiritual leader—always moral courage and frequently physical courage as well …

Martin Luther possessed this important quality in unusual measure. It has been asserted that he was perhaps as fearless a man as ever lived. When he set out on his momentous journey to Worms, he said, "You can expect from me everything save fear or recantation. I shall not flee, much less recant." His friends, warning him of the grave dangers he faced, sought to dissuade him. But Luther would not be dissuaded. "Not go to Worms?" he said. "I shall go to Worms though there were as many devils as tiles on the roofs." …

But not all men are courageous by nature as Luther was, and that fact is both explicit and implicit in Scripture. The highest degree of courage is seen in the person who is most fearful but refuses to capitulate to it. However fearful they might have been, God's leaders in succeeding generations have been commanded to be of good courage. Had they been without fear, the command would have been pointless.[3]

So where do strength and courage come from? These concepts teach us several important ingredients:

(1) Strength and courage come through *Recognizing* and *Relating* to God's pleasure (His will) and having a sense of God's calling and destiny (1:1-2).

Knowing God's Word, the clearly revealed will of God, plus recognizing one's gifts, abilities, and training, all of which are a part of understanding His pleasure or will for one's life, is foundational for finding strength and courage to accept any area of responsibility in ministry. Without this understanding, one will hardly have the motivation or courage to move into the ministries God wants to call us to.

There is a specific process to be noted here in verses 1-9. There is first God's Word to Joshua commissioning and encouraging him. The courage that is called for here is the direct result of the Word and knowing God's will (see Eph. 5:9-10). Also, Joshua is reminded that he had been prepared and trained for this as the servant of Moses (1:1).

Joshua being spoken to in verse 1 is equivalent to us gaining biblical insight. It is this that forms the foundation for courage and conviction and for faith and action. We need to pray and seek God's will and wisdom. The first foundation for courage is knowing both the Word and God's will.

Being the understudy of Moses illustrates a couple of key principles: (1) The principle of having a godly example (1 Tim. 4; 1 Pet. 5:1-3). (2) The principle of Luke 16:10 and its impact on the development of courage and motivation for ministry. Joshua had been faithful in the little things and would be faithful in much. Service in the larger areas of responsibility starts with faithfulness in smaller things. We each need to find a place to serve and grow. It may become the training ground for other areas of ministry to which God may be calling you.

"Moses my servant is dead" (vs. 2). This statement reminds us that no one is indispensable and leadership changes. If we are not training others and being trained ourselves, we leave gaping holes (2 Tim. 2:2).

"Now therefore arise" emphasizes the need for decisive action to fill the void left by the absence of Moses. And this is true for all of us in ministry for whatever reason there is a void left by the removal of the servants of God. A true grasp of the need is always a vital element to decisiveness and action to fill that need; it's part of the root that produces the fruit. But there is another element that is vital to courage and decisiveness in doing the will of God.

(2) Strength and courage come through *Resting* in God's promises (1:2b-6).

Please note the promises given to Joshua here were given in relation to the ministry and work to which God had called him. This applies to each of us regardless of the particular ministry God has called us to in the body of Christ. Read these verses carefully and see what application you can make from them to your life. Do you feel the tug of God on your life to serve him in a particular way, but you are afraid? Are you afraid of failure? Are you afraid of what it might cost you? Meditate on these verses.

We might also note some of the obstacles that can be observed in this passage because in claiming the promises of God, faith must face the obstacles.

"Cross this Jordan." In Scripture, the Jordan often represents an obstacle, an impediment to growth, ministry, progress. There is good reason to believe that the Jordan was swollen over its banks at this time of year (cf. Jos. 3:15; 4:18). Here is one of the reasons courage is needed.

Further, to cross the Jordan meant to enter into a hostile land, a land full of enemies some of whom were giants and who lived in strongly fortified cities. This was no simple challenge. Remember, the previous generation failed at Kadesh Barnea because of a lack of courage. But there is more here.

"You and all this people." This was no small group! The very numbers made this a colossal task. But Joshua had the responsibility of leading a people who were noted for being stiff necked and throwing stones at their leaders. The word "all" reminds us that it is God's purpose for all His people to mature and become strong, to be in His will and living victorious lives.

Nevertheless, regardless of the obstacles, God's will had been clearly made known to Joshua. He needed to act on this fact by faith in the Lord's person, promises, and provision.

Let's look at the promise in verse 2b: "To the land which I am giving to them, to the sons of Israel" (vs. 2). Also note the words "which I have given to them" (vs. 3). They were going into the Promised Land, the land promised to the patriarchs, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob or Israel by God Himself who cannot go back on His promises. In fact, He was then and had for some time been preparing the inhabitants for defeat (cf. 2:9f). The land had been theirs for forty years but they failed to enter in because of unbelief and a lack of courage.

God's Word is filled with hundreds of promises (vss. 3-6, 9). In essence, every principle of Scripture becomes a promise because with the principle comes the inherent promise of God who is perfect veracity so that we can count on the principle. But we must know those promises and act on them by faith. God's promises are given to carry us through the Jordan rivers of life, not necessarily to remove them but to enable us to step out in faith to cross them. They are not given so we can avoid or go around, but so we can cross them victoriously.

How do we claim and act on those promises? How do we make those promises a part of our lives?

(3) Strength and courage come through daily *Renewal* in God's Principles (1:7-8).

Successful ministry according to a biblical definition of success is ultimately related to solid Bible teaching and study rather than to our human methods, techniques, and strategies which too often resort to pressure, coercion, and manipulation in order to achieve our own agendas or results.

The Word is intrinsically powerful and able to produce godly change in believers' lives as it motivates, encourages, gives hope and direction, and exposes us to both our needs and God's provision. The Word has been given to us to establish a communicative relationship with God. It is a means of fellowship with Him. But this takes time, quality time and diligence. Note the emphasis on this in these verses. "To do according to all the Law…; do not turn from it …" (vs. 7), "but you shall meditate on it day and night …" (vs. 8).

What's our tendency? The average person today wants a quick fix—three easy steps. We want God to do it now. But this kind of approach does not develop a relationship with the Lord. Relationship with God, knowing Him, as with any relationship, takes time. It is this that provides us with success in ministry and in life, wherever we go and in whatever we do.

The Warning: Joshua was warned or cautioned in three things:

- To "be careful" warns against danger, calls for prudence, observation or careful scrutiny, and conscientiousness (cf. Eph. 5:15).
- To "do according to all" points to the concept of the whole counsel of the Word.
- To "not to turn from it" points to the concept of the Scripture as our objective index or standard and warns against moral relativity.

The Process: Joshua was to do three things with regard to the Scriptures:

- The Law was not to depart from his mouth; he was to talk about it (cf. Deut. 6:7). This would be a means of staying occupied with God's thoughts and ways.
- He was to meditate on it day and night; he was to think about it constantly (cf. Ps. 1:2; 119:97). In order to be able to talk about it and apply it, one must know it and see how it applies. We must have it on our mind and heart to fortify, encourage, and direct.
- He was to do everything written in it; he was to conduct his life in obedience to all its commands (cf. Ezra 7:10; James 1:22-25).

(4) Strength and courage come through *Reckoning* on God's Person and presence (1:9).

Last, but certainly not least is the promise of the ever watchful and protective presence of God. There is no situation, no problem or enemy that we ever face alone. The Lord is always there as our constant support and supply. If we are concerned about our ministries or anything else, we can be absolutely sure God is infinitely more concerned than we are. Our need is simply to walk in the light of His presence and to count on His guidance, support, supply, and care by keeping our focus on Him (Heb. 12:1-2).

"Have **I** not commanded you." What's the important point here? It's the ***source*** of the command and the promises. The 'I' refers to *Yahweh*. So note what follows.

"For the Lord (*Yahweh*) your God (*Elohim*) is with you wherever you go." These words stress the ***nature*** of the one who gave the command. They focus our attention on who and what God is like. One of the secrets to boldness and courage is an awareness of God's provision and presence, especially His presence as the one who has promised to never leave us.

Compare John 20:19 and the fear of the disciples before they experienced the presence of the resurrected Christ with the promise of His never-ending presence (cf. Matt. 28:18-20) with the boldness they displayed in Acts 4:13-20. What made the difference in the disciples? These were men who were now confident of Christ's presence (Matt. 28:18-20), knew God's will, His word, and who were filled with God's Spirit (cf. Acts 4:8). When the Holy Spirit is in control of a man's life and is instructing him in God's Word, He imparts not "a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline":

"For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline (2 Timothy 1:7).

"Timidity" is deilia meaning cowardice, the opposite of courage. "Power" is dunamis, the ability to do what we should. "Love" is agaph, a mental attitude of sacrificial concern for others. This means the motivation and ability to make tough choices. "Discipline" is swfronismos meaning sound-mind thinking, a product of biblical understanding, which holds our fears in check, changes values and priorities, and gives courage and decisiveness.

In Hebrews 13:1-3, the author reminded his readers of the need of ministry to the saints. For instance he wrote, "let love of the brethren continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, …" God wants us to be ministering people and this takes courage and obedience, and sometimes means sacrifices. So also, he cautions us concerning our values and our sources of security and then reminds us of the promise of the presence and supply of God.

Let your character be free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you," so that we confidently say, "The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me?" (Heb. 13:5-6)

As we face the challenges and opportunities and calling of God, let's remember these promises of God to Joshua. With the call of God to service there is **always** the matching provision of God. The problem lies not with the Lord, but with our responsibility to follow the Lord's admonitions as given to Joshua.

(Adapted from URL:https://bible.org/seriespage/commissioning-joshua-joshua-11-18)

Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

For the young family described in the Introduction, the courageous trust of the parents paid off—I should know because it's the story of my parents. Because of their courage and trust in God, my older sibling and I could thrive. The situation of my parents and that of Joshua with the ancient Israelites is significantly different. However, both reveal tremendous human courage by trusting that God would provide. We discern two points of application. First, God can and will use anyone as an instrument to achieve his will. Second, God promises to provide for us as we follow his lead. In neither case is worldly measures of success guaranteed. Instead, God promises eternal, spiritual blessings when we follow his will. Courage and trust are what Joshua was to exhibit. Will you exhibit the same in whatever role God has assigned you?