



**BE STRONG AND  
COURAGEOUS**

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# INTRODUCTION

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Step into a journey of profound transformation with our upcoming sermon series. Drawing inspiration from the life of Joshua, the fearless leader who succeeded Moses in guiding the people of Israel to the Promised Land, we'll uncover the unwavering message from God: "Be strong and courageous."

Throughout this series, we will discover the significance of courage in our walk of faith. From Joshua's calling to lead through the insurmountable challenges, the temptation to compromise, and even the weariness of life's battles, each week will unveil a new facet of living fearlessly in Christ. Join us on this remarkable journey starting October 1<sup>st</sup>, as we eagerly embrace the wisdom of Scripture and learn to navigate life's uncertainties with unshakeable faith. Together, we'll rise above fear, embodying the call to be strong, courageous, and unwavering followers of our faithful God.

# HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

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## THE BIBLICAL TEXT

We begin each guide with the text from Scripture. We believe all discussions about the truth God has revealed to us should begin with his inspired Word. So, we encourage you to read the text carefully even if the verses are ones you are already familiar with.

## EQUIP

The questions presented in the “equip” section of each guide are designed to help you read the biblical text carefully. By doing so, you can figure out the meaning of the passage. Some questions might lead to obvious answers, but others may not. What is important is that the questions force you to slow down and consider the text beyond just a quick and cursory reading. It also provides the basis for an informed discussion on biblically rooted ways to apply the text, as the next section covers. Note that, at the end of each guide, we have included thoughts about the Equip questions. These thoughts do not cover every possible answer, nor do they claim to be the best possible answers. However, they can help guide you if you feel puzzled by a certain Bible passage.

## ENCOURAGE

The “encourage” questions aim to move you from understanding the text toward applying it to your life. These questions will begin this process by asking you to reflect on your life as it was, as it is, and as it could be in relationship to what the Bible passage teaches. By prompting you to think about your life in the light of what Scripture teaches, you can be encouraged to be open to God’s transforming work in you.

## ENTHUSE

In the “enthuse” section, we ask you to consider a specific way that you can apply the truth of Scripture to your life that week. This always begins with prayer to God and seeking his guidance. In many cases, we then ask you to reflect on how it went when you sought to live out what God was calling you to do.

## SOMETHING TO CONSIDER

Finally, the “something to consider” section provides you with a devotional reading from one of the writers behind this study. The devotionals aim to present you with both thoughtful and personal insights on the topic. Our thoughts and stories may help you to live out the Scripture passages as well.



01

OCTOBER 1, 2023

Be strong and  
courageous  
when God  
calls you.

DEUTERONOMY 31:1-8  
JOSHUA 1:1-9

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## DEUTERONOMY 31:1-8 (NIV)

<sup>1</sup>Then Moses went out and spoke these words to all Israel: <sup>2</sup>"I am now a hundred and twenty years old and I am no longer able to lead you. The LORD has said to me, 'You shall not cross the Jordan.' <sup>3</sup>The LORD your God himself will cross over ahead of you. He will destroy these nations before you, and you will take possession of their land. Joshua also will cross over ahead of you, as the LORD said. <sup>4</sup>And the LORD will do to them what he did to Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites, whom he destroyed along with their land. <sup>5</sup>The LORD will deliver them to you, and you must do to them all that I have commanded you. <sup>6</sup>Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you."

<sup>7</sup>Then Moses summoned Joshua and said to him in the presence of all Israel, "Be strong and courageous, for you must go with this people into the land that the LORD swore to their ancestors to give them, and you must divide it among them as their inheritance. <sup>8</sup>The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged."



## JOSHUA 1:1-9 (NIV)

<sup>1</sup>After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide: <sup>2</sup>"Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites. <sup>3</sup>I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. <sup>4</sup>Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Mediterranean Sea in the west. <sup>5</sup>No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. <sup>6</sup>Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them.

<sup>7</sup>"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. <sup>8</sup>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. <sup>9</sup>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."

## EQUIP

Read Deuteronomy 31:1-8. As Moses approached the end of his life, what message did he give to the Israelites—and to Joshua in particular?

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Read Joshua 1:1-9. Based on God's words here, how could Joshua and the other Israelites find success in the difficult challenge they were about to undertake? What would be in store for them if they succeeded?

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## ENCOURAGE

Have you recently been in a situation where living out your faith required courage? What were the stakes, and how did you respond?

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Like with Joshua, God goes with us wherever we go. How can we use this knowledge to find courage every day?

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Moses prepared Joshua for the upcoming challenge by telling him to be strong and courageous. Who is a person that has helped you find courage? In what ways did they encourage you?

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## ENTHUSE

Joshua needed courage to live out his faith while undertaking the difficult task of leading the Israelites. All of us have people that we lead or influence in our everyday lives. Like Joshua, we can be courageous examples of faith as we support the people around us. Take some time here to list all of the people you lead or influence in a regular week. Pray for each person and ask God to help you discern ways you can support them. Then, provide extra encouragement to at least one person on your list this week. Pray that God would continue to use you for this wonderful purpose. Use the space to the right for reflection.

## SOMETHING TO CONSIDER

By Aaron Thatcher

*Joshua had spent years as Moses' aide and military leader. After contributing to many victories and seeing Moses' encounters with the Lord, he had every reason to be confident in his ability to lead the Israelites. Yet, Moses and God still encouraged him to be courageous as he prepared to lead the people on a conquest of the Promised Land.*

*Whether or not Joshua felt ready, he faced a daunting task. While you'll probably never be asked to lead an army, life today is full of its own threats and difficulties: sickness, financial challenges, and family dysfunction are just a few possibilities. No matter what skills you have or how well you prepare for these obstacles, courage is always critical for navigating them. Without courage, we lack the boldness to use the skills and experiences that God has given us to face these challenges.*

*Courage, though, is not foolish risk-taking. The courage that Moses and the Lord talk about in these passages is hardiness, the capacity to withstand trials and move forward. When we pray for courage like Joshua, we are asking for the strength to use our talents, relationships, and resources to address challenges as they come, weathering them in faith to move on to the next day victorious.*

## EQUIP THOUGHTS

**Read Deuteronomy 31:1-8. As Moses approached the end of his life, what message did he give to the Israelites—and to Joshua in particular?** Moses told the people that his aide, Joshua, would be his successor, leading them into the Promised Land. However, the battle was not Joshua's, but rather God's. The Lord would allow the people to take the land from powerful, wicked nations. Moses emphasized to the crowds and to Joshua that the Lord's support was the reason they could be brave even when faced with what seemed like a daunting challenge.

**Read Joshua 1:1-9. Based on God's words here, how could Joshua and the other Israelites find success in the difficult challenge they were about to undertake? What would be in store for them if they succeeded?** In this passage, God doesn't mention any clever military tactics that Joshua needed in order to gain victory. Rather, God emphasizes that Joshua

needed to be brave, to trust in his divine provision and protection. Such a courageous trust wasn't supposed to appear only on the battlefield. Joshua was to demonstrate his faith in everything he did by meditating on and obeying God's commands for righteous living. If Joshua and the people remained faithful, then they would safely inherit the land that God promised to them.

## NOTES

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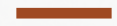
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02

OCTOBER 8, 2023



Be strong and  
courageous  
when you  
face trials.

JOSHUA 5:13-15, 6:1-27

## JOSHUA 5:13-15 (NIV)

<sup>13</sup>Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, "Are you for us or for our enemies?"

<sup>14</sup>"Neither," he replied, "but as commander of the army of the LORD I have now come." Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked him, "What message does my Lord have for his servant?"

<sup>15</sup>The commander of the LORD's army replied, "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so.

## JOSHUA 6:1-27 (NIV)

<sup>1</sup>Now the gates of Jericho were securely barred because of the Israelites. No one went out and no one came in.

<sup>2</sup>Then the LORD said to Joshua, "See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men. <sup>3</sup>March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days. <sup>4</sup>Have seven priests carry trumpets of rams' horns in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets. <sup>5</sup>When you hear them sound a long blast on the trumpets, have the

whole army give a loud shout; then the wall of the city will collapse and the army will go up, everyone straight in."

<sup>6</sup>So Joshua son of Nun called the priests and said to them, "Take up the ark of the covenant of the LORD and have seven priests carry trumpets in front of it." <sup>7</sup>And he ordered the army, "Advance! March around the city, with an armed guard going ahead of the ark of the LORD."

<sup>8</sup>When Joshua had spoken to the people, the seven priests carrying the seven trumpets before the LORD went forward, blowing their trumpets, and the ark of the LORD's covenant followed them. <sup>9</sup>The armed guard marched ahead of the priests who blew the trumpets, and the rear guard followed the ark. All this time the trumpets were sounding. <sup>10</sup>But Joshua had commanded the army, "Do not give a war cry, do not raise your voices, do not say a word until the day I tell you to shout. Then shout!" <sup>11</sup>So he had the ark of the LORD carried around the city, circling it once. Then the army returned to camp and spent the night there.

<sup>12</sup>Joshua got up early the next morning and the priests took up the ark of the LORD. <sup>13</sup>The seven priests carrying the seven trumpets went forward, marching before the ark of the LORD and blowing the trumpets. The armed men went ahead of them and the rear guard followed the ark of the LORD, while the trumpets kept sounding.

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<sup>14</sup>So on the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp. They did this for six days.

<sup>15</sup>On the seventh day, they got up at daybreak and marched around the city seven times in the same manner, except that on that day they circled the city seven times. <sup>16</sup>The seventh time around, when the priests sounded the trumpet blast, Joshua commanded the army, "Shout! For the LORD has given you the city! <sup>17</sup>The city and all that is in it are to be devoted to the LORD. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall be spared, because she hid the spies we sent. <sup>18</sup>But keep away from the devoted things, so that you will not bring about your own destruction by taking any of them. Otherwise you will make the camp of Israel liable to destruction and bring trouble on it. <sup>19</sup>All the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron are sacred to the LORD and must go into his treasury."

<sup>20</sup>When the trumpets sounded, the army shouted, and at the sound of the trumpet, when the men gave a loud shout, the wall collapsed; so everyone charged straight in, and they took the city. <sup>21</sup>They devoted the city to the LORD and destroyed with the sword every living thing in it—men and women, young and old, cattle, sheep and donkeys.

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<sup>22</sup>Joshua said to the two men who had spied out the land, "Go into the prostitute's house and bring her out and all who belong to her, in accordance with your oath to her." <sup>23</sup>So the young men who had done the spying went in and brought out Rahab, her father and mother, her brothers and sisters and all who belonged to her. They brought out her entire family and put them in a place outside the camp of Israel.

<sup>24</sup>Then they burned the whole city and everything in it, but they put the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron into the treasury of the LORD's house. <sup>25</sup>But Joshua spared Rahab the prostitute, with her family and all who belonged to her, because she hid the men Joshua had sent as spies to Jericho—and she lives among the Israelites to this day.

<sup>26</sup>At that time Joshua pronounced this solemn oath: "Cursed before the LORD is the one who undertakes to rebuild this city, Jericho:

"At the cost of his firstborn son  
he will lay its foundations;  
at the cost of his youngest  
he will set up its gates."

<sup>27</sup>So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame spread throughout the land.

## EQUIP

Read Joshua 5:13-15 and 6:1-5. Who spoke to Joshua, and what message did he deliver?

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Read Joshua 6:6-27. How did Joshua demonstrate courageous faith?

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## ENCOURAGE

Joshua had an encounter with a messenger from God and received clear instructions on what to do when he faced an insurmountable task. While we may not always have a direct message from God, he is always with us. Have you ever received guidance from God when facing something that seemed impossible? How did you respond?

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We see that Joshua followed the instructions he was given in every way, even though it humanly didn't make sense to march around a city to destroy its walls. Sometimes our natural tendencies lead us to doubt what we know God is telling us to do. How can you find courage to make faithful choices that line up with the Lord's values—even when you have doubts?

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## ENTHUSE

This week, take time to reflect on a difficulty you've struggled with in the past. In what ways did you respond to the challenge in a God-honoring fashion? In what ways did you respond to the challenge without relying on the Lord?

This reflection isn't meant to puff up your pride or to make you feel guilty about the past. Instead, it's a way to consider how, based on your past experiences, you can better understand your strengths and weaknesses in trusting the Lord. Use the space below to detail ways that you can follow God more closely when facing difficult times.

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## SOMETHING TO CONSIDER

By Darletta Martinez

*Many years ago, I had an experience that became a lasting lesson on where my focus resides when I'm hurting. It might resonate with you too.*

*As a little background, I'm a "fighter" by nature with a strong sense of survival. I know God created me with these natural tendencies, but emotional trauma early in my life left me with an extra strong desire to take control and fight when I'm faced with a difficult situation. Unfortunately, this has not always served me well: It sometimes draws my focus away from what Christ wants for me.*

*In this particular moment, I was in a period of deep physical pain. I chose to let my natural instincts win. I focused inward. I tuned out the voices of everyone around me, including the people who were trying to help. Out of instinct, I thought I was controlling the situation by "hunkering down" all by myself.*

*That didn't solve anything.*

*Once I reached the point when I thought I couldn't take it anymore, the face of someone I love came into focus. My husband stood over me, holding my face in his hands and giving me clear, quiet direction. His support finally brought peace*

*to my spirit and provided me with the stamina to move through the pain.*

*The lesson I learned through that experience more than twenty years ago has brought me deep spiritual conviction and reassurance in moments when I'm tempted to build a wall, to fight the battle myself. Rather than my self-reliance, it is the face and voice of God that I see and hear. He used that moment in my life to reassure me of his presence. He has reminded me time and time again that focusing on him, listening to his direction, and acting on what he tells me will bring me through whatever it is I face.*

*He has me in his hands. He is looking deep into my eyes and my heart. He is whispering instruction to my spirit.*

*I hear his whispers when the Bible verse I read seems to be exactly what I need. I hear his whispers when a friend gives me a word of encouragement that I need. I hear his whispers through worship songs, in my daily routine, and even through people I encounter while I'm shopping.*

*His whispers tell me to march around the "wall" and be faithful, knowing that he's promised the battle is won. I know this to be true in the large and small moments of life, in the long and the short heartaches, in the great pain and the daily*



challenges. Whatever it is, if I focus—if I focus!—I know he is there.

*My dear friend, what is your Jericho? What seems so impossible that you've stopped seeking him? What pain do you wrestle with endlessly? Whatever it is, he is with you, providing for you, and giving you the next step.*

*Pause. Be still before him... and listen. He still sends messengers with direction and words of hope. His Spirit will speak. He loves you and will provide for you, just as he promises. Do not lose hope or let your circumstances be louder than his whisper. He's here.*

## EQUIP THOUGHTS

**Read Joshua 5:13-15 and 6:1-5. Who spoke to Joshua, and what message did he deliver?** The “man” was the commander of God’s army, perhaps an angel of high rank. He was clearly a significant figure since Joshua needed to remove his sandals on the holy ground, much as Moses did at the burning bush. Through this commander, the Lord gave Joshua specific, seemingly bizarre instructions on how to conquer the walled city of Jericho. The assurance of victory must have bolstered Joshua’s courage! It is an important reminder that God is with us, even in the “impossible.”

**Read Joshua 6:6-27. How did Joshua demonstrate courageous faith?** Joshua’s response is clear and profound. He did exactly what God instructed, and it was successful. While this may seem straightforward, it may not have been an easy choice for Joshua. After all, walking around for seven days wasn’t the typical way an army conquered a city. But he led the Israelites in doing exactly that. They also kept their promise of mercy to Rehab, a resident who feared God and had helped the Israelite spies.

## NOTES

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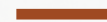


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03

OCTOBER 15, 2023



Be strong and  
courageous  
when tempted  
to compromise.

JOSHUA 6:18-19, 7:1-26

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## JOSHUA 6:18-19 (NIV)

<sup>18</sup>But keep away from the devoted things, so that you will not bring about your own destruction by taking any of them. Otherwise you will make the camp of Israel liable to destruction and bring trouble on it. <sup>19</sup>All the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron are sacred to the LORD and must go into his treasury.”

## JOSHUA 7:1-26 (NIV)

<sup>1</sup>But the Israelites were unfaithful in regard to the devoted things; Achan son of Karmi, the son of Zimri, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of them. So the LORD’s anger burned against Israel.

<sup>2</sup>Now Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is near Beth Aven to the east of Bethel, and told them, “Go up and spy out the region.” So the men went up and spied out Ai.

<sup>3</sup>When they returned to Joshua, they said, “Not all the army will have to go up against Ai. Send two or three thousand men to take it and do not weary the whole army, for only a few people live there.” <sup>4</sup>So about three thousand went up; but they were routed by the men of Ai, <sup>5</sup>who killed about thirty-six of them. They chased the Israelites from the city gate as far as the stone quarries and struck them down on the slopes. At this

the hearts of the people melted in fear and became like water.

<sup>6</sup>Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell facedown to the ground before the ark of the LORD, remaining there till evening. The elders of Israel did the same, and sprinkled dust on their heads. <sup>7</sup>And Joshua said, “Alas, Sovereign LORD, why did you ever bring this people across the Jordan to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us? If only we had been content to stay on the other side of the Jordan! <sup>8</sup>Pardon your servant, Lord. What can I say, now that Israel has been routed by its enemies? <sup>9</sup>The Canaanites and the other people of the country will hear about this and they will surround us and wipe out our name from the earth. What then will you do for your own great name?”

<sup>10</sup>The LORD said to Joshua, “Stand up! What are you doing down on your face? <sup>11</sup>Israel has sinned; they have violated my covenant, which I commanded them to keep. They have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen, they have lied, they have put them with their own possessions. <sup>12</sup>That is why the Israelites cannot stand against their enemies; they turn their backs and run because they have been made liable to destruction. I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy whatever among you is devoted to destruction.

<sup>13</sup>“Go, consecrate the people. Tell them, ‘Consecrate yourselves in preparation for tomorrow; for this is what

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the LORD, the God of Israel, says: There are devoted things among you, Israel. You cannot stand against your enemies until you remove them.

<sup>14</sup>“In the morning, present yourselves tribe by tribe. The tribe the LORD chooses shall come forward clan by clan; the clan the LORD chooses shall come forward family by family; and the family the LORD chooses shall come forward man by man. <sup>15</sup>Whoever is caught with the devoted things shall be destroyed by fire, along with all that belongs to him. He has violated the covenant of the LORD and has done an outrageous thing in Israel!”

<sup>16</sup>Early the next morning Joshua had Israel come forward by tribes, and Judah was chosen. <sup>17</sup>The clans of Judah came forward, and the Zerahites were chosen. He had the clan of the Zerahites come forward by families, and Zimri was chosen. <sup>18</sup>Joshua had his family come forward man by man, and Achan son of Karmi, the son of Zimri, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was chosen.

<sup>19</sup>Then Joshua said to Achan, “My son, give glory to the LORD, the God of Israel, and honor him. Tell me what you have done; do not hide it from me.”

<sup>20</sup>Achan replied, “It is true! I have sinned against the LORD, the God of Israel. This is what I have done: <sup>21</sup>When I saw in the plunder a beautiful robe from Babylonia, two hundred shekels of silver and a bar of gold

weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. They are hidden in the ground inside my tent, with the silver underneath.”

<sup>22</sup>So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent, and there it was, hidden in his tent, with the silver underneath. <sup>23</sup>They took the things from the tent, brought them to Joshua and all the Israelites and spread them out before the LORD.

<sup>24</sup>Then Joshua, together with all Israel, took Achan son of Zerah, the silver, the robe, the gold bar, his sons and daughters, his cattle, donkeys and sheep, his tent and all that he had, to the Valley of Achor. <sup>25</sup>Joshua said, “Why have you brought this trouble on us? The LORD will bring trouble on you today.”

Then all Israel stoned him, and after they had stoned the rest, they burned them. <sup>26</sup>Over Achan they heaped up a large pile of rocks, which remains to this day. Then the LORD turned from his fierce anger. Therefore that place has been called the Valley of Achor ever since.

## EQUIP

Read Joshua 6:18-19. How were the Israelites supposed to show reverence for God as they drove enemies out of the land he was giving them?

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Read Joshua 7:1-12. How did Achan sin against the Lord, and how did this sin affect his fellow Israelites?

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Read Joshua 7:13-26. How did Joshua and the other Israelites demonstrate their commitment to following the Lord's commands?

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## ENCOURAGE

The Israelites had a huge mission in store for them as they took over the land that was promised to their ancestors. In light of their hard work, it would be tempting for them to think they deserved at least some

of the gold and silver they found—even though God was the one blessing them with victories over their enemies. In what situations do you feel entitled to things that God wants you to give to him instead? Consider your time, talents, possessions, and anything else you value.

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Once Joshua discovered that one of the Israelites had committed a terrible sin by trying to steal what was rightfully God's, he didn't make any excuses or hesitate to fix things. Instead, he immediately followed the Lord's instructions on how to set things right. In light of Joshua's example, explain how you can wholeheartedly commit everything from your previous answer to the Lord. Consider something special you can do this week to demonstrate that you entrust God with these things.

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## ENTHUSE

In Joshua 7, we learn that compromising on the Lord's commands—even in secret—had disastrous consequences for Achan and some of his fellow

Israelites. Chances are, our own compromises will not get anyone killed. However, every time we try sidestepping God's mandates, we're telling him that we trust ourselves more than him. So, every sidestep isn't just a little slipup, but rather a step away from the Christlikeness we're called to pursue.

This week, carefully evaluate your actions, including ones you take without other people around. Are there any areas where, perhaps without giving it much thought, you're not fully obeying God's commands for Christlike living? Pray that he would reveal these compromises to you. Confess them to him, and seek his strength as you recommit yourself to following him in every aspect of your life. Use the space below to write about what you discover.

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## **SOMETHING TO CONSIDER**

By Bobby Miller

*Years ago, a new family moved into a house near mine. Not long after they settled in, I learned something interesting about these new neighbors. Apparently, they don't like paying extra money when they have lots of yard waste and other extra trash to get rid of.*

*Rather than take a gargantuan tree branch out to the curb, they decided it would be a good idea to toss the whole thing into a fire pit. The odor travelled across the neighborhood, and the smoke shrouded their backyard. But, in my neck of the woods, burning your garbage is illegal, so a sheriff came and told them to stop.*

*A few uneventful weeks passed, and then these neighbors had somebody build a great, big privacy fence around their property. Once I saw it, I told myself, "Hold on. They're not going to try burning stuff again, right?"*

*They answered my answered a few days later when an unpleasant smell wafted through my windows. I looked outside and, lo and behold, there was a cloud of smoke rising from their backyard. A sheriff paid them a visit once again.*

*These neighbors moved away a while ago, but the image they provided has lodged itself firmly in my mind. Even though we couldn't see the trash they were burning, we could figure out what they were up to. That privacy fence didn't hide it! As the old saying goes, "Where there's smoke, there's fire."*

*Now, before we get too judgmental of those neighbors, it's important to remember that many people overestimate their ability to hide their wrongdoing. In fact, that's practically been a*



*staple of humanity from the get-go: Just look at how Adam and Eve thought they could hide from God after disobeying him. And, as we saw in this session, Achan assumed he could get away with his sin as well.*

*Adam and Eve thought some bushes could hide them from God's judgment. Achan thought keeping his mouth shut could protect him from punishment. My neighbors thought a privacy fence would let them burn their garbage in secret.*

*It sounds ludicrous, right? But stop for a moment and consider this: Most of us think a closed door is enough to keep our sins hidden and harmless.*

*Think about it. Nobody else sees that list of websites you've visited. Nobody else sees what you do at work when your supervisor's not around. Nobody else sees exactly how much you report on your taxes. Nobody else sees how you treat your family in the privacy of your own home.*

*So, have you ever been tempted to compromise just because lots of eyes aren't watching your every move?*

*But we can't always keep our seemingly small sins a secret. They often create clouds of smoke that our doors and privacy fences can't hide. Maybe somebody bursts into the room while a dubious*

*image is on the screen. Maybe the supervisor notices a slip in performance. Maybe the tax forms get flagged. Maybe cracks in the family are turning into terrible wounds. Not so secret anymore.*

*But it was never secret in the first place. Privacy fences, closed doors and shut mouths can't keep anything a secret from God. No compromise sneaks past his radar.*

*Yes, God sees all your sins. But guess what? He sees your faithfulness as well.*

*Whenever you're brave enough to refuse to compromise, God notices your courage.*

*That one picture online looks enticing, but you decide to click away without hesitating, to flee from temptation. That supervisor of yours sure doesn't supervise you much, but you decide to do a good job anyway, working as if for the Lord. That tax form makes it easy to "save" some money, but you decide to report all your earnings anyway, honoring the authorities God has put into place. That family of yours is getting on your nerves, but you decide to treat them with patience and kindness, recognizing that God's given you a whole lot of grace too.*



*Nothing can hide those seemingly small victories from God. So, consider thanking him for the courage he gives you—and celebrate with him.*

## EQUIP THOUGHTS

**Read Joshua 6:18-19. How were the Israelites supposed to show reverence for God as they drove enemies out of the land he was giving them?** During the conquest of Jericho, God clearly told his people that no gold, silver, bronze, or iron they found was meant to be plundered for their own personal gain. Otherwise, the Israelites themselves would be destroyed. Everything of value was to be set aside for the Lord's treasury or destroyed. After all, he was the source of their victories.

**Read Joshua 7:1-12. How did Achan sin against the Lord, and how did this sin affect his fellow Israelites?**

During the raid on Jericho, Achan took an expensive robe and some precious metals that were supposed to be set apart for God. So, the Israelites lost their next battle despite the fact they were going up against a relatively small village. When Joshua cried out in despair, God told him that the defeat was a result of Israel's disobedience to his commands.

**Read Joshua 7:13-26. How did Joshua and the other Israelites demonstrate their commitment to following the Lord's commands?** The people followed God's orders on how to handle the sin that took place among them. Step by step, the Lord exposed Achan as the culprit. Joshua commanded Achan to make a full confession of what he had done. Once they heard his story, the people found the plunder and set it out before the Lord. They stoned Achan to death, leaving the rocks as a solemn reminder that God's anger is not to be taken lightly.

## NOTES

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on the right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

Handwriting practice lines on page 40.

04

OCTOBER 22, 2023



Be strong and  
courageous  
when you  
want to quit.

JOSHUA 13:1-5  
EXODUS 17:8-14  
JOSHUA 21:43-45

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## JOSHUA 13:1-5 (NIV)

<sup>1</sup>When Joshua had grown old, the LORD said to him, “You are now very old, and there are still very large areas of land to be taken over.

<sup>2</sup>“This is the land that remains: all the regions of the Philistines and Geshurites, <sup>3</sup>from the Shihor River on the east of Egypt to the territory of Ekron on the north, all of it counted as Canaanite though held by the five Philistine rulers in Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath and Ekron; the territory of the Avvites <sup>4</sup>on the south; all the land of the Canaanites, from Arah of the Sidonians as far as Aphek and the border of the Amorites; <sup>5</sup>the area of Byblos; and all Lebanon to the east, from Baal Gad below Mount Hermon to Lebo Hamath.

## EXODUS 17:8-14 (NIV)

<sup>8</sup>The Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites at Rephidim. <sup>9</sup>Moses said to Joshua, “Choose some of our men and go out to fight the Amalekites. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hands.”

<sup>10</sup>So Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had ordered, and Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill. <sup>11</sup>As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning. <sup>12</sup>When Moses’

hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up—one on one side, one on the other—so that his hands remained steady till sunset. <sup>13</sup>So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword.

<sup>14</sup>Then the LORD said to Moses, “Write this on a scroll as something to be remembered and make sure that Joshua hears it, because I will completely blot out the name of Amalek from under heaven.”

## JOSHUA 21:43-45 (NIV)

<sup>43</sup>So the LORD gave Israel all the land he had sworn to give their ancestors, and they took possession of it and settled there. <sup>44</sup>The LORD gave them rest on every side, just as he had sworn to their ancestors. Not one of their enemies withstood them; the LORD gave all their enemies into their hands. <sup>45</sup>Not one of all the LORD’S good promises to Israel failed; every one was fulfilled.

## EQUIP

Read Joshua 13:1-5. In old age, what challenges would Joshua still need to face?

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Read Exodus 17:8-14. What happened during this event much earlier in Joshua's life? Although the text does not tell us what Joshua was thinking during this event, what encouraging lessons do you believe he may have learned from it?

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Read Joshua 21:43-45. What did God provide the Israelites through the mission that Joshua carried out? What does this suggest about God's character and Joshua's character?

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## ENCOURAGE

As the Israelites claimed the Promised Land, it was a time of constant war. God was in their midst and protected them, but it was still war. It was not an easy, peaceful transition. It was a brutal, strenuous undertaking. It is easy to imagine that, after so many years of fighting, Joshua was exhausted and ready to step out of his role. God, however, wasn't finished with him. Have you ever had a time in your life when you felt as though you were in a constant battle and wished you could just abandon the fight—even though God wanted you to keep going?

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Consider the struggle you mentioned in the previous question. Did you consult God and fellow believers throughout the battle you faced, and if so, did they help? What lessons could you learn for the future as you search for the strength to keep going, even when you're tempted to give up on something God is calling you to do?

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## ENTHUSE

It is essential to seek the help of God and fellow Christians when we face hardships. It is also essential to be someone that others can come to during their own struggles. This week, set time aside each day to be intentionally present with someone. This can be with your kids, spouse, coworker, or a friend. Put down the screens. Stop planning for what comes next. Be fully present. Consider beginning your time together with a prayer. Ask how they are, and really listen. Be honest with them as well. Share with one another about how you could each use some support. Speak encouragement into their life about how valuable they are to you. Consider ending with a prayer. Write down what you learn from these conversations.

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## SOMETHING TO CONSIDER

By Amanda Scherer

*I am going to be honest. Right now, I feel the heaviness of this broken world weighing on me.*

*Just days before writing this devotional, I learned that one of my cousins committed suicide. He left behind his wife and four children. I don't know*

*how closely he walked with Christ in recent years. But he knew Jesus, and I have hope he is resting in his arms. However, the sting of death when someone you love chooses to give up is devastating.*

*While reflecting on this painful loss, a meme that I saw a few years ago came to my mind. It was a painting of the Last Supper with the caption, "No one talks about the miracle of a man having twelve close friends in his thirties." At the time, I chuckled.*

*But remembering that now doesn't make me smile. In fact, it sends a chill through my bones. It reminds me that the brokenness of this world has isolated us through business and political groups that segregate us. Close friends who support one another aren't easy to find. But loneliness is rampant.*

*I am heartbroken that my cousin felt so alone. I am sad that his children will now grow up without his influence, and his wife without his partnership. I am sad that my aunt has to experience the loss of another son. But I know that I need to lean into trusted friendships and to support others around me.*

*In Genesis 2:18, God says, "It is not good for the man to be alone" (NIV). This doesn't just speak to*

*the relationship between men and women. It speaks to how we need community and belonging. We are not meant to be isolated.*

*We are meant to fight against the world's idea that we're basically alone. The Apostle Paul brilliantly ended his letter to the Ephesians by saying, "Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (6:11-12, NIV).*

*Here's the thing: Paul wrote this deliberately to encourage a group! It wasn't a platitude for individual Christians to suit up in bubble wrap. It wasn't meant as a one-way directive. Paul was saying, "Hold the line!" Stand next to your brothers and sisters in unity. In whatever position you're in, in whatever relationship you're in, "Hold the line!"*

*When my armor is weak, yours may be strong! Where yours is weak, mine may be strong! Let's protect one another with the armor that God so lovingly blessed us with.*

*The faithful Israelites supported each other in this way. We find an example of this in Exodus 17.*

*Joshua could not win on the battlefield without Moses raising his hands to the Lord. When Moses was tired, his friends were there to support him, thus supporting the men fighting on the battlefield, thus protecting all of the Hebrew community.*

*As I grieve the loss of my cousin, I also grieve the losses we have experienced as a community this year. It is easy to slip into a mindset of hopeless. It is easy to be worn out by the heaviness of this broken world. It is easy to want to give up when you are in the midst of distress. It is easy to want to give up when it looks like there is no way out of darkness. It is easy to want to give up when you feel the burden of grief. It is easy to want to give up when you see our country deviate from godly values.*

*But friend, I want to remind you that, even though it looks like Satan has the upper hand, do not be deceived. He has not won! As Didi has said before, "You have value! And you have value to give!" Find someone to hold up your arms in this battle. There is hope! Hold the line!*



## EQUIP THOUGHTS

**Read Joshua 13:1-5. In old age, what challenges would Joshua still need to face?** Joshua's mission was to continue as a warrior and military leader. Even after his many years of service, there was still much land to conquer. It may have seemed challenging for Joshua to continue since, as God clearly said, he was in old age.

**Read Exodus 17:8-14. What happened during this event much earlier in Joshua's life? Although the text does not tell us what Joshua was thinking during this event, what encouraging lessons do you believe he may have learned from it?** In this passage, God miraculously allowed the Israelites, led in battle by Joshua, to gain victory over the hostile Amalekites so long as Moses held his hands up to the Lord. Holding his hands up in the air left his muscles aching, so two men held his arms up for him. From this, Joshua may have learned that victory comes from God, not his own efforts. Also, people can support one another even when they feel bogged down by their weaknesses.

**Read Joshua 21:43-45. What did God provide the Israelites through the mission that Joshua carried out? What does this suggest about God's character and Joshua's character?** Through Joshua's faithful obedience, God gave the people all that he had promised them. Simply put, Joshua was a loyal servant, and the Lord is a God who keeps his promises!

## NOTES

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# BE STRONG AND COURAGEOUS

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