

“Building Strength and Courage”

Made For More Sermon Series | Week Two | Newbreak Church

January 16th, 2022

Newbreak’s Sermon Study Guide is an in-house resource that serves sermon-based Life Groups and/or individuals who want to reflect further on how the message contributes to their spiritual formation.

In this week’s study, we look at how Joshua’s commission teaches us about the relationship between courage and trust and how faith in God fuels our bravery.

Icebreakers for Life Groups

- What (if any) new year’s goals do you need motivation to keep after?
- When was a time you needed courage? What was the setting and what did you do to cultivate courage?

Going Deeper Into the Message

Read Joshua 1:6–9

“How do we develop the strength to pursue what God says is possible?”

Point 1 – Trust God as our source of strength and courage.

“Be strong and very courageous” (Joshua 1:7, NLT) God said to Joshua. These are the kinds of instructions you receive when something risky or dangerous lies ahead. For Joshua, taking possession of the promised land would not be like taking a stroll through Disneyland, where all the thrill and adventure are pre-set to come out with a positive outcome. In other words, you don’t need strength and courage to go to Disneyland (unless you are deathly afraid of roller coasters 😊). **Nevertheless, the point is clear, God calls us to have courageous trust when we are on the brink of something great—something He is calling us to.**

“Courageous trust” might sound like some higher form of faith, for the instances that necessitate greater degrees of bravery, but at the core of our faith in God is courage—no matter to what degree! Trusting God is the courageous choice. But that also doesn’t mean that trusting God borders on irrationality. What could possibly be wiser and more prudent than trusting God? (*Crickets.*) Nothing! So, why could it sometimes be scary to take God at His word? Answers may vary, but they all boil down to the same gist: **it’s scary to trust God as our source of strength because that means that the answer lies outside of ourselves and not within ourselves.**

But maybe that’s what also makes trusting God liberating. We don’t have to be our own source of strength. We have an inexhaustible fountain gushing forth from a God who is eager and willing to equip and empower us for the very tasks that He calls us to accomplish for our good and His glory.

Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Reflection

- When was the last time that you needed courage from God? How did you experience the courage that comes from God as you leaned into Him for strength?
- Why is it encouraging to know that the source of true strength and courage is *outside* of ourselves instead of being *within* us?
- What practical wisdom have you gained from leaning on God for strength, especially in times of need? What have you learned about God’s faithfulness to you in those times?
- How can your community become a courageous community? What steps can be taken?

Point 2 – Prioritize God’s Word like my life depends on it.

“Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful” (Joshua 1:7-8, NIV).

God is always faithful in every promise He gives us. He tells the Israelites here in Joshua 1 that they will be successful wherever they go, that they will be prosperous, ***if*** they meditate on His Word day and night, and ***if*** they are careful to do everything written in it. God redeemed them from Egypt. God protected them in the wilderness. God kept His Word about their discipline of wandering for 40 years for their unbelief. God is always true to what He says. His Word never changes.

Does this mean that if you read Scripture you will be rich, and have no problems for the rest of your life? Does it mean that you will always be healthy and that everyone you love will be well taken care of? Does this mean that you will not have to work for the things that you want? Not at all! This means that God will give you the skills you need to get you through any and every situation God puts before you. God told the Israelites that they would be “prosperous and successful,” but they still had to go in and take the Promised Land. They still had to do battle with the people there. They had to work and strive to take hold of what God was giving them. God’s Word was their instruction manual in how to do it the right way.

“I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you” (Psalms 119:11). This is why we need to prioritize God’s Word in our lives, that we might not sin against Him. When we are free from sin in our own lives, it opens up opportunities for God to do great things in our lives. When we obey His Word, we can go in and take possession of the land He’s giving to us. We can move forward in faith that He is giving us good things out of His abundant riches stored up for His children.

We need to always be meditating on the Word of God to remind ourselves that He always has been, is now, and will always be faithful to His promises. We have short memories when we are going through trials and hardships. We tend to forget all of the ways in which God has blessed us, cared for us, guided us and redeemed our mistakes. When we are daily in His Word, it is a fresh reminder of how faithful He is and how good He is to us.

Determine a time in the day that will work for you to spend one-on-one time with God this week. Make this a priority as you would a meeting with anyone else. Be consistent.

Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Reflection

- What time of day is most quiet for you? How many times a week do you focus on God’s Word during that quiet time?

- What hinders you from reading God's word regularly? What can you do to mitigate those hindrances? If you read regularly, what can you do to apply more of what you read?
- Is there sin in your life that's keeping you from all that God has for you? Bring this to God and ask for His forgiveness. He always forgives. Then look forward to what He will do in your life!

—FINAL CHALLENGE QUESTIONS—

How are you going to think differently in light of what you have read, heard, and discussed this week?

What is one thing you are going to change in your life in light of the sermon?

BONUS: For those of you with kids or around kids: What is one truth from this message that you can share with your kids?