



Friday: October 30, 2015

Be strong and courageous, for you are the one who will lead these people to possess all the land I swore to their ancestors I would give them. Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the instructions Moses gave you. Do not deviate from them, turning either to the right or to the left. Then you will be successful in everything you do.

Joshua 1:6-7 (NLT)

After re-establishing His will for the people of Israel in light of their change in leadership, God uses the following phrase of encouragement three times in four verses: **“Be strong and courageous.”** Once, God even tells Joshua to be “very courageous.” God doesn’t sugarcoat that following Him in leading the people of Israel will require more from Joshua than he has ever needed before. It’s going to be hard. It’s going to require great strength. It will find Joshua in predicaments that would seek to dismay him, frighten him or make his knees go weak.

If we were to read through the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy and chronicle the life of Moses as he led these people, we would see tremendous hardship, disappointment and frustration on the part of Moses. These were not easy people to lead. But we would also repeatedly see incredible demonstrations of God’s power, goodness and intimacy with His people. The reward of intimacy with God far outweighed the toll of the struggle — but that doesn’t mean there wasn’t struggle. Likewise, God says to Joshua: *“Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous,”* Joshua 1:6-7a.

The people were finally to come into the land that had been promised to them by God decades earlier! They would have a home — nomads no longer. They would ultimately dwell in peace, not facing starvation or the threat of walking through foreign lands as sojourners. But to get to that glorious place would take work.

The stories we love to read spend most of their time on the glory. In our lives, what we want the most is the joy of the arrival. But in order for us to enjoy that requires something of us. As believers, we are wired to long for God to do great things in us and through us. How we dream of the day of the realization of those great things! But it will require something of us that will be exceedingly worth the investment because God grows us in the struggle.

Steady obedience is critical to following God in faith.

After reminding Joshua of the end result of his calling, God revealed to Joshua the critical component of his success in leading the people: “...*be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go. This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success,*” Joshua 1:7b-8.

It was not enough for Joshua to realize the need the people had for a leader. It was not enough for Joshua to be willing to lead them. It was not even enough for Joshua to understand what the end result was to be so that he knew the direction to pursue. The critical ingredient was relentlessly following God. Following is different than knowing. Following is “knowing” **with** “application.”

The two-part process that God gave to Joshua in verse 8 was to: 1) meditate on the law day and night and 2) to do what it said. Merely thinking about it day and night would not have accomplished the desired result. It required obeying the Word of God.

Reflect:

Which step of faith that Mark mentioned on Sunday is appropriate for you to take?

1. Come again.
2. Start Praying. (God, how do you want to grow my faith for BTL?)
3. Pray a BIG FAITH prayer that may even scare you. (God, I'm willing to put everything on the table because it's all Yours. What do You want back?)
4. Place your trust in Jesus. Stop trusting yourself more than Jesus.