

Journey Into Fearless Living

LESSON 1 . . . Prerequisites for Fearless Living (Joshua 1:1-18)

More than anything else, fear keeps us from fulfilling God's will for our lives. We fear failure, being different, being labeled as religious fanatics, etc. One of the greatest "fearless living" stories in the Bible is the life of Joshua. About 1,300 years before Christ, Joshua was born into Egyptian slavery. His name means "Jehovah is salvation" and is the Hebrew form of the Greek name translated "Jesus." Moses was the great law-giver who led the Israelites out of Egypt. Joshua was the military genius who fearlessly led them into battle.

In addition to his fearless faith, one of Joshua's most remarkable traits was his pure heart. When Moses came down from Mount Sinai after receiving the Ten Commandments, Joshua was waiting at the foot of the mountain, guarding God's leader. They could hear the noise of the Israelites shouting as they worshipped the golden calf (Ex 32:17a). However, because Joshua doesn't even think in sinful terms, what does he say when he hears the noise (32:17b)?

Because of his pure heart, Joshua can't imagine God's people would be sinning. We need more Joshuas, who don't even think in sinful terms. I love Joshua, and I'm glad I have a grandson named "Joshua." I pray he lives up to that honorable name. There are at least three **prerequisites for fearless living** . . .

Let go of the past (1:1-2).

As the book of Joshua opens, the Israelites have just finished forty years of wandering in the wilderness. As they arrive a second time at the border of the Promised Land, only Joshua and Caleb remain from the original fighting men who left Egypt. All the other men over age twenty died in the wilderness because they lacked faith (Num. 14:29 & Josh. 5:6). What does God now say to Joshua (1:2a)?

Why does God say that to Joshua? Because fearless faith requires letting go of the past. The past may include a bad church experience, failure, sin, divorce, or the death of a spiritual mentor like Moses. Whatever it is, we must let go of the past so we will be ready for the present.

To live fearlessly, **let go of the past** and . . .



NOTES

Trust God’s promises in the present (1:3-6, 7a & 9).

After telling Joshua to **let go of the past**, God tells him He will give the Israelites the land promised to Abraham (1:4; Gen. 15:18). However, in Joshua 1:3 what condition does God place on the promise?

They had to literally step out in faith. God’s promises always have a premise and part of that premise always involves fearless faith. The Lord promised to give them the land, but they had to march over every part of it. “Fearless living” understands God will do His part, but there is always a part for us to do. Faith does not presume on God; it trusts Him as we do His will.

Joshua needs encouragement to take the land because some of the cities are strongly fortified and their armies large and well-trained. Therefore, the Lord tells him no one will *be able to stand* against him (1:5a). Next, we come to the key verse in the book of Joshua and also the key to fearless living—Joshua 1:5b. Write it below:

God never promises our lives will be free of problems or pain. But, He does promise He will be with us through it all.

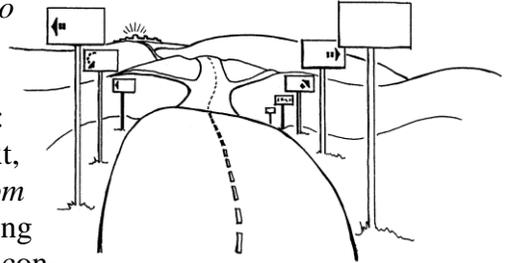
Three times in this chapter God says to Joshua: “*Be strong and courageous*” (1:6, 7, & 9). In other words, “Live fearlessly.” Faith is not just believing; it is doing. Faith means nothing until it causes us to fearlessly do something for God.

Fearless living doesn’t just believe in God; it obeys and trusts Him even when it’s tough. God also tells Joshua not to be *frightened* or *dismayed* because He will be with Him *wherever* he goes (1:9). One of Satan’s best weapons for preventing us from doing God’s will is using circumstances to plant thoughts in our minds that cause us to be *frightened*. The more important the task, the more Satan tries to make us afraid, which results in our being discouraged. At those times, what do we need to be able to say with the psalmist (Psalm 56:11)?

To live fearlessly, **let go of the past, trust God’s promises in the present,** and . . .

Study God’s Word for guidance in the future (1:7b-8 & 10-18).

To prepare Joshua for the future, God tells him to be *careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go*” (1:7b). This means: “Keep on the biblical road and stay out of Satan’s ditches.” Next, God tells Joshua: “*This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth*” (1:8a). This refers to the Hebrew custom of reading and studying the Bible by reading aloud, which greatly aids in concentration. I go over my sermons aloud like this in my study just before I preach. Not letting God’s Word depart from our mouths also includes obeying what command in Deuteronomy 6:7?



God also tells Joshua to “*meditate on it day and night*” (1:8b). How do you *meditate*? If you know how to worry, you know how to *meditate*. Worry is taking a fearful thought and thinking about it over and over from every angle. Meditation is taking a verse of scripture and thinking about it over and over from every angle, looking for application. Meditation always has application as its goal. According to Psalm 1:3a-b, what is the result of meditating on God’s Word?

Therefore, when we *meditate* on the Word of God, we stay spiritually healthy and strong during the difficult seasons of life.

Bible study and scripture memory should never be an end in themselves. We must also *meditate*, which always enables us to apply God’s Word to our lives. Only then can we be sure “*to do according to all that is written in it*” (Josh. 1:8c). What is the promise for reading, studying, meditating on, and obeying God’s Word (Joshua 1:8d)?

A vital key to fearless living is knowing **how** to study the Bible, which requires asking the right questions as you study. A good book with which to begin is the book of James, which like all Bible books, should be studied by paragraphs. Don’t worry about verses you don’t understand; God

will reveal them later. A great way to study a Bible passage is to answer the five SPECS questions:

Is there a (an). . .

- Sin to confess and forsake?
- Promise to claim?
- Example to follow?
- Command to obey?
- Stumbling block to avoid?



Only after using a Bible study method like the SPECS questions to study, meditate on, and obey God's Word, can we experience what wonderful truth found in Psalm 119:105?

After receiving God's commands and promises, Joshua calls the *officers* of Israel together. He tells them to get ready because in three days they cross the Jordan River to *take possession of the land that the LORD* is giving them (1:10-11). Then, Joshua speaks to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh (1:12-14), who had asked Moses' permission to settle on the east side of Jordan. Moses agreed under the condition they first help their brothers take the Promised Land and then return to the east side of Jordan (Num. 32:8-22). However, what did Moses tell them would happen if they did not help their brothers take the Promised Land (Numbers 32:23c)?

After I became a Christian, Virginia, my then wife-to-be, gave me a Bible with this statement written on the flyleaf: "This book will keep you from sin, but sin will keep you from this book." If we do not live by God's book, the Bible, we will sin and our sin will find us out. There are always consequences to sin that eventually catch up with us.

The two-and-a-half tribes agree to help take the land and then return to the east side of Jordan. They also agree to obey Joshua just as they did Moses (1:16-18). The chapter ends with the tribes making what statement to Joshua in the last phrase of verse 18?

Fearless living requires you **let go of the past, trust God's promises in the present, and study God's Word for guidance in the future.**