

# SERMON NOTES

From *In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley*



## Godly Meditation on Courage

KEY PASSAGE: Joshua 1:5-9 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES: Joshua 1:2-4

### ► SUMMARY

**The most important activity in a believer's life is personal, private meditation on God and His Word.**

And sometimes meditation involves thinking deeply about a single verse and seeking to understand what God says He will do and how He desires for us to respond, in light of who He is and what He has promised. Joshua 1:9 is just such a verse because it tells us to be strong and courageous in our obedience to the Lord.

### ► SERMON POINTS

When the people of Israel arrived at the border of the land God had promised them, He spoke to Joshua to encourage him and the people. Forty years earlier, the previous generation of Israelites had stood opposite the land but refused to enter because they were afraid. As a result of their disobedience to God's command, they forfeited the Promised Land and wandered in the wilderness for 40 years until they all died. Now their sons were given the same command, and they needed strength and courage to conquer Canaan and receive all that God promised them.

#### The Lord's Promises

God told Joshua, "Arise, cross this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them, to the sons of Israel. Every place on which the sole of your foot treads, I have given it to you" (Josh. 1:2-3). To further encourage him God assured Joshua that no one would be able to stand against him. Then He gave him this promise: "I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you" (v. 5).

### God's Command

Based on these promises, the Lord then commanded Joshua, "Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them (v. 6). Joshua's success was assured if he would faithfully meditate on the law of Moses, letting it dominate his thoughts and his words, and carefully obeying all that was written in it without turning to the right or the left. Instead of responding with fear and trembling as the previous generation had, Joshua was told to be strong and courageous because the Lord would be with him wherever he went (vv. 7-9). The method for conquering the land of Canaan was not in battle strategies but in meditation and obedience to God's Word.

### Definition of Meditation

Meditation includes reading Scripture, believing what it says, absorbing it into our hearts, and obeying what God says. The goal is to learn to relate to the Lord personally in our walk with Him by listening and applying whatever He says and making it a part of our lives. It requires focusing on the Lord, shutting everything else out, and listening to Him more than talking. We can also meditate on sermons we hear by writing down the major points, thinking about what was taught, and applying these truths to our lives.

### Definition of Courage

Courage is the quality of mind and spirit enabling one to meet danger, opposition, or the challenges of life with fearlessness, calmness, and firmness by trusting and obeying God.

- **The Command.** “Be strong and courageous” (v. 9). This command is repeated three times in this short passage to emphasize our great need in challenging times. If we are not grounded in God’s Word, our first response will be fear. The way to combat this is to set our minds and hearts on the character and work of God. His promise to be with us in every situation gives us the courage to face whatever comes our way.
- **The Basis.** “I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you” (v. 5). God’s unfailing presence is the foundation for strength and courage. He is the one who ultimately determines every circumstance in our lives. Our responsibility is to be rooted and grounded in His truth, believe what God says, and trust Him. To stand strong, we need a clear understanding of who He is since this is the basis for our trust in Him. Knowing that the Lord is the sovereign Ruler over everything, that there is nothing we will ever face that He cannot handle, and that He understands and cares for us gives us a strong basis for trusting and obeying Him. Although He doesn’t reveal all the details of what He is going to do or how He will work in our lives, when our confidence is in God’s nature and attributes, we can be strong and courageous even if His ways are not what we expected.
- **The Caution.** “Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go” (v. 9). This new generation of Israelites was being warned not to respond as their parents had with doubt, unbelief, and fear, which led to failure. But instead, they needed to see through eyes of courage and faith. In the same way, we are called to walk by faith in God, trusting in His promises so we can live in godliness with joy and confidence.
- **The Issue.** “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” (v. 8). Whatever the circumstances, the solution is to meditate upon God’s Word day and night and be careful to do what it says. He may not work everything out exactly as we hope or desire, but He will never fail us.

- **The Consequences.** “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” (v. 7). God didn’t give Joshua all the details of how he would conquer the Promised Land. Instead He commanded him to obey His Word and do whatever it said. This is the same kind of faith and obedience we need to have to live in a manner that is successful in God’s eyes. Meditation on His Word isn’t accomplished by breezing through Scripture but by letting it fill our minds so that we’ll carefully obey it (v. 8).

## ► RESPONSE

- Do you trust God in challenging times? According to today’s passage, what is the evidence of genuine trust in a person’s life? How is it displayed in your emotions, your habits, and your willingness to obey whatever God asks of you?
- How ready are you to obey the Lord when you don’t know the details of how the situation will work out?
- How could meditation each morning on God’s command, “Be strong and courageous,” influence your attitude, thinking, and obedience to Him throughout the day?

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