



## When You Are Afraid – Part 1

**Passage: Joshua 1:1-9**

**Key Verse:**

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

"Courage is not simply one of the virtues, but the form of every virtue at the testing point." C. S. Lewis

Bold courage depends on different circumstances and personalities. Some people were born with a daredevil spirit and they love a physical challenge and difficult situations. There are also the accounts of men and women, who, at the sight of danger, develop a super-natural physical strength and boldness. I remember a story I heard a couple of years ago, about a lady in Florida who allegedly was able to open the mouth of an 800 pound alligator to free her son's leg.

Indeed, random acts of bravery can be attributed to an emergency, to love, and even to a person's belief in a cause.

There is bravery, however, that is based on faith alone. Not on one's ability to succeed, or on the odds for a happy ending. That type of bravery is based exclusively on God's character and strength, not ours.

That is the bravery that God commanded from Joshua. Moses was dead. The man that had led Israel out of Egypt and through the desert, the one who God used to deliver His laws and statutes to His people, the very man who held up his hand as God parted the Red Sea... was called home. How incredibly sorrowful Israel must have felt! There was sadness, there was doubt.

In the midst of this testing moment of sorrow and loss, God spoke to Joshua, commanding him to spearhead the movement that would take His people into the Promised Land:

"Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, cross this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them, to the sons of Israel." (v.2 – NASB)

God's message was simple: "My work does not depend on any one man, even the greatest. Moses died, but my work must go on. Moses is gone, but the Power that made him great is still alive and available to you".

## Scary Charge

Joshua knew that he had to lead God's people into battle against a stronger and better prepared enemy. Don't you know he was scared! We can actually catch a glimpse of Joshua's spirit regarding the task ahead of him by the fact that God commanded him to be strong and courageous four times on chapter One alone.

Joshua was afraid.

So am I.

Every time I am confronted with giants that are bigger and stronger than I am, or big challenges that evoke defeat, my heart wavers.

Being afraid is being human.

But if we are to get to our Promise Land, we need courage. We cannot shrink in the sight of a road block... or a powerful enemy.

As we read through the first chapter of Joshua, we see God challenging us to trust Him as He promises victory. In this passage, the Lord of the battle teaches us what we must do when challenged to do something bigger than what we believe we can handle; or when we face the giants of opposition and trials:

### **#1 Look at the past to trust God for the task ahead:**

"As I was with Moses, so will I be with you"

Can you look back in your life and see the times that God brought you victory against all odds?

The disease that is healed, the prodigal child that comes back home, the broken relationship that is mended.

Joshua had been with Moses in the wilderness, and watched as God delivered Israel from Pharaoh's hand and provided manna for His people...

He saw God's glory in Moses' face when he descended Mount Sinai with the tablets of the law.

He had experienced God...

Therefore he drew his strength from his experience and belief that God was going ahead of him into battle.

Indeed, any time in our lives that God calls us to do something bigger than ourselves, trust is the first step of obedience. The reason Joshua was victorious, was because he remembered, believed and obeyed.

He was not victorious because of his talents, or his ability to fight the battles, but because he knew, that just as it was in the wilderness, God would fight the battle for him.

**#2 God is with you:**

"I will not fail you, nor forsake you".

Not only did God promise victory, He promised that He would be with Joshua in battle.

And so it is with us as we face life's greatest challenges: He will not fail us when we are weak, nor will He forsake us when we feel inadequate. He gives us the task, and He promises to empower us to accomplish it.

Our acceptance of a charge given by God opens His heart and He floods us with His grace, thus empowering us to fulfill His plan for our lives.

If He tells you to go, there's no question about it - He is set ahead of you, opening doors and preparing the battle grounds.

All you need is a little courage to take the first step... and then the next.

And watch Him work!

**Verses to Meditate Upon:**

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline." 2 Timothy 1:7

"But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe." Mark 5:36

"I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken." Psalm 16:8

*Patricia Holbrook is a Bible teacher, writer and national conference speaker. She lives in Kennesaw with her husband and two daughters. Visit her blog to read her devotionals: [www.soaringwithHim.com](http://www.soaringwithHim.com) or email: [pholbrook@soaringwithHim.com](mailto:pholbrook@soaringwithHim.com).*