

Joshua 1:9 NLT

This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.

“Be strong and courageous!” When was the last time we said that to any of our Christian brothers or sisters. When have we ever said that to our pastor, or elders, or those cleaning the bathrooms at church, or the worship team, or the greeters, or those in the coffee ministry, or those going out sharing the gospel? When was the last time anyone said that to us in the ministry God has given us to do?

People tend to think if you praise someone who is doing the work of God, that in a sense it is a sin to do so, because they feel like they are lifting that person up. But do you know what, it's not a sin, because God Himself is doing it right here with Joshua, giving him words of encouragement and even praise for doing His (God's) work.

Me personally, I shy away from receiving praise for what God has given me to do, and I feel a little embarrassed when someone does give me praise. But on the other hand, it is nice to hear once in a while that we are helping others, knowing that we are doing what God has called us to do, and that what we are doing is actually making a difference for the Kingdom of God.

Yet we are so quick to tell others when they are doing something wrong or bad or even give them our “opinions” on how we think they should be doing God's work or even live life. I think it's time for us to stop “discouraging” one another, and to start “encouraging” one another in the things God has given each one of us to do for His Kingdom.

† **Hebrews 10:25 (NLT2)** *And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.*

Things in this world is getting so bad; Therefore, let us ***“encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.”***

What if we truly started saying to others ***“Be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”*** How different would they be in that ministry or just their walk with the Lord?

What if we encouraged others in ministry that we are praying for them and even told them, ***“Be strong and courageous! I'm praying for you. Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”*** And not just including that we are praying for them, but actually praying for them?

God knew that Joshua needed the Lord's words of encouragement, and even in Joshua chapter 1 we read of these words "***Be strong and courageous!***" in verses 6, 7, 9 & 18. And in Deuteronomy chapter 31, Moses speaks these same words to Joshua in verses 6 & 7 before he died, and God said it to Joshua in verse 23 of Deuteronomy chapter 31 as well. Also in Joshua 10:25 Joshua encourages the Children of Israel with these same words of encouragement.

✠ **Joshua 10:25 (NLT2)** *"Don't ever be afraid or discouraged," Joshua told his men. "Be strong and courageous, for the LORD is going to do this to all of your enemies."*

Unfortunately, we have gotten so focused on sin, and making sure everyone is living a sinless life (Yet no one can except Jesus) that we do tend to be more "discouraging" than "encouraging" to others. Don't we all feel better about ourselves and stronger in the Lord when we are encouraged by others? Now, go and do likewise!

✠ **Luke 10:37** *And he said, "He who showed mercy on him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."*

✠ **Galatians 5:14 (MSG)** *For everything we know about God's Word is summed up in a single sentence: Love others as you love yourself. That's an act of true freedom.*

✠ **Luke 6:31 (NLT2)** *Do to others as you would like them to do to you.*