

Joshua 1:9

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

In the book of Joshua, in the very first chapter, we read several times of God telling Joshua to, "***Be strong and of good courage***" and even in verse 7 God not only says to be courageous, but to be "***very courageous***".

† **Joshua 1:7** *Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go.* (underlined for emphasis)

Even reading the end of chapter one in the book of Joshua, we read of the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh saying the same thing to Joshua as well.

† **Joshua 1:18b** *Only be strong and of good courage.*

When we read the first chapter in Joshua, we tend to forget that this was thirty days after Moses had died, as we read at the end of the book of Deuteronomy.

† **Deuteronomy 34:8** *And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days. So the days of weeping and mourning for Moses ended.*

So Joshua had thirty days without Moses guiding him, and thirty days to ponder what he was about to do, which was lead the children of Israel into the Promised Land, something even his mentor, Moses was not allowed to do. Talk about a huge responsibility, no wonder God told him several times to "***be strong and courageous***" because we all need those words of encouragement at times in our lives, especially those who are in ministry.

Yet, when was the last time you gave your pastor, or someone in any type of ministry, words of encouragement? We usually don't think about what they do and the sacrifices that they make for others, and only tend to go to them when we want something from them, but not when we want to be an encouragement to them.

So, even though it's the middle of the week, why not plan on giving your pastor or others in the ministry a few words of encouragement sometime this week or weekend. Maybe a simple email or text. Or what about doing something a little old fashioned, like take time out of your day to buy them a Thank You card to simply thank and encourage them. Or what about an old fashioned phone call, once again thanking them for all they do, and giving them a few words of encouragement. You can even go as far as taking them to lunch during the week or after church on Sunday, or inviting them over to your home for dinner.

It's not that those in ministry are looking for others to tell them how great they are doing; but you know what, it sure helps, especially when you may be thinking that you are not doing a good job, or you feel like you are not really helping out others with the ministry you are in.

Just like Joshua, he was not doing what he was called to do to get a bunch of attention or to be all that, in fact, he was called specifically by God to lead the Children of Israel into the Promised land.

† **Numbers 27:22-23** *So Moses did as the LORD commanded him. He took Joshua and set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation. And he laid his hands on him and inaugurated him, just as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses.*

Yet God knew that Joshua still needed those words of encouragement from God Himself, as well as by those he was leading. If God knew that Joshua needed those words of encouragement, doesn't He know that others in the ministry need it as well? Your words of encouragement this week can help someone in ministry to keep on keeping on, or your lack of words of encouragement can help destroy a ministry.

† **2 Thessalonians 2:13-14** *But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

† **Ephesians 1:15-16** *Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers:*