

Group

Real. Bold. Love.

Adult Sunday School/Small Group Bible Study

13 lessons

FEARLESS CONVERSATION™

**IS GOD IN
CONTROL OF
MY LIFE?**

DISCUSSIONS FROM JOSHUA,
RUTH, AND ESTHER

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

LESSON 1: DOES GOD EXPECT *ME* TO BE STRONG AND COURAGEOUS?

GREETING

**What's one thing you're afraid of? Heights? The dark? Spiders?
Something else?**

**The one word that comes to mind about a time I had to be
strong and courageous is:**

G R O U N D I N G

God's Word: Joshua 1:1-9

¹ After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide: ² "Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites. ³ I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. ⁴ Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Mediterranean Sea in the west. ⁵ No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. ⁶ Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them.

⁷ "Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. ⁸ Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. ⁹ Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

BEHIND THE SCENES

The Hittite country mentioned in verse 4 doesn't refer to the Hittite Empire that was established in the region of modern Turkey around 1600 B.C. It's referring to the region of modern Syria, which was sometimes called "the land of the Hatti."

What are the first questions that come to mind? What words or phrases catch your attention in this passage?

Write down your thoughts and questions here.

You'll find "Behind the Scenes" boxes with Bible commentary provided throughout this lesson. You can read these ahead of time or as you move through the lesson. They're there to help you gain a better understanding of the Bible.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt when Joshua was just a little boy, and Moses was the only leader the Israelites had ever known. Joshua, along with the older Israelites, would have experienced God's power firsthand. They witnessed the Red Sea part and passed through it. They had seen pillars of fire and cloud leading them. And they had miraculously found food, manna, to eat each day.

Although the older Israelites were born and lived as slaves in Egypt, those less than 40 years old had only known an existence of wandering through the desert as nomads. After 40 years of wandering, they were finally going to their promised home.

GRAPPLING

GOING DEEPER

You can help others in your group go deeper by listening with your full attention and by asking questions as others share. Saying "I wonder about what you just said. Tell me more!" will help people know you care about what they're saying and want them to open up more.

What if you were the Israelites? You used to be slaves. You've been wandering in the desert for decades. And now God wants you to enter an unknown land and conquer the people there. What would your thoughts and feelings be?

In verse 9, God promises that "the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." What do you think it means that God was with the Israelites? What does it mean, practically, that God is with us? How might that have a bearing on being strong and courageous?

BEHIND THE SCENES

In Joshua 1:9, God promised he would be with the Israelites. Jesus promised his disciples something similar in Matthew 28:20: "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

What significance (if any) might there be in the fact that God's words, "Be strong and courageous," are stated three times? What would it have meant to Joshua and the people of Israel given their situation? What connections might there be between these commands and the other two commands in this passage?

BEHIND THE SCENES

In Joshua 1:2-4, the word “you” is plural, whereas “you” in verses 5-9 is singular. Bible commentators theorize that verses 2-4 were directed at the Israelite nation, while verses 5-9 were directed at Joshua.

Joshua received two promises and three commandments from God. The promises are: 1) no one will be able to stand against him; 2) the Lord will be with him. The first command (which is repeated three times!) is to be strong and courageous. The second command is to obey the Law, and the third is to meditate on the Law day and night.

INTERESTING THOUGHTS SPARKED BY OTHERS
IN MY GROUP:

BEHIND THE SCENES

God had first promised land to the Israelites hundreds of years earlier through Abraham, the father of the Israelite nation: “The Lord appeared to Abram and said, ‘To your offspring I will give this land.’” (Genesis 12:7). God repeated this promise to Abraham in Genesis 13:14-15 and 15:7.

So why did Abraham’s descendants have to wait hundreds of years to get the land? Genesis 15:16 says, “In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure.” God knew that the people living in this land were going to commit sins so egregious that the culture needed to end.



GROWING

Is there a situation in your life in which you think God is asking you to be strong and courageous? What possible effects could this have on God's mission or purposes in the world?

Write your thoughts here.

FEARLESS CONVERSATION™

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A BOLD APPROACH TO
STUDYING THE BIBLE

IS GOD IN CONTROL OF MY LIFE?

DISCUSSIONS FROM JOSHUA,
RUTH, AND ESTHER

No matter where you are in your faith journey, chances are you still have questions—and that's okay! Fearless Conversation helps you grapple with questions that Christians and non-Christians alike have about God, faith, and the Bible. Each week you'll be able to share your own stories, openly discuss your questions and doubts, and dive deep into the Bible to find the truth.

In this study, you'll explore:

LESSON	SCRIPTURE
Does God expect <i>me</i> to be strong and courageous?	Joshua 1:1-9 (God's charge to Joshua)
Why are imperfect people a part of God's plan?	Joshua 2:1-21 (Rahab and the spies)
Why does God's plan seem so complicated?	Joshua 6:1-21 (The walls of Jericho)
How does my sin impact others?	Joshua 7:1, 19-26 (The sin and punishment of Achan)
How can we live with integrity in a world that doesn't?	Joshua 9:3-21 (The Gibeonites trick Israel)
Why would God protect lawbreakers?	Joshua 20:1-9 (Joshua establishes cities of refuge)
How do my relationships affect my walk with God?	Joshua 23:6-16 (Joshua's final instructions to the Israelites)
Why does God use tragedy as part of his plan?	Ruth 1:6-18 (Ruth follows Naomi—and God)
Are my actions alone enough to let others know I'm a Christian?	Ruth 2:1-13 (Ruth works in Boaz's fields)
What is a redeemer, and what does this have to do with me today?	Ruth 4:1-12 (Boaz as the guardian-redeemer)
When is it okay to hide my faith?	Esther 2:8-20 (Esther becomes queen)
How far should I go to right a wrong?	Esther 4:8-17 (Esther's vow to approach the king)
How do I know God is in control?	Esther 7 (Haman's plot is revealed)

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