

Be of Good Courage

By Bill Scheidler

Text: II Chronicles 15:7

“But you, be strong and do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded” (NKJV).

Do not let your hands be weak...

This phrase is used of someone who is finding their courage is sinking or slipping away. Other translations include:

“Let not your hands be weak or slack” (Ampl.)

“Be strong and do not lose courage [marg. Let your hands drop]” (NAS)

“Be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded” (NIV).

“But be you strong, relax not your efforts, for your work will be rewarded” (Mof).

Courage

Courage is the quality of mind that meets danger or opposition with calmness and firmness. It is the ability to be unshaken in the face of danger.

Synonyms

Synonyms include: Boldness, Bravery, Daring, Fearlessness, Fortitude, Resolution, Valor.

Antonyms

Antonyms include: cowardice, faintheartedness, timidity, terror, dread, fear.

People of Courage

Over and over again in the Scripture God’s people are called upon to be people of courage. That is because there are so many things that can cause our hands to become weak.

When you examine the particular places in the Bible where the people of God are exhorted to take courage you realize that there are common situations that we all face in our journey to take hold of the will of God for our lives.

1. When you step into a new area of responsibility.

Joshua faced this taking over for Moses. Imagine what that must have been like.

God reassures him prior to Moses departure.

“Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the Lord your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave or forsake you.”
Deut. 31:6

God comes to him again after Moses departure in Joshua 1: 2-9 where he tells him three times to be strong and courageous.

2. When you are taking on a large project

Solomon was faced with a large project. Not only was he following the greatest king that ever lived, he was given the task of building perhaps the greatest temple that had ever been built.

“And David said to his son Solomon, ‘Be strong and of good courage, and do it; do not fear nor be dismayed, for the Lord God—my God—will be with you. He will not leave your nor forsake you, until you have finished all the work for the service of the house of the Lord’ (I Chron. 28:20).

3. When you seem to be outnumbered five to one by the enemy.

In Joshua 10 we have the people of God facing conflict with five kings of the Ammorites (Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem, Hoham king of Hebron, Pirum king of Jarmuth, Japhia king of Lachish, Debir king of Eglon). Adonai-Zedek is not enough, he must go get four others to pile on to the people of God.

Joshua is only trying to do what God has called him to do, but there are enemies/obstacles in the path. “I thought the will of God was going to be easier then this.”

Sometimes problems seem to come in bunches.

As Joshua advances toward the enemy God speaks to him in verse 8, “Do not fear them for I have delivered them into your hand; not a man of them shall stand before you.”

Joshua advanced in obedience, got the enemy on the run, God rained large hailstones down on the enemies, God caused the sun to stand still at Joshua's request so that they could finish the job.

Read verse 14, "And there has been no day like that, before it or after it, that the Lord heeded the voice of a man; for the Lord fought for Israel."

Sometimes we experience our greatest days in the face of great opposition. God is on our side. One with God is always a majority. God doesn't fight fair.

God promises to do this to all of our enemies. **Read Verse 24-25**

4. When you are facing an enemy that has never been defeated (Assyria).

Assyria was a fierce nation that had the largest, most powerful army in the world with the most modern weapons of the day. Not only had it never been defeated, but also the nations that it conquered tortured. Here are you with a bow and arrow (much like David before Goliath).

In **II Chronicles 32** Sennacherib, the king of Assyria is encamped against Judah led by Hezekiah. The people of God did what they could to fortify themselves. Joshua encouraged the people to trust the Lord (**Read vs. 7-8**).

After this Sennacherib sent messengers among the people of God to destroy their faith. They said things like:

- You've seen what we have done to other nations, we are going to do the same to you.
- Other people thought their gods were going to save them, but they were not able to. What makes you think your god is any different.
- Hezekiah's words are words of deception, he is leading you into certain death.

There is the huge scene with a rather anti-climactic ending. **Read vs. 20-22.**

5. When you are in the middle of a restoration project that doesn't seem to be moving as fast as it should (Read Hag. 2:3-9).

The project may be in the home, society or the church. It can include a marriage relationship, a backslidden child, a weak church, a corrupt society, etc.

In all of these we can faint, lose heart, and relax in our efforts. We can become discouraged.

You often wonder how many people have failed in a cause because they gave up just before victory.

1. Swimming the English channel in heavy fog.
2. The night darkest before the dawn.

Our biggest problem is that usually we are focusing on the wrong thing. We are focusing on what we see with our natural eyes. We are focusing on the negative circumstances, the obstacles that seem so much stronger than we are.

The Children of Israel before Goliath (I Sam. 17). They were totally intimidated.

David's response, "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God...Let no man's heart fail because of him, your servant will go and fight with this Philistine." (Vs. 26,32)

When David approached the Philistine, he knew who he was and he knew who was standing there with him.

Read: I Samuel 17:45-47

We sometimes forget who we serve. David gives us the secret of his victory in II Sam. 22:1-51 (esp. vs 18) and also in Psalm 142:1-7).

The key that will help us through challenging times involves our focus. There are five things that must serve as our focus if we are to be victorious in tough times.

1. The Strength of the Lord

He is a fortress, a strong tower, a rock – omnipotent
"The Lord your God in your midst, The Mighty One, will save." (Zeph. 3:17).

2. The Integrity of our God

God will vindicate His people (See. Is. 35:3-10).

3. Our Relationship to our God

God did not tell people to be courageous who were not in right relationship to Him (Job 17:9) or who were not involved in the Lord's work. When the enemy attacks it should drive us closer to God (Neh. 6:9).

4. The Power of our Weapons

Moses hands extended to the Lord was more powerful than the armies of Amalek. David's voice of praise was stronger than disappointment.

We need to see the camp of the enemy and realize that they are trembling and fearful because of the pillar of cloud and the reputation of our God (Judg. 7:11ff.)

5. The Reward of the Lord

God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Heb. 11:6).

Jeremiah 31:16 says, "Refrain your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears; for your work shall be rewarded, says the Lord."

II Chronicles 15:7 says, "But you, be strong and do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded!"

I Corinthians 15:58 says, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."