

Memory Verse 4 | Joshua 1:9 (Author, John Majors)

Devotion

There he was, a young summer camper, about halfway up a 100-foot high rock face. He started the climb with plenty of confidence, but now his palms were sweating, calves were quivering, and fingertips were slipping. He looked down and confirmed that the instructor was definitely right when he said not to look down. How much longer could he hold on? One of the main reasons he came to camp was to show his friends how “strong and courageous” he was. He thought they’d all be impressed when he scampered up the wall like a mountain goat chugging energy drinks. And now everything was coming unraveled.

Joshua 1:9 says, “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

Rock climbing takes a good dose of both strength and courage. And God definitely calls us to be strong and courageous. In fact, in this verse, he **COMMANDS** it. That’s no mere polite suggestion. If you believe in God, it should inspire confidence and courage for everything you face! Ah, but here’s the catch: This whole “strong and courageous” thing isn’t really about rock climbing, and it isn’t about *your* strength and courage.

Notice what this verse says is the basis of our strength: “for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” This verse is not describing a kind of strength and a courage that’s based on our own ability to be

strong and courageous. No, it's a strength and courage based on who God is; on how strong and courageous HE is. Like when the neighborhood bully was about to give you a new haircut (so nice of him), but you both saw your dad coming. A surge of strength and courage rushed over you, not because you were suddenly bigger and stronger, but because of the strength and courage of your dad, and you trusted in that. That's the kind of "strong and courageous" this verse is talking about. This kind of courage is based on something stronger than us: Something that's outside of us.

Back to our climber left dangling on the rock face. At just about the point he was going to give up, the guide yelled down "I've got you! Just sit back in your harness and take a break: lean into the strength of the rope." See, he began the climb by strapping into a harness and attaching that to a rope so that he couldn't fall. He leaned back on the rope for a moment. His legs stopped shaking. Arms stopped quivering. His toenails recovered. He realized he was safe. He couldn't fall. Even if he slipped. He was able to regain strength and footing and courage and continue up the mountain.

When you encounter the difficult trials of life, you can lean on your own strength and courage for a season, but there comes a point you need something stronger than yourself to continue. Lean into the strength and the courage of the Lord.

Questions

In this passage "strong and courageous" can be thought of as one idea, kind of like "fast and furious," "Red White and Blue," or "peanut butter and jelly." (yummmm). Who do you think of when you think of

someone who is “strong and courageous?” What person comes to mind? How do you want to be like them? (*Maybe a family member? Another kid in school? A Grandparent? Sports Figure? A missionary?*).

Bonus questions if time allows:

2. What do you think is their main source of strength and courage?
3. What area of life do you feel like you need some strength or courage today?

Prayer

God, we all face situations every day when we need strength and courage. And we are often tempted to lean on our own strength and courage, to depend on ourselves. Help us to look to you first and foremost and to lean on the strength and courage of who you are in every situation. Give us your strength and courage to trust you completely to meet our every need.