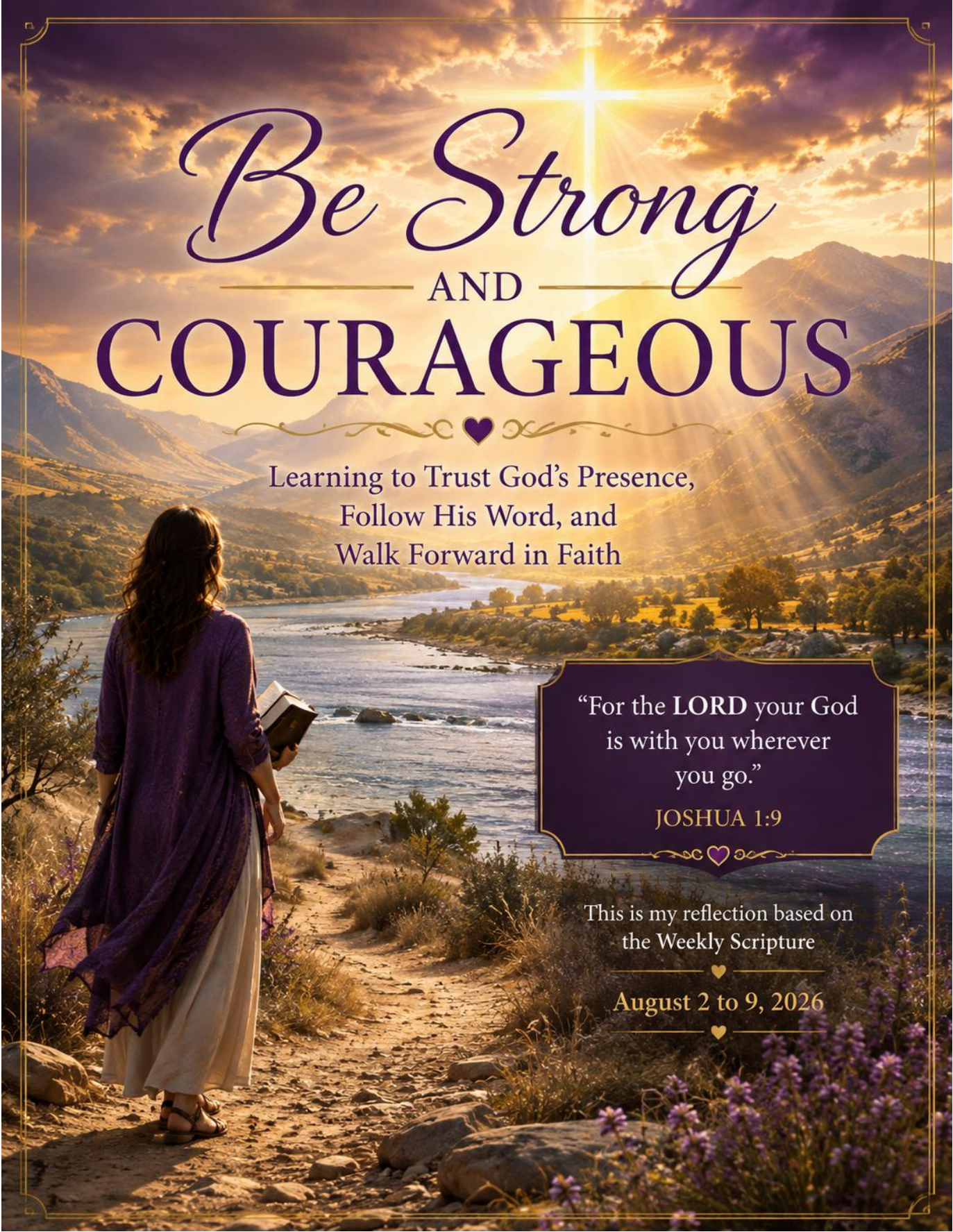




Be Strong AND COURAGEOUS

Learning to Trust God's Presence,
Follow His Word, and
Walk Forward in Faith

"For the **LORD** your God
is with you wherever
you go."

JOSHUA 1:9

This is my reflection based on
the Weekly Scripture

August 2 to 9, 2026

August 6, 2026

Going Through “This Week’s Scripture” From My Website

Scripture Passage

Joshua 1:9 says, “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” (New Living Translation, 2023).

This verse alone gives me so much comfort. Just knowing that my heavenly Father is always with me wherever I go makes me stop and say, “**Wow! How wonderful is that?**” I cannot think of anyone on earth who could promise to be with me every moment, in every place, and through every situation. People may love us deeply, but they cannot always be beside us. God can. His presence is not limited by distance, time, weakness, or circumstances.

Joshua 1:9 was originally spoken directly to Joshua as he prepared to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land. However, the rest of Scripture also confirms that God remains present with His people. God promises, “*I will never fail you. I will never abandon you*” (**Hebrews 13:5**). Jesus also told His followers, “*And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age*” (**Matthew 28:20**). Because of these promises, I can receive the truth behind **Joshua 1:9** with confidence: I do not have to face what God places before me alone.

Sometimes we do not realize how wonderful God’s presence is or recognize the ways He has been working in our lives. I was once that way. I did not know this verse or understand the promise of God’s presence. Yet, as I look back over the past 54 years, I can see where God was with me through every trial, every hurt, and every season of joy.

I did not personally come to know God until I was 33 years old, when I placed my faith in Jesus Christ, prayed for His forgiveness, and was baptized. Even then, it took more than 15 years for me to begin truly understanding who God is and what His truth means for my life. Before that, I knew there had to be Someone greater than me, but I did not yet understand who He was.

That is one of the ways the enemy works in this world. Satan does not want people to see the truth about God or understand the good news of Jesus Christ. Scripture calls Satan “*the god of this world*” and explains that he blinds the minds of those who do not believe so they cannot see the light of the gospel (**2 Corinthians 4:4**). **First John 5:19** also tells us that “*the world around us is under the control of the evil one.*” However, Satan

is not equal to God, and he is never outside God's authority. **God remains sovereign, faithful, and able to open our eyes to His truth.**

What amazes me is that God knew me before I knew Him. He told *Jeremiah*, "*I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb*" (*Jeremiah 1:5*). David also wrote that God saw him and knew the details of his life before his days had even begun (*Psalms 139:13–16*). **These passages do not mean that everyone automatically has a saving relationship with God, but they do show us that no human life is hidden from Him. He is our Creator, and He knows us completely.**

Looking back, I can now recognize moments when God showed me mercy, preserved my life, and gently drew me toward Him, even when I did not understand what He was doing. *Jesus said, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them to me"* (*John 6:44*). God was patiently working in ways I could not yet see, bringing me to a place where I would open my heart, seek Him, and begin learning His truth.

Once we begin seeking God through His Word, our eyes gradually open to the lies we have believed. We begin to see our lives differently. We recognize places where God was present, even though we did not understand Him at the time. We also begin to see how patiently He has dealt with us. *Second Peter 3:9* says that the **Lord is patient because He does not want anyone to be destroyed but desires people to repent.** *Romans 2:4* also teaches that God's kindness is intended to lead us toward repentance.

I am so grateful that God did not give up on me. He was patient while I struggled, questioned, learned, and slowly began to understand His truth. The more I look back, the more I can see that His faithfulness was present throughout my story. Even during the years when I did not yet know Him personally, He knew me, showed me mercy, and was drawing me toward the truth.

When God places a calling upon a person's life, as He did with Abraham, Moses, and Joshua, He also provides what is needed to walk forward in obedience.

- Abraham was called to leave what was familiar and travel to a land God would show him (*Genesis 12:1–4*).
- Moses felt inadequate and questioned whether he was capable of doing what God asked, but God answered, "*I will be with you*" (*Exodus 3:12*).
- Joshua faced the enormous responsibility of leading Israel after Moses, yet God commanded him to be strong and courageous because God's presence would go with him.



This does not mean the road will always be easy or that we will never experience fear, suffering, or uncertainty. It means we do not have to move forward in our own strength. **God prepares the way according to His will, gives us strength for each step, and remains present as we walk into the unknown.** **Proverbs 3:5–6** reminds us to trust the Lord rather than depend only on our own understanding. When we acknowledge Him and follow His direction, He shows us the path we are to take.

That is what **Joshua 1:9** is helping me understand: **courage does not mean I never feel afraid. Courage means I continue trusting and obeying God because I know He is with me.**



Background and Purpose of the Book of Joshua

As God led me to look more closely at the background of the Book of Joshua, I learned that its human author is not known with certainty, although Joshua is traditionally believed to have contributed to the account. The events of the book take place after the death of Moses, when God called Joshua to lead the Israelites across the Jordan River and into the land He had promised them. Joshua had already demonstrated his faith in God years earlier when he was one of the twelve men sent to explore the land. While ten of the men returned with a fearful and discouraging report, Joshua and Caleb trusted God and encouraged the people to believe that He would give them the land (**Numbers 13:25–33; 14:6–9**).

The Book of Joshua reminds us that God is faithful to keep His promises. It records how He guided His people, gave Joshua the courage to lead, and remained with them as they entered unfamiliar territory. Its message encourages us to remain strong and courageous, not because we are powerful on our own, but because God is with us and can be trusted to accomplish what He has promised. This background and purpose are summarized from the introductory material to Joshua in the *Courage for Life: New Living Translation Study Bible for Women* (2023, p. 268).



Looking at Joshua 1:1–8: The Lord’s Charge to Joshua

Before reaching the main verse in Joshua 1:9, God led me to look more closely at verses 1–8. This section is titled **“The Lord’s Charge to Joshua.”** Moses had died, and God called Joshua to take his place as the leader of Israel. Joshua was responsible for leading the people across the Jordan River and into the land God had promised to give their ancestors.

God first promised this land to Abraham and his descendants. In *Genesis 12:7, God told Abraham, “I will give this land to your descendants.”* God repeated and expanded that promise in *Genesis 15:18 and Genesis 17:8*. Later, when the Israelites were enslaved in Egypt, God reminded Moses of the same covenant promise:

“I will bring you into the land I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I will give it to you as your very own possession. I am the LORD!” (Exodus 6:8).

These verses show that the land of Canaan was a specific covenant promise God made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the nation of Israel. Joshua was not beginning a new promise; he was being called to participate in the fulfillment of a promise God had made generations earlier. This reminds me that God does not forget what He has promised, even when many years pass before we see the fulfillment.

When I read about this promise, it warms my heart. I understand that the physical promise of Canaan was given specifically to Israel, so I should not claim that exact land promise as though it were personally made to me. However, as a believer in Jesus Christ, I am connected to Abraham through faith. *Galatians 3:29 says, “And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children of Abraham. You are his heirs, and God’s promise to Abraham belongs to you.”* This does not mean that every promise God gave Israel automatically applies to me in exactly the same way. It means that through Christ, I share in the spiritual blessing God promised would come through Abraham — the blessing of salvation, faith, and belonging to God’s family (*Genesis 12:3; Galatians 3:7–9, 14*).

The truth I can carry into my own life is that the same faithful God who kept His covenant with Israel remains faithful to His people today. God was with Abraham, Moses, and Joshua, and He promises to remain with those who belong to Christ. *Jesus said, “And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20). Hebrews 13:5 also reminds us that God has said, “I will never fail you. I will never abandon you.”*



I may not be fighting the same physical battles Israel fought when entering Canaan, but I am involved in a spiritual battle. Scripture tells us, *“For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world” (Ephesians 6:12)*. Satan works through deception, temptation, accusation, and discouragement, but he is not equal to God and does not have unlimited authority. Jesus has already defeated the powers of darkness through His death and resurrection (**Colossians 2:15**). Because I belong to Christ, I do not have to live as though Satan has the final word over my life.

I also need to be careful about how I describe my own calling. I am not Joshua, and I am not leading people into the physical Promised Land. Joshua had a unique assignment in God’s plan for Israel. **Yet his obedience encourages me as I follow the calling God has placed upon my life. God has called me to use my story, my writing, and what He teaches me through His Word to offer hope, encouragement, and faith to people who are broken, hurting, or spiritually weary.**

The “promised land” for Christians should not simply be defined as receiving every blessing we desire or living without hardship. **Our greatest promise is reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ, eternal life in His presence, and the assurance that He is forming us into the image of Christ.** *Romans 5:1 says, “Therefore, since we have been made right in God’s sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us.”* Through Christ, we have access to God, forgiveness of sin, the presence of the Holy Spirit, and the hope of eternal life.

I may not be physically taking people into a land, but I can point them toward the One who saves, restores, and gives hope. *Psalms 147:3 says, “He heals the brokenhearted and bandages their wounds.”* Jesus also invites those who are tired and burdened to come to Him for rest (**Matthew 11:28–30**). Through my writing, I want to show hurting people that God sees them, that He has not abandoned them, and that they can come to Him honestly.

Joshua 1:3 says, “I promise you what I promised Moses: ‘Wherever you set foot, you will be on land I have given you.’” In its original context, this promise concerned the land God was giving Israel. I should not take this verse to mean that God has promised to give me ownership of every place I physically walk. However, it still teaches me something important about obedience: Joshua had to move forward and walk into what God had already promised to provide.



That speaks deeply to me because I often struggle as I walk through the journey and purpose God has called me to fulfill. At times, I feel resistance, discouragement, fear, and spiritual attack. Satan has opposed God's work throughout Scripture, and he continues to seek ways to distract and discourage believers. *First Peter 5:8 warns us to stay alert because our enemy "prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour." Yet the next verse tells us how to respond: "Stand firm against him and be strong in your faith" (1 Peter 5:9).*

When I read and meditate on God's Word, pray, and obey His leading, I open my heart and mind to what He is teaching me. Sometimes God even uses a song, a conversation, or a painful experience to direct me back to Scripture. Those things do not replace the Bible, but God may use them to get my attention and lead me into a deeper study of His truth. His Word remains the standard by which I test what I hear, feel, and believe (**Acts 17:11; 1 John 4:1**).

It took me a long time to reach this point in my life. In the beginning, following God and learning to recognize His guidance was difficult. I did not always understand His Word, and I did not always know how to apply it. But God was patient with me. *Second Peter 3:9 tells us that the Lord is patient, and Philippians 1:6 reminds us that "God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished."*

After approximately 20 years of learning, growing, struggling, and being corrected by God, I am now at a place where I know to turn toward Him when discouragement or spiritual attack comes. That does not mean I never feel afraid, overwhelmed, or confused. It means I have learned where to take those feelings. I pray and ask God to show me what is true, reveal where my thinking is wrong, and guide me through His Word. **James 1:5** says that when we need wisdom, we should ask God, and He will give it generously.

I share this because I do not want anyone to become discouraged when they first begin seeking God, learning who He says they are, or trying to understand their purpose. Spiritual growth takes time. We do not become mature believers overnight. We grow by continuing to seek God, read His Word, pray, obey what He teaches us, and depend upon the Holy Spirit. *Second Peter 3:18 tells us to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."*



Joshua 1:5–6 says: “No one will be able to stand against you as long as you live. For I will be with you as I was with Moses. I will not fail you or abandon you. Be strong and courageous, for you are the one who will lead these people to possess all the land I swore to their ancestors I would give them.”

These two verses give me the reassurance I need: God is with me, and He will not fail or abandon me. In the original passage, God was speaking directly to Joshua and promising to equip him for the specific responsibility of leading Israel. I cannot take Joshua’s exact assignment as my own, but I can hold on to the truth that God remains faithful to those He calls and that He does not expect us to carry out His work without His presence and strength.

These verses also remind me that Satan does not have the final authority over my life or over the work God has called me to do. The enemy may attack through fear, discouragement, doubt, temptation, or lies, but Scripture tells us to submit ourselves to God and resist the devil, and he will flee from us (**James 4:7**). *First John 4:4 also reminds believers that “the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world.”* This does not mean I will never face spiritual opposition. It means that I do not face it alone and that Satan cannot overturn God’s purposes.

God will not abandon me as I seek to point broken and hurting people toward Him.

He is the One who restores, heals, and makes people whole. I cannot heal anyone in my own strength, but I can share the truth of His Word and direct people to the One who can.

Psalm 147:3 says, “He heals the brokenhearted and bandages their wounds.” Isaiah 61:1 also speaks of bringing good news to the poor, comforting the brokenhearted, and proclaiming freedom to those who are bound. Jesus later applied this passage to His own ministry, showing that true restoration is found in Him (Luke 4:18–21).

As I continue reading, verse 8 brings the focus back to God’s Word. God told Joshua to study the **Book of Instruction** continually, meditate on it day and night, and carefully obey everything written in it. For Joshua, the Book of Instruction referred to the law God had already given through Moses. **For us today, we have the full message of Scripture, which teaches us who God is, reveals His will, corrects us, and prepares us to live faithfully.**



How can we know God's Word if we do not read it, study it, and meditate on it? That took me a while to understand. I can read a verse and know information about God, but if I never slow down, think about what it means, pray over it, and apply it to my life, I may never allow that truth to transform me. Psalm 1:2 describes the godly person as someone who delights in the Lord's instruction and meditates on it day and night.

Psalm 119:11 says, "I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you."

There is a difference between knowing about God and knowing Him through a genuine relationship. We can collect facts, remember Bible stories, and quote verses, but if we never obey what we learn, our knowledge remains only information. *Jesus said, "If you love me, obey my commandments" (John 14:15). James 1:22 gives the same warning: "But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves."*

That is why meditation and application matter so much. **Biblical meditation is not emptying our minds; it is filling our minds with God's truth and thinking deeply about how that truth should shape our beliefs, decisions, attitudes, and actions.**

Romans 12:2 teaches that we are transformed by changing the way we think.

Colossians 3:16 tells us to let the message about Christ fill our lives. As God's Word settles into our hearts, the Holy Spirit uses it to correct our thinking and form us into the people God has called us to become.

The study note in the Bible I am using helped make this especially personal for me:

"Listen to **Joshua 1** and reject the worldly lie that you can be a godly leader without God's help. Replace it with the Truth that as a godly leader, you are to meditate on God's Word, apply it to your everyday life, and always depend on God for guidance" (*Courage for Life: New Living Translation Study Bible for Women*, 2023, p. 269).

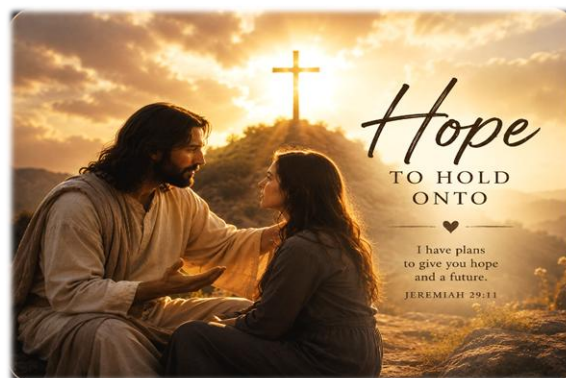
I love this because it describes where God has brought me now. I reject the world's idea that leadership is about appearing strong, having all the answers, or depending only on myself. I want to replace that way of thinking with God's truth about leadership. A godly leader depends upon God, remains grounded in His Word, and obeys what He teaches.



I can fulfill God's calling and purpose for my life only by depending on Him for guidance. **Proverbs 3:5–6** tells me to trust in the Lord with all my heart, not depend on my own understanding, seek His will in everything I do, and allow Him to show me which path to take. *Psalm 119:105 says, "Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path."* These verses remind me that God usually does not show me the entire journey at once. He gives me enough light to take the next faithful step.

Studying God's Word is not enough by itself; I must also obey what He reveals to me. *Jesus asked, "So why do you keep calling me 'Lord, Lord!' when you don't do what I say?" (Luke 6:46).* Obedience shows that I trust Him. It does not earn His love or salvation, but it is the response of a heart that belongs to Him. **Philippians 2:13** reminds me that God is working in me, giving me both the desire and the power to do what pleases Him.

As I read **Joshua 1:1–8**, I see that courage, obedience, meditation on Scripture, and dependence upon God all belong together. Joshua could not lead faithfully by relying on his own ability. He needed God's presence, God's instruction, and the courage to obey. The same is true for me. I cannot carry out my calling through determination alone. I need God to guide me, strengthen me, correct me, and continually bring me back to His Word.





Promises of God That Connect With This Study

- God will be with His people: *"I will never fail you. I will never abandon you"* (Hebrews 13:5).
- God will guide those who trust Him: *"Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take"* (Proverbs 3:6).
- God gives wisdom when we ask: *"If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you"* (James 1:5).
- God strengthens us for what He calls us to do: *"For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength"* (Philippians 4:13).
- God continues the work He begins in us: *"God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished"* (Philippians 1:6).
- God's Word guides our path: *"Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path"* (Psalm 119:105).
- God is greater than the enemy: *"The Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world"* (1 John 4:4).



Reflecting on This Week's Scripture: August 2–9, 2026

As I continue reflecting on this week's Scripture, I come to the personal reflection question:

Where do I need God's strength and courage this week?

The study notes in the Bible I am using also include two questions that connect with **Joshua 1:7–8**:

Overcome obstacles: Have I been guilty of moving away from God's way? What do I need to overcome so that I can return to obedience?

Commit to change: How often do I study, meditate on, and obey God's Word?

These questions are adapted from the study notes in the *Courage for Life: New Living Translation Study Bible for Women* (2023, p. 269).

After reading these questions, I stopped and prayed for God to show me my answers. Then I became still and allowed time for God to bring things to my heart and mind, always remembering that anything I believe He is showing me must agree with His written Word:



Prayer Before Reflection

God, please open my heart and mind to receive whatever You want to reveal to me through these questions. Help me honestly recognize the areas in which I need Your strength, courage, wisdom, and correction. Give me the knowledge and understanding I need so that I can continue growing closer to You. In Jesus' name, **amen**.

After praying, do your best to sit quietly and listen. This may feel difficult at first, and that is okay. Write down whatever honestly comes to your mind and then compare those thoughts with the truth of Scripture. You may be surprised by what God brings to your attention. He already knows what you need before you ask Him. *Jesus said, "Your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him!" (Matthew 6:8). Psalm 139:1–4 also teaches that God knows our thoughts, actions, and words before we speak them.*

Do not become upset with yourself if one concern comes to mind—or several. This is not about condemning yourself. It is about becoming open before God and allowing

Him to reveal where healing, growth, correction, or encouragement is needed. *Romans 8:1 reminds us that “there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus.” God’s correction is not intended to destroy us. He disciplines His children because He loves us and desires our growth (Hebrews 12:6, 10–11).*

Give this reflection a try. I am also asking God to help you as you continue your journey of knowing Him.



Where Do I Need God’s Strength and Courage This Week?

The greatest area in which I need God’s strength and encouragement right now is the online ministry website He helped me build. I have dedicated this ministry to Him, and its purpose is to share the guidance, understanding, comfort, and hope He has given me with people who are broken and hurting. *Second Corinthians 1:3–4* says that God comforts us in our troubles so that we can comfort others with the same comfort He has given us.

Anyone who has read about my life or followed my writings may understand that one of my greatest struggles is doubting whether what I say or write is good enough or biblically correct. Throughout much of my life, I was told that what I said or did was wrong. I was also made to feel that everything had to be perfect before it could be accepted.

God’s Word has been teaching me something different. **My confidence cannot rest in believing that I am perfect or that I will never make a mistake. My confidence must rest in God, His Word, and the work of the Holy Spirit within me.** *Second Corinthians 3:5* says, “It is not that we think we are qualified to do anything on our own. Our qualification comes from God.”

For approximately 20 years, I have been studying God’s Word and learning about my relationship with Him. For the past several years, I have also attended Liberty University so that I could develop a deeper biblical and theological understanding of

Scripture. Education does not make me spiritually superior, nor does a degree give me authority over God's Word. However, God has used this education to train me to study more carefully, recognize context, and communicate biblical truth responsibly.

I do not speak because I believe I know everything. I speak because God calls His people to share what He has done and teach others what they have learned from His Word. *Psalm 107:2 says, "Has the LORD redeemed you? Then speak out! Tell others he has redeemed you from your enemies." First Peter 4:10–11 also teaches that believers should use the gifts God has given them to serve others and that anyone who speaks should do so as one who communicates God's words.*

Even though I know these truths, I still struggle with doubt when I publish something about God. My past wounds sometimes become places where Satan attempts to accuse, discourage, or silence me. **Revelation 12:10** describes Satan as an accuser, and **John 8:44** identifies him as the father of lies. Yet I continue writing and publishing because I want to be obedient to God. I do not have to wait until every feeling of insecurity disappears before I obey Him.

What I write is never meant to bring praise to me. It is intended to point people toward God and show them what He can do in a person's life. I am only a servant and an instrument He can use. *Paul explained, "It's not important who does the planting, or who does the watering. What's important is that God makes the seed grow" (1 Corinthians 3:7). Second Corinthians 4:7 also reminds us that we are fragile human vessels carrying a treasure from God, making it clear that the power comes from Him and not from us.*

Therefore, my prayer during this first week of making the ministry public is that God will continue reminding me that I belong to Him. I ask Him to reassure me that when my writing agrees with His Word, honors Jesus Christ, and is offered in obedience, He can use it to reach the people who need it. I pray that He will comfort me when doubt begins to rise and remind me of His truth instead of the harmful messages I heard for so many years.

Isaiah 41:10 speaks directly to this need: "Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you." I need God to keep bringing me back to that truth.





Overcoming Obstacles

The next question asks whether I have been guilty of deviating from God's way. My honest answer is yes. There are times when my emotions, fears, doubts, or thoughts begin pulling me away from what I know God has said.

I am not perfect—far from it. However, I have learned to call upon God, even when part of me does not feel like doing so, because I believe His truth is greater than my emotions. I know that God's love for me is not based on flawless performance. **Romans 8:38–39** teaches that nothing can separate believers from the love of God revealed in Christ Jesus.

That does not mean my choices do not matter or that sin should be ignored. When I recognize that I have moved away from God's way, I must confess it and return to Him. **First John 1:9** promises that when we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us. **Proverbs 28:13** also teaches that those who confess and turn away from sin will receive mercy. I sometimes say, "*God has my back,*" but what I mean is that God remains faithful, watches over me, and gives me what I need to stand against the enemy. This is not a promise that I will never experience suffering or consequences. It means that when I submit myself to God and resist the devil, I do not have to fight in my own strength (**James 4:7**).

What do I need to do to overcome these obstacles? I need to continue doing what God has been teaching me: study His Word, meditate upon it, apply it to my life, and keep choosing His truth even when my emotions or thoughts are telling me something different. **Psalm 119:9** asks *how a person can remain pure and answers, "By obeying your word."* **Psalm 119:30** also says, *"I have chosen to be faithful; I have determined to live by your regulations."*

Obedience is a continuing choice. Sometimes I may need to make that choice repeatedly in the same day. Every time doubt, fear, or discouragement comes, I can bring it before God and choose again to believe what He has said.



Committing to Change

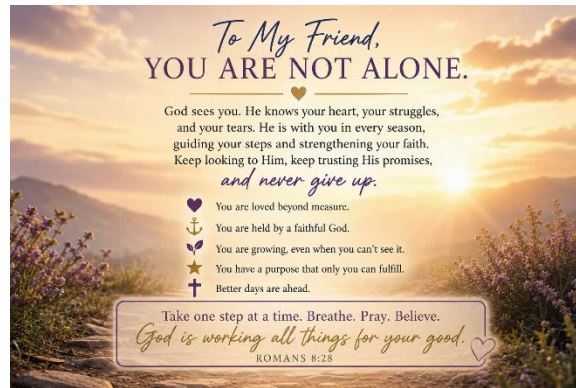
This question may be different for me than it is for some readers because I have been attending school since May 2022. As part of my education, I read and study God's Word almost every day. In a sense, I have had no choice but to remain involved with Scripture because my courses require it.

However, I now recognize that God knew exactly what I needed. He knew my tendency to begin something and then stop before finishing it. He knew that if He did not place me in an environment requiring consistency, I might not have developed the study habits I have today. God used school not only to educate me but also to discipline me, mature me, and teach me how to remain committed.

Psalm 139:1–3 tells us that God knows us completely. He understands our thoughts, our movements, and everything we do. He knows our strengths, but He also knows the patterns and weaknesses that can interfere with our growth. *Proverbs 16:9 says, "We can make our plans, but the LORD determines our steps."* Looking back, I can see that God directed my steps into school because He knew it would become part of my spiritual formation.

I am not saying that everyone needs to attend a university or seminary. Please do not think you must go to school unless God is leading you in that direction. A person can know God deeply without earning a degree. The Holy Spirit teaches believers, and God has given His Word to guide all His people (**John 14:26; 2 Timothy 3:16–17**).

My point is that God knows each of us personally and understands what circumstances, people, responsibilities, and forms of discipline may help us grow. *Philippians 2:13 says, "For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him."* God knew what I needed to become more consistent, and He faithfully provided it.



God Never Intended Us to Face Life Alone

As I continued through the weekly Scripture study, one statement stood out to me: **God never intended for us to face life's challenges alone.**

You can read through the Bible and see this truth repeatedly:

- God told Moses, *"I will be with you"* when He called him to confront Pharaoh (**Exodus 3:12**).
- God promised Joshua that He would not fail or abandon him (**Joshua 1:5**).
- David found courage by remembering that God was with him even in the darkest valley (**Psalms 23:4**).
- Jesus sent His disciples out together rather than leaving each one to minister alone (**Mark 6:7**).
- The early believers prayed, learned, ate, worshiped, and shared life together (**Acts 2:42–47**).
- Believers are instructed to encourage one another and help carry each other's burdens (**Galatians 6:2; Hebrews 10:24–25**).

It took me a long time to believe this. For much of my life, I felt as though I had to be strong by myself. But the more I studied God's Word, the more I realized that He did not create us to live independently from Him or in complete isolation from other believers. We need God's presence, the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the truth of Scripture, and healthy Christian community.

We experience difficulty because we live in a fallen world affected by sin. Scripture says that *"the world around us is under the control of the evil one"* (1 John 5:19). However, this does not mean Satan owns the earth or rules independently of God. *Psalm 24:1 declares, "The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it."* Satan exercises real but limited influence within this fallen world, while God remains completely sovereign over all creation.

Jesus never promised His followers a life without suffering. Instead, *He said, "Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world"* (John 16:33). Believers may experience pain, loss, rejection, persecution, illness, and even physical death. **Second Timothy 3:12** says that everyone who desires to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

Some followers of Christ may even lose their lives because of their faith. Jesus told the church in Smyrna, *"Remain faithful even when facing death, and I will give you the crown of life"* (Revelation 2:10). Yet physical death is not the end for those who belong to Christ. Jesus said, *"I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying"* (John 11:25).

God holds His people securely. Jesus said that no one can snatch His sheep from His hand or the Father's hand (**John 10:27–29**). This does not mean that nothing painful will happen to us. It means that no suffering, enemy, loss, or even death can separate us from Christ or remove us from His eternal care.

Because we belong to Jesus, we can have confidence about what awaits us when our earthly lives end. Paul wrote that being absent from the body means being at home with the Lord (**2 Corinthians 5:8**). He also said that his desire was *"to depart and be with Christ, which would be far better"* (Philippians 1:23). Our ultimate hope is not that this life will become free from pain. Our hope is that Jesus has conquered sin and death and has promised eternal life in His presence to everyone who trusts in Him.

That truth does not remove every fear or make suffering easy. But it gives us somewhere firm to stand. Satan may attack, the world may disappoint us, and our circumstances may change, but God remains sovereign. He is with us now, He holds us through every trial, and He will bring His people safely into His eternal presence.





Encouragement for You

As you reflect on **Joshua 1**, please remember that being strong and courageous does not mean pretending you are never afraid. It means bringing your fear to God and continuing to trust Him. It means returning to His Word when your emotions become overwhelming, asking for His wisdom when you do not know what to do, and taking the next step He places before you.

You do not have to understand everything at once. You do not have to become spiritually mature overnight. Begin where you are. Read one passage. **Ask God one honest question. Write down one truth. Obey Him in one area. Then come back tomorrow and continue.**

God knows your history, your struggles, and the areas where you need healing. He also knows the purpose for which He created you. The same God who patiently worked in my life is able to work patiently in yours. Do not become discouraged because growth takes time. **God is still working.**

When fear tells you that you cannot continue, remember that God is with you. When shame tells you that you are disqualified, remember that there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ. When the enemy tells you that your life has no purpose, remember that you are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do the good works He prepared for you (**Ephesians 2:10**).

Be strong and courageous—not because you are able to handle everything alone, but because the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.



Prayer of Thanks

Heavenly Father, thank You for being patient with me throughout my journey.

Thank You for never abandoning me, even during the years when I did not recognize Your presence or understand what You were doing in my life. **Thank You** for using Your Word to correct my thinking, heal the places that have been wounded, and teach me who You truly are.

Thank You for giving me the strength and courage to continue walking in the calling You have placed upon my life. When doubt rises within me, remind me that my confidence comes from You and not from my own perfection. Help me remain humble, teachable, and obedient. Protect me from speaking from pride or relying only upon my understanding. **Let everything I write point people toward You and bring glory to Your name.**

Father, I also **thank You** for every person reading this study. Open their hearts to Your truth. Show them where they need Your strength, courage, wisdom, healing, or correction. Help them understand that they do not have to face life alone. Draw them closer to You, surround them with faithful believers, and give them the courage to obey whatever You reveal.

Thank You for Your faithfulness, Your presence, and Your promise that nothing can separate Your children from Your love. Continue guiding us, changing us, and teaching us to trust You one step at a time.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Prayerfully prepared by

Christie Johnson

Christie Johnson

Servant of God

"Pointing people to the hope, healing, and transformation found in Jesus Christ."