BIBLE CONNECTIONS WITH JOSEPH

Joshua 1:9 (read in 1:1–9)

A companion study from the set Bible Verses for Anxiety, Through the Six Steps · Bible Connections with Joseph

> This study walks Joshua 1:9 (read in 1:1–9) through the six steps: 1 Read It — the passage and what's around it · 2 Cross Over — who wrote it, to whom, and what was happening · 3 Stand in Their World — hear it the way they heard it · 4 Verify It — hold it up against the fullness of Scripture · 5 Come Back — put what you found into today's language · 6 Carry It Home — what it asks of you, and how it points to Jesus.
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> If it's heavy, pray about it and talk to someone you trust (or the friend who gave you this sheet). If you don't have anyone yet, a local church is a good place to ask.
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> Keep your own Bible open; this page sends you into the passage rather than printing it. It quotes the Christian Standard Bible (CSB); where you see LORD in capital letters, that is how the CSB prints God's personal name. A reference like 4:6 means chapter 4, verse 6; 'v.' means verse.

1 · Read It — the passage and what's around it

Joshua 1:9 is the verse on the plaques and graphics. It ends with a reason: "for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." Read it in your own Bible, then read Joshua 1:1–9, the whole speech it closes. God's speech to Joshua runs from verse 2 to the end of verse 9; in verse 10 Joshua turns and gives his first orders to the people's officers. Inside the speech the command to be strong and courageous comes three times, in verses 6, 7 and 9, and verse 9 opens by pointing back to the first two: "Haven't I commanded you: be strong and courageous?" Hold on to that ending reason, because it is the line this whole study follows: God's command to be strong and courageous rests on His promise to go with His people.

◆ **Write down what the courage command is attached to each time: verse 6, verse 7, and verse 9.**

2 · Cross Over — who wrote it, to whom, and what was happening

God is speaking to one man, Joshua, on the edge of a campaign. Moses, the man who led Israel, God's people, out of Egypt, has just died, and Joshua, "Moses's assistant" (v. 1), is the one who has to lead Israel across the Jordan River and into the land God promised their ancestors. Verse 6 is about distributing that land, verse 7 about keeping the whole instruction Moses commanded, verse 8 about the book of instruction, the law Moses wrote down, staying in Joshua's mouth (more on that law in step 5). The courage command is wrapped around the land, which was Joshua's task, and around God's word, which runs through the whole speech. And verse 5 gives the promise everything rests on: no one will be able to stand against Joshua, and God will be with him as He was with Moses, and will not leave him or abandon him. Then look at how verse 9 begins. Hebrew often makes a strong statement in the form of a question, and here the question seems to work as an emphatic yes. "Haven't I commanded you?" is not God asking Joshua to search his memory. It comes out as "I have commanded you," with the weight on the I: I, the Lord, am the one who gave you this command. English does the same thing. A father who tells his nervous

son, “Didn’t I say I’d be right there?” is not asking a question; he is making a promise, and reminding the boy who made it. Putting His own authority in front of the command this way lifts the worry and hesitation off His servant: the one who commands is the one who will be there. So the command to be courageous comes with God’s own authority in front of it and God’s own presence at the end of it.

◆ **Read Joshua 1:1–5. What has just happened, what is Joshua being handed, and what does God promise him in verse 5?**

3 · Stand in Their World — hear it the way they heard it

Stand where Joshua stands. Moses is dead, a nation is waiting on you, and the Jordan is in front of you, running over its banks at that time of year (Joshua 3:15), with no bridge and no boats to cross it. Nearly forty years earlier Joshua was one of the twelve men sent to scout this same land, and he watched the people refuse to go in because they were afraid of who lived there and would not trust God’s word. Read Numbers 14:1–9. All twelve scouts had seen the same strong cities and the same powerful people (Numbers 13:28). Ten of them said Israel could not go in. Two, Caleb and Joshua, said go, and in Numbers 14:6–9 they give their reason: if the Lord is pleased with His people, He will bring them into the land, so do not rebel against Him and do not be afraid of the people there, because the Lord is with us. Their courage did not come from seeing a smaller enemy than the others saw. It came from counting God in, and it cost them: the whole community talked of stoning them (Numbers 14:10). Numbers 14:9 calls the refusal what it was: rebellion against the Lord. Look closely at what the rebellion was. It was the people turning their backs on God’s word and refusing to go. Feeling afraid was not the rebellion. If your heart pounds when you read a verse like this, you are not standing where that crowd stood. The courage God asks for is going with Him while you are still afraid, the same reason Caleb and Joshua gave: the Lord is with His people. Now, nearly forty years later, the same land is in front of Joshua, and God says, “Do not be afraid or discouraged.” God also hands him something to carry: the book of the law Moses wrote. Joshua is to keep it in his mouth because he is now the one who will give the orders and settle the people’s disputes, and he is to do it by that book.

◆ **Write what “do not be afraid or discouraged” meant to Joshua at that moment. Then write how your situation differs from his.**

4 · Verify It — hold it up against the fullness of Scripture

A first reading of this verse can land in one of two places: “this is a promise for me to claim exactly as Joshua got it,” or “this was only ever for Joshua.” Hold both up against the fullness of Scripture before you keep either one. Read Deuteronomy 31:6–8, and notice who hears “be strong and courageous” first, and

who hears it second. In verse 6 Moses says it to the whole people of Israel; only in verses 7–8 does he turn and say it to Joshua. So the call to courage belonged to God's people before it was handed to their leader. Compare the last sentence of Deuteronomy 31:8 with Joshua 1:9: it is the same "Do not be afraid or discouraged," which shows God repeating to Joshua what Moses had already told him. Then read Psalm 31:24, which calls everyone who puts their hope in the Lord to be strong and courageous, so the call reaches past any one leader to all who trust Him. Read 1 Corinthians 16:13, where Paul tells an ordinary church, people with no army to lead and no land to divide, to be courageous and strong, so the call reaches Christians in the New Testament. Then look at where the reason sits: Deuteronomy 31:6 gives it in the same breath as the command — the Lord goes with you — and Hebrews 13:5–6 takes the promise of Joshua 1:5 and Deuteronomy 31:6 and gives it to believers in these words: "I will never leave you or abandon you." That shows the promise behind the courage being handed on as well as the command. This is the check that decides what carries over from Joshua 1: a word spoken to Joshua reaches you when the rest of Scripture, and the New Testament above all, gives it to God's people. Step 5 runs that same check on verse 8. If what you find reworks your first reading, let it.

◆ **Who is called to courage in these passages, and what reason does Deuteronomy 31:6 give for it? Does your first reading of Joshua 1:9 square with all of Scripture, or does it need reworking?**

5 · Come Back — put what you found into today's language

Now sort the passage into two piles: what belonged to Joshua, and what carries over to you. Joshua's assignment was his: leading Israel into the land, winning its battles, and dividing it among the tribes. That task was never yours. The promise in verse 5 that no one would be able to stand against him as long as he lived goes in that pile too; it was the guarantee that came with his task.

Verse 8 takes more care. Joshua is told to "carefully observe everything written in" the book of instruction, the law Moses wrote; that was Joshua's command. Before you apply a command like that to yourself, verify it elsewhere in Scripture and see how it is tied to Christians in the New Testament. The courage and the promise carry over to us: Paul tells the church in Corinth, "be courageous, be strong" (1 Corinthians 16:13), and Psalm 31:24 makes the same call. But the command to keep everything in the law of Moses was given to Israel. Here is how that carries over to us, one step at a time.

How the law Moses wrote carries over to us

This part is here because the video this study goes with ("7 Bible Verses for Anxiety (What They Really Say)" on the Bible Connections with Joseph YouTube channel) set this question aside: it called how that law carries over to us "a lot to unpack" and left the answer to this page. Verse 8 tells Joshua to keep the whole law, so it is fair to ask whether it is ours to keep too, and if so, how much of it. The question matters, because it decides how you read every Old Testament command, not only this one. So this page takes the time to answer it. If you came to this page for courage today, take one thing from this section with you now: the law does not reach a believer as a test to pass in order to be saved, or as a verdict hanging over you, because there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1). Then you can skip

ahead to the line that begins “Fifth, back to the center of the passage,” near the end of step 5, and come back here when you are ready.

First, what it was. “The law Moses wrote” is the first five books of the Bible, Genesis through Deuteronomy, often called the Law or the books of Moses. Deuteronomy 31:24–26 tells how Moses wrote it in a book and had it kept beside the ark, the sacred chest at the center of Israel’s worship. At the heart of those books are the commands God gave Israel at Mount Sinai (Exodus 19–24), when He made a covenant with them: a binding agreement in which God commits Himself to a people as their God and tells them how to live as His people. God gave those commands to a people He had already brought out of Egypt (Exodus 20:2), so they were the way of life for a rescued people, not a way to earn His favor. So when God tells Joshua to keep this book in his mouth, He is handing him the covenant law of the nation he now leads. It was the part of the Bible Israel had at that time; the rest of the Old Testament and the whole New Testament came later. Some of it was written for Joshua’s exact task, such as the laws for Israel’s wars and for dividing the land among the tribes.

Second, why it doesn’t all reach us the same way. Jesus said He came to fulfill the Law, not to abolish it (Matthew 5:17–18). Then the New Testament shows what that fulfilling means, and it does not treat every command the same way. Some commands it sets aside, because what they pictured has come: Jesus declares all foods clean (Mark 7:19); God shows Peter the same thing in a vision (Acts 10:9–16); the church’s leaders decide that Gentile believers (people who are not Jewish) do not have to take on the whole law of Moses (Acts 15). Hebrews calls the covenant made at Sinai old next to the new covenant Jesus brings (Hebrews 8:6–13). Other commands the New Testament repeats and hands straight to Christians: honor your father and mother, do not steal, do not murder, do not covet, love your neighbor as yourself (Ephesians 6:1–3; Romans 13:8–10). So the question is never simply “Is it in the Old Testament?” The question is “What does the New Testament do with this command?”

Third, one careful way to sort it. The Westminster Confession of Faith (a 1640s summary of Bible teaching used by Reformed churches; a tool, not an authority over the Bible) gathers what that New Testament check finds across the whole of Scripture. In chapter 19 it sorts the law into three kinds. Not every church uses these three labels, but many Christians who don’t still agree on the check underneath them: the New Testament shows which commands Christ fulfilled and which He hands to His people. Here is each kind in plain words, with examples and the New Testament check, and then how to use it.

Kind one: the ceremonial laws. These governed Israel’s worship: the sacrifices, the priests, the tabernacle and later the temple, the festivals, the rules for clean and unclean food, and the washings that made a person ready to come before God. The Confession says God gave them to Israel “as a church under age,” the way a child is taught with pictures before he can grasp the whole thing, and that they were “prefiguring Christ,” picturing Him ahead of time (chapter 19, section 3). Paul says the same: these things were a shadow, and the substance is Christ (Colossians 2:16–17), and the law was a guardian until Christ came (Galatians 3:24–25). The examples show how the check works. The animal sacrifices of Leviticus 1–7 were offered again and again; Jesus offered Himself once for all time (Hebrews 10:1–14). Israel’s priests served and died and were replaced; Jesus is a priest who lives forever and intercedes for His people (Hebrews 7:23–27). The food laws marked Israel off from the nations; Jesus declares all foods clean (Mark 7:19). So the ceremonial laws are set aside, and the Confession calls this a freedom Christ bought for believers, freedom from “the yoke of the ceremonial law” (20.1). What reaches you is what they pointed to: Jesus Himself. For an anxious heart that matters. You do not come to God through a system of offerings you

might get wrong. Hebrews says that because of Jesus' sacrifice you can draw near with confidence and a clean conscience (Hebrews 10:19–22).

Kind two: the judicial laws. These ran Israel as a nation. The Confession says God gave them to Israel "as a body politic," a people with its own government, and that they "expired together with the State of that people" (19.4). They covered Israel's courts and judges, its penalties for crimes, its rules for land and inheritance, the cities of refuge where a person who killed someone by accident could flee (Numbers 35), and the year of Jubilee when family land went back to its family (Leviticus 25). Israel was God's people and a nation at the same time; the church is God's people from every nation, and it is not a nation with civil courts and laws of its own. So these laws stay with Israel. But the Confession adds that they still bind others as far as their "general equity" requires: the basic fairness and care underneath them. Two examples. Deuteronomy 22:8 told an Israelite to put a railing around his flat roof, where people gathered, so no one would fall and die. Leviticus 19:9–10 told farmers to leave the edges of their fields for the poor and the foreigner to gather. You likely have no flat roof and no grain field, but the fairness underneath both still carries over: you look after the safety of the people under your roof, and you make room in what you have for people in need, as the New Testament also says (Ephesians 4:28; 1 John 3:17).

Kind three: the moral law. This is God's will for how every person is to live, because it comes from who God is. The Confession says it was given at Sinai in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20), the first four (some churches count them differently) about our duty toward God and the other six about our duty toward other people (19.2). Jesus summed it up in two commands: love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind, and love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:37–40). Paul says love fulfills the law (Romans 13:8–10). The check comes out plainly here, because the New Testament repeats these commands to Christians: Ephesians 6:1–3 gives the command to honor your father and mother; Ephesians 4:28 gives the command against stealing, and turns it toward work and generosity; Romans 13:9 lists several more. So the Confession says the moral law binds everyone, believers included (19.5).

It binds because it comes from who God is, not only because the New Testament repeats it. Jesus said He did not come to abolish the Law but to fulfill it (Matthew 5:17), so the Ten Commandments still stand, along with the other commands that show God's own character: His holiness, justice, faithfulness and love. God calls His people to be holy because He is holy, and Peter hands that same call to Christians (Leviticus 19:2; 1 Peter 1:15–16).

Here is the part an anxious reader most needs to hear. The moral law does not reach a believer as a test to pass in order to be saved, or as a verdict hanging over you. The Confession says believers are not under it "as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified, or condemned" (19.6). (A covenant of works means a standing with God you would have to earn by keeping the law perfectly yourself; "justified" means declared right with God.) Jesus kept the law perfectly and died for the ways we have not, so there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, and His Spirit now helps us live it (Romans 8:1–4). The Confession calls the moral law, for believers, "a rule of life": a guide that shows you God's will and how to walk in it (19.6). And it says the obedience Christ makes possible is given "not out of slavish fear, but a childlike love and willing mind" (20.1), with the Spirit of Christ enabling us to do it "freely, and cheerfully" (19.7). Read that way, the moral law is the shape of the life God is already growing in you, not a list to be anxious about.

To finish the third point, how to sort a command yourself. When you meet an Old Testament command, ask three questions. Is it about Israel's worship, the sacrifices, priests, feasts and rituals that pictured Christ?

Then look for how Christ fulfilled it, and let that be what reaches you. Is it about running Israel as a nation, its courts, penalties and land? Then look for the fairness underneath it. Is it about how God wants every person to live, toward Him and toward other people? Then it still stands, because it shows who God is; look for how Jesus and the apostles apply it, and where the New Testament repeats it. In every case, let the New Testament decide. If you aren't sure, this is where a pastor or a good commentary (a book that explains a book of the Bible verse by verse) earns its place.

Fourth, with the three kinds sorted, what carries over from Joshua 1:7–8. Run those two verses through the same check. Joshua was told to meditate on God's instruction day and night and to carefully do what it says. The New Testament gives that to Christians, now with the whole Bible in view: Colossians 3:16 tells the church to let the word of Christ live richly among them; 2 Timothy 3:16–17 says all Scripture is inspired by God and equips His people for every good work; James 1:22–25 tells believers to do what the word says, not only to hear it. So meditating on God's Word and carefully obeying it carry over to you. So do the courage and the presence, as step 4 showed (1 Corinthians 16:13; Hebrews 13:5). The success promised in verses 7 and 8 was tied to Joshua's task, and the Hebrew word behind "success" in verse 7 can also mean acting wisely; that wisdom is what God's Word still gives the people who live by it. What stays with Israel is the law as Israel's national covenant code: the sacrifices and the priesthood, the food laws, the courts and penalties, and the orders for taking and dividing the land.

Fifth, back to the center of the passage. Joshua's task and Israel's national law stay with them. What carries over is what the New Testament hands to Christians: God's Word on your mind and in your life, the call to be strong and courageous, and the reason God gave Joshua for it. That reason still holds: He goes with His people (Deuteronomy 31:6; Hebrews 13:5–6). That is God's character. You see it again and again as you read the Old Testament, and it does not change, so it is true for you too. That's where courage comes from, not from how brave you feel. Courage that rests on that reason can sit right beside a shaking hand. Hebrews 13:5–6 shows the New Testament handing the promise of God's presence to ordinary believers. So the whole passage, law and all, comes back to its center: God's command to be strong and courageous rests on His promise to go with His people.

◆ **Pick one line from Joshua 1:7–8 and run the check yourself: where does the New Testament give it to Christians, and how? Then write verse 9 in your own words for your own situation, leaving out Joshua's assignment and keeping the call to courage and the reason behind it.**

6 · Carry It Home — what it asks of you, and how it points to Jesus

Joshua was told to be courageous because God would be with him wherever he went, and he was given God's Word to keep in his mouth while he went. Think about the place where you most need that courage this week, and what it would look like to step into it trusting that He goes with you, with His Word on your mind. That is the center line of the passage brought home: God's command to be strong and courageous rests on His promise to go with His people.

Here's a connection to weigh, not something these verses say by themselves. Joshua's name and Jesus' name are the same name. "Joshua" comes from the Hebrew Yehoshua, a name that means something like "the Lord saves." The New Testament was written in Greek, and Greek-speaking Jews had a Greek translation of the Old Testament; in both, the name is spelled Iēsous. That is the name we say in English as "Jesus." So when your Bible says Joshua in Acts 7:45 and Hebrews 4:8, the Greek behind it is the same name as Jesus. A man named "the Lord saves" led God's people into the land; centuries later a child was given the same name, and Matthew 1:21 says why: He will save His people from their sins.

Now the rest. Read Hebrews 4:8: "For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day." Here is the argument in plain steps. In Psalm 95, written long after Joshua (Hebrews 4:7 says God spoke it through David), God still invites His people to enter His rest today. If Joshua leading Israel into the land had been the full rest God meant, there would have been nothing left to invite them to. So the land was real rest from wandering and war, and it was also a picture of something larger. Hebrews 4:9–10 names it: a Sabbath rest remains for God's people, and whoever enters it rests from his own works the way God rested from His. Hebrews 4:3 says who enters it: we who have believed. It is the rest of belonging to God through Christ, no longer working to earn your place with Him, now and in the life to come. Christians have long read Joshua as a picture pointing ahead to Jesus: Joshua brought the people into the land, and Jesus brings His people into the rest the land only pictured. Weigh that connection against the text, and hold it as a connection the New Testament invites, not a claim Joshua 1 makes on its own.

For the second question below, two places to start: Matthew 28:20, where Jesus, sending His followers out, promises to be with His people always, to the end of the age, the same promise of presence that verse 9 ends on; and Hebrews 13:5, where the promise God gave Joshua, never to leave or abandon him, is given to everyone who belongs to Christ.

◆ **What does this passage ask of you? And how does it point you to Jesus?**

> This study is one of eight in Bible Verses for Anxiety, Through the Six Steps. The full set: bibleconnectionswithjoseph.com/companions/anxiety-verses/ If you want to run this on another passage, the one-page Six Steps sheet is at bibleconnectionswithjoseph.com/companions/six-steps/.

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