



A Devotional

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

– Joshua 1:9



Don't Be Afraid of The In-Between

Joshua 1:9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

Have you ever wanted a change, but the thought of it scared you so much you decided to stay put? Maybe you settled for something less because it was familiar. Settling "into" is more accurate. It's like getting stuck.

By doing nothing, we think we've avoided a painful experience. In some weird way, this act of settling lessens the fear of the in-between. You know that empty place.

It's in-between what we know and what's next.

Maybe you need to make some changes in your life. For example, you'd like to start living a healthier lifestyle, go back to school, or start looking for that dream job. Or maybe it's something more critical, like finally addressing that addiction, sincerely working on your marriage, or figuring out what to do after losing a spouse.

A lot of negative self-talk can help us justify staying comfortable right where we are.

Self-talk like this:

- I'm too _____.
- No one will want me.
- I might fail and look foolish for giving up what I have.
- I can't make a change now.
- Why try? Nothing ever works out for me.
- It might not work out, and then I'll be empty-handed.

I'm sorry if you are in that empty space right now. You want to let go of being afraid but don't know how. So, you don't do anything for fear of failure and rejection. So, now you're stuck. Can you relate?

When I finally got the courage to start looking for a new job, the first interview didn't work out for me. I must have been right. All that negative self-talk was all true, at least that's what I believed—no in-between for me. So I stayed put for another ten years.

You see, I didn't ask God what He wanted.

Instead, I chose what I saw in myself and settled into what I knew. Not because it was good, but because it felt comfortable. I hadn't considered what God planned for me. I feared the in-between.

I never even invited God into the conversation.

Fear leads to a forty-year attitude adjustment

In the book of Numbers, Moses sends out spies to check out the promised land. Upon their return, he gets a bad report. Well, the news wasn't all bad; the other side of the Jordan River was indeed a land of milk and honey.



To prove it, the spies brought back pomegranates, figs, and grapes so large it took two men to carry the branch between them on a pole.

It was the people occupying the land that worried the spies. These people were not what the spies expected. They were like giants and lived in fortified cities, for goodness sake! The spies saw themselves as grasshoppers waiting to be crushed.

Being stuck in the perceived comfort of what they knew, the spies couldn't see how to take the land God promised their forefathers. They feared the in-between.

They didn't invite God into their conversation either.

Joshua and Caleb were the only holdouts who believed they should go up and take possession of the land by all means. They trusted what God saw in them and what He promised. But the spies were adamant against the idea of crossing the Jordan, and that fearful self-talk spilled out and managed to influence a nation to stay put.

God promised a destination to the Israelites, but fear stopped them. Their fear stemmed from a lack of trust in God, so He paused the plan for a forty-year attitude adjustment.

Fast forward forty years. After wandering in a desert until all the fearful generations died. Joshua courageously led the people across the Jordan River on dry ground and took possession of the promised land. Did you get that? ON DRY GROUND! God is trustworthy. He always creates a way to accomplish His plan.

God created everything, including the in-between. And He provided an inerrant account of it in His Word because He knew we would need attitude adjustments from time to time. We are human, after all, and God knows that. So you can trust God to guide you through those changes you want to make, even the hard ones.

So how does that work? First, always bring God into the conversations of your life.

Speaking truth over your fears

God loves you, and His perfect love casts out fear, clearing the way for us to trust Him. I encourage you to develop a deep relationship with God. You can do that by setting aside time to spend with Him every day in prayer and His Word to learn about His promises and plans for you.

God has a destination for you, friend. Trust Him to get you there. If you aren't sure how to start, here's a prayer that may help.

Prayer

Lord, thank you for loving me. Help me remember that when I am fearful of making changes, I can trust your guidance to help me make the right choices. Would you please help me to see what you see in me, and not the weaknesses I perceive?

I don't want to settle for what I think is best. I want only your best in my life. Lord, help me be courageous in the in-between places of life and remember Your promise to be there, leading me through. Help me to trust you, Lord, even when I'm struggling. Thank you for being there for me every step of the way. And when I can't feel your presence, help me to be still and know that you God and You are with me.

In Jesus' name, Amen

Getting unstuck

Now it's time for a little of the work I mentioned earlier. Let's figure out how to take that first step together. And then another. I want you to courageously step into the in-between with Jesus, even if you have to do it afraid.

1. What is keeping you stuck? Name it here.

2. What makes staying in this empty place all that comfortable?

3. Bring God into the conversation. Write out a prayer in the space below. It's okay to use extra paper. But be sure to tell Him why you are afraid to meet Him in the in-between.

Getting unstuck

4. Now, choose just one scripture from the list below and try to memorize it. Write it out and carry it with you. Then, use it as a weapon against those negative thoughts keeping you stuck. God's word is powerful, so don't be afraid to use it. (No need to limit yourself to just one.)

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."
—Joshua 1:9

The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,
—Romans 8:16

for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.
—2 Timothy 1:7

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.
—1 John 3:1a

Getting unstuck

"That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn't life more than food, and your body more than clothing? Look at the birds. They don't plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren't you far more valuable to him than they are? Can all your worries add a single moment to your life? —Matthew 6:25-27(NLT)

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.
—John 3:16

Scripture references

Scriptures are in the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted:

Numbers 13:1-2 The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the people of Israel.

Numbers 13:23 When they reached the Valley of Eshkol, they cut off a branch bearing a single cluster of grapes. Two of them carried it on a pole between them, along with some pomegranates and figs.

Numbers 13:30 But Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, "Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it."

1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

Matthew 6:25-27 "That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn't life more than food, and your body more than clothing? Look at the birds. They don't plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren't you far more valuable to him than they are? Can all your worries add a single moment to your life? (NLT)

