

FACE YOUR BATTLES WITH STRENGTH AND COURAGE

When someone keeps telling you to “be strong and courageous,” you might suspect you are up against something big. And the Israelites were.

About to enter the land that had been promised them 600 years before, they had a giant-sized task awaiting them. Literally. Forty years earlier ten spies had come back and told the Israelites that the inhabitants of the land were so big they felt like they were the size of a grasshopper in comparison. Fear took them captive without a battle and sent them off as a group to wander around in a wilderness where they took their chances against wild animals rather than face their giants.

They wandered so long that those who had grasshopper-sized faith died out. Forty years later their children were ready to take the land. They were physically no taller than their parents had been. The enemies in the land were no smaller than before. But the Israelites’ faith muscles had grown.

There were two spies who had reported the land was theirs for the taking. One of them, Joshua, is now the Israelites’ leader. He was courageous. And God wanted to keep him that way. So God tells him three times in the first nine verses of the first chapter of Joshua: “Be strong and courageous.” He also reminds him “the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

My guess is you have a few giants in your life too. Some uphill battles that appear insurmountable. A task demanding more than you think you have to give. One too many things on your “to do” list than you have the time or energy to do. Unemployment is staring you down. Depression has a grip on you. Bills have raided your bank account and left it empty. An illness hovers in your life like a threatening storm. You’d rather just run and wander.

Instead, be strong and courageous. You have a Joshua that will lead the way. The New Testament equivalent of the name “Joshua” is “Jesus.” And he has promised to be with you always (Matthew 28:20).

Jesus knows how to lead you through battles. He had a few of his own while he was on this earth. Enemies attacking him with accusations (Mark 3:22). No home and no bed (Luke 9:58). Crowds and expectations pressing in on him (Luke 8:45). The religious establishment eventually insuring he was sentenced to a brutal death. (Mark 15:14).

Yet he took on the most barbaric giant there is, death, and lived to tell about it. He can help you do the same. You need only be strong and courageous in your faith.