

September, October, November 2026
Fall Lessons

Journey

Bible Studies for Young Adults



SUNDAY SCHOOL
PUBLISHING BOARD

Unit I: From Nomadic Tribes to Settled People

Renewing Our Commitments

DEVOTIONAL READING: Daniel 10:18–21

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Joshua 1

PRINT PASSAGE: Joshua 1:1–11

Key Verse

Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest. (Joshua 1:9, KJV)

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Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.” (Joshua 1:9, NIV)

Lesson Aims

As a result of experiencing this lesson, you should be able to do the following:

- Understand that God provides for His people.
- Realize that God develops leaders to guide believers.
- Live faithfully in covenant with God.

*Key Terms

Be strong (verse 6)—Hebrew: *châzaq* (*khawzak*): to strengthen, prevail, harden, conquer; be courageous.
Commanded (verse 9)—Hebrew: *tsâvâh* (*tsawvaw*): to [have] appointed, ordained, laid charge upon; gave orders.

Prosper (verse 7)—Hebrew: *sâkal* (*saw-kal*): to be prudent, act wisely, have insight; “be successful” (NIV).

Servant (verse 1)—Hebrew: *‘ebed* (*eh’-bed*): a slave, subject, worshipper; used in a special sense to refer to prophets and Levites—but in this case, it refers to Moses as the Lord’s servant.

Stand (verse 5)—Hebrew: *yâtsab* (*yaw-tsab*): to set, place, or station oneself; to present oneself. The Lord promised the people of Israel that no one would be able to stand against them as He was with them.

*(Word Study Supplement—Refer to page 2)



Overview

After forty years of wandering in the wilderness and the death of Moses, the Israelites need direction, cultural identity, and a leader. The Israelites survived Pharaoh's oppression and evaded capture by miraculously crossing the Red Sea on dry land. They survived the wilderness but are weary and grieving the loss of a strong leader in Moses. They yearn for direction and a nation to call home; the land God had promised them through God's covenant with Moses.

In this lesson, we explore the renewal of God's covenant with Moses' protégé, Joshua, and a new generation of Israelites. The Lord's exhortation to Joshua to "be strong and courageous" as he gets ready to go to battle and enter the Promised Land echoes throughout our study. When we are called to positions of leadership, our power to influence doesn't come from our own will to lead, but from our ability to be led by faith. It is a reminder to be encouraged and confident of God's presence when we are called to take on new responsibilities or when we face challenges that can easily overwhelm us.

Life Happens

Aaliyah has always been the "responsible one." She grew up in a faith-centered home, stayed away from the party scene, and built a quiet life rooted in discipline and purpose. But lately, she's been feeling... invisible. Her art isn't getting noticed. Her dating life is nonexistent. And her friends, especially the ones from college, seem to be thriving in ways she's not.

Then comes the invitation: a reunion trip to Vegas. Her old roommate, now a popular lifestyle influencer, is covering most of the costs. The itinerary includes VIP clubs, pool parties, and a "no-judgment" pact. Aaliyah hesitates, but her roommate presses: "You've been playing it safe your whole life. Don't you want to feel alive for once?"

At the same time, Aaliyah's boss offers her a promotion on one condition. She'll need to lead a campaign for a luxury brand known for pushing controversial content. It's a huge step up, but it clashes with everything she stands for. She's caught between two lives: one that feels like it's passing her by, and one that demands compromise to keep up. Her friends say she's too uptight. Her church friends say she's drifting. And Aaliyah is not sure who she is anymore.

One night, she opens her suitcase. Her passport is inside. So is a sketchbook filled with designs she's never shown anyone before. Feeling torn, she stares at her own artwork and her own passport, knowing she can't take them both with her.

Questions

1. Is it possible to live a life of conviction without becoming isolated or self-righteous?
2. What's the difference between exploring freedom and abandoning responsibility?
3. Have you ever felt like you were living two lives? What helped you choose which one to live?

COMMENTARY ON THE BIBLICAL TEXT

A New Leader for a New Generation (*Joshua 1:1-4*)

KJV

NOW AFTER the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying,

2 Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel.

3 Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.

4 From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast.

NIV

AFTER THE death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide:
2 "Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites.

3 I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses.

4 Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Mediterranean Sea in the west.

Moses is dead. The man who confronted Pharaoh, led Israel through the Red Sea, and carried the weight of an entire nation for forty years, is gone. The book of Joshua opens in the middle of that grief and uncertainty and with a people who have lost the only leader most of them have ever known.

Then, God speaks to Joshua. Joshua is identified in the text as Moses' assistant, someone who had served faithfully at Moses' side for decades. He had watched Moses lead, struggle, and pray. He knew the work from the inside. God tells him to arise, cross the Jordan, and lead the people into the land He is giving them. The urgency is unmistakable. The mission is still moving, and God has already chosen the person to carry it forward.

Verses 3 and 4 lay out the boundaries of the land, from the wilderness to Lebanon, from the Euphrates to the Mediterranean Sea. These are the same boundaries God described to Abraham generations earlier in Genesis 15:18. The promise had been on the table for a long time, passed down through generations, and now it was landing on Joshua's shoulders. He stood where Abraham once stood and heard God say, "This belongs to you and to your people." What God committed to one generation, He was carrying forward to the next.

 **What Do You Think?** Put yourself in Joshua's shoes. He goes from being an aide to Moses to being his successor. Do you think he was ready to meet the moment or overwhelmed by his new responsibilities?

The Promise of God's Presence (*Joshua 1:5-7*)

KJV

5 There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

6 Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them.

7 Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.

NIV

5 No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you.

6 Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them.

7 “Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go.

Before Joshua takes the first step toward the Jordan, God gives him something more important than a strategy. He gives him a promise in verse 5. Joshua had just watched Moses die. He was about to lead an entire nation into enemy territory. That promise, at that moment, was significant.

The language here echoes throughout Scripture. God said something very similar to Jacob at Bethel (Genesis 28:15), and Moses spoke the same words over the people before his death (Deuteronomy 31:6, 8). God was connecting Joshua to a long line of people who stepped into the unknown with nothing but His word to go on. The faithfulness that sustained every generation before him was available to him right now.

Three times in this chapter, God tells Joshua to “be strong and courageous” (verses 6, 7, 9). In Hebrew, the phrase is *chazaq ve'ematz*, and it reads as a direct charge, not a suggestion. Courage in Scripture has always looked like trusting God enough to keep moving when everything feels uncertain. Joshua had every reason to feel the heaviness of the moment. The people were watching him. The enemies ahead were real. But God's answer was direct: I am with you, and that is enough.

Verse 7 ties courage directly to obedience. Strength, in God's eyes, has as much to do with staying faithful to His instructions as it does with anything that happens on a battlefield.

What Do You Think?

Can you remember a time when you had to be strong and courageous? How does God's presence in our lives help us to be courageous?

Obedience and Action (*Joshua 1:8-11*)

KJV

8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

9 Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

10 Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying,

11 Pass through the host, and command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals; for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the LORD your God giveth you to possess it.

NIV

8 Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.”

10 So Joshua ordered the officers of the people:

11 “Go through the camp and tell the people, ‘Get your provisions ready. Three days from now you will cross the Jordan here to go in and take possession of the land the LORD your God is giving you for your own.’”

In verse 8, God gives Joshua a practice that would anchor his entire leadership: meditating on the Book of the Law. The Hebrew word here is *hagah*, and it means more than reading quietly. It carries the sense of murmuring, speaking aloud, turning the words over until they begin to shape how a person thinks and responds. God tells Joshua that this book “shall not depart out of thy mouth,” meaning Scripture was supposed to be part of his public life, part of his decisions and his leadership, not kept as a private exercise.

God draws a straight line between obedience to His Word and the success Joshua would experience. Prosperity, in this context, was not tied to military strategy or political connections. It grew out of faithfulness. God made that clear before the first battle even began. Verse 9 brings the call to courage one final time, and God frames it as a question: “Have I not commanded you?” He had already promised His presence, already laid out the path, already spoken over Joshua’s life. The question carries a boldness to it, as if God is saying, “You have everything you need. Now move.”

Joshua’s response is immediate. He turns to the officers and tells the people to prepare their provisions because they would cross the Jordan. He heard from God and he moved. That kind of obedience comes from years of serving alongside Moses and a relationship with the Lord that had already been tested.



What Do You Think? Is there an area of your life where God is asking you to move forward before you have all the answers? What would it take for you to step out in obedience?

Your Life

Leaders aren’t only defined by their actions in big moments or by significant accomplishments. How they handle the seemingly small things matters greatly, too. Make a list of ways you can be faithful to God in the small things in the upcoming week.

Your World!

Societal understandings of leadership aren’t always aligned with what God finds most important in leaders. Some lead with fear rather than faith. Consider what your definition of leadership is and make note of times you’ve seen local or national leaders exercise courage and humility in service to their constituents.



Dear God, You have not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind. Help us to be faithful to your Word and to rest in the assurance that you will be with us, supplying our every need, wherever we go. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Home Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY, September 7	“Hold Fast to the Traditions”	(2 Thessalonians 2:13-17)
TUESDAY, September 8	“Victory at the Sea”	(Exodus 14:21-31)
WEDNESDAY, September 9	“The Lord Goes Before Us”	(Numbers 10:29-36)
THURSDAY, September 10	“Do not be afraid.”	(John 6:15-21)
FRIDAY, September 11	“Remember God’s Mighty Deeds”	(Psalm 77:11-20)
SATURDAY, September 12	“Remember Jesus’ Saving Work”	(1 Corinthians 11:23-27)
SUNDAY, September 13	“Crossing into the Promised Land”	(Joshua 4:14-24)

Notes

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Unit I: From Nomadic Tribes to Settled People

Family Legacies

DEVOTIONAL READING: Luke 8:35-39

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Joshua 4

PRINT PASSAGE: Joshua 4:14-24

Key Verses

When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones? Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land. (Joshua 4: 21-22, KJV)

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“In the future when your descendants ask their parents, ‘What do these stones mean?’ tell them, ‘Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground.’ (Joshua 4:21-22, NIV)

Lesson Aims

As a result of experiencing this lesson, you should be able to do the following:

- Adhere to the instruction to remember God’s saving actions.
- Recognize memorials and rituals established to commemorate God’s goodness.
- Fully understand God’s steadfast love for us.

*Key Terms

Camped (verse 19)—Hebrew: *chânâh* (khawnaw’): pitched tents, dwelled, rested; “encamped” (KJV).

Command (verse 16)—Hebrew: *tsâvâh* (tsawvaw’): to charge, appoint, ordain, give charge over, set in order.

Covenant (verse 18)—Hebrew: *berîyth* (bereeth’): a treaty, alliance, league, ordinance, pledge. God’s covenant with the Israelites included making Israel God’s treasured possession.

Stones (verse 20)—Hebrew: *’eben* (eh’-ben): weights; sacred objects (as memorials); plummets. Twelve stones were taken from the Jordan to be used as a reminder to the Israelites of how they crossed the river on dry land.

Waters (verse 18)—Hebrew: *mayim* (mah’-yim): watercourses; streams of water.

*(Word Study Supplement—Refer to page 2)

Life Happens

Danielle is a community organizer who grew up hearing powerful stories from her grandfather about marching for civil rights and her mother’s fight to integrate schools in their town. These stories shaped her identity and filled her with pride in her family’s resilience. Social justice was not just something to discuss



Overview

Traditions and rituals are used to create meaning and belonging, strengthen community bonds and foster connection across generations. They are used to pass down cherished histories and establish cultural identity. For example, in the African American religious experience, Watch Night Service is a New Year's Eve tradition that commemorates Freedom's Eve when enslaved people awaited news of the Emancipation Proclamation. Today, Black churches around the country and across denominations gather on the eve of a new year to worship, share testimonies of faith, and celebrate God's goodness in community. In this chapter, Joshua is using ritual to provide the Israelite people with a foundational understanding of their cultural identity and to provide a way to remember God's faithfulness to them from the very beginning. From losing the shackles of slavery and safely crossing the Red Sea on dry land to providing manna in the wilderness and granting a new generation access to the Promised Land, Joshua tells the story of God's steadfast love for His people through ritual so that future generations will have a sense of who they are and whose they are.

during Black History Month, but it was a part of her DNA and family legacy. Their experiences weren't just memories—they were a living inheritance.

Recently, Danielle's younger cousin came home from school upset. Their history textbook barely mentioned slavery, skipped over Reconstruction, and summarized the civil rights movement in a single paragraph. There was no discussion at all about the "hidden figures" who undeniably impacted the history of this country and, in many cases, the world. When Danielle raised concerns at a school board meeting, she was told, "We don't want to dwell on the past." The dismissal stung! It felt like watching her family's sacrifices being quietly erased.

At the same time, Danielle's job offered her the chance to lead a new diversity initiative, but only if she agreed to keep it "neutral" and avoid "controversial" topics like systemic racism, sexism or colorism. The offer was tempting: more money, more influence, more visibility, more stability. Yet the conditions felt like a muzzle. She wondered if accepting would mean abandoning the truth.

Danielle realized that if her family doesn't actively protect and pass down their own history, it could be rewritten by others. She was standing at a crossroad: silence for comfort, or courage for legacy. She knew that choosing courage may cost her, but losing her voice would cost far more.

Questions

1. What happens to a community when its history is erased or rewritten by outsiders?
2. How do you balance telling hard truths about the past with building hope for the future?
3. What responsibility do you have to preserve family and cultural legacies?
4. What responsibility does the church have to preserve, protect and teach family, cultural and spiritual legacies to all generations?

COMMENTARY ON THE BIBLICAL TEXT

God Confirms Joshua's Leadership (*Joshua 4:14-18*)

KJV

14 On that day the LORD magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they feared him, as they feared Moses, all the days of his life.

15 And the LORD spake unto Joshua, saying,
16 Command the priests that bear the ark of the testimony, that they come up out of Jordan.
17 Joshua therefore commanded the priests, saying, Come ye up out of Jordan.
18 And it came to pass, when the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD were come up out of the midst of Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up unto the dry land, that the waters of Jordan returned unto their place, and flowed over all his banks, as they did before.

NIV

14 That day the LORD exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they stood in awe of him all the days of his life, just as they had stood in awe of Moses.
15 Then the LORD said to Joshua,
16 "Command the priests carrying the ark of the covenant law to come up out of the Jordan."
17 So Joshua commanded the priests, "Come up out of the Jordan."
18 And the priests came up out of the river carrying the ark of the covenant of the LORD. No sooner had they set their feet on the dry ground than the waters of the Jordan returned to their place and ran at flood stage as before.

Up to this point, God had spoken to Joshua privately. He gave him the commission, the instructions, the promise. But in verse 14, God takes it public. On that day, the Lord exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel, and the people revered him just as they had revered Moses all the days of his life. Joshua had not campaigned for this. He had not given a speech or lobbied for the people's trust. God lifted him up in front of the entire nation, and the people responded with the same kind of reverence they once had for Moses.

Then comes the moment at the river. God tells Joshua to command the priests carrying the ark of the covenant to come up out of the Jordan. Joshua gives the word, the priests step onto dry ground, and the waters come rushing back to flood stage as if nothing had happened. The entire nation stood there and watched it. One moment the riverbed was dry. The next, the Jordan was flowing again at full force. There was no natural explanation for what they had just seen.

For most of the people standing on that bank, the story of the Red Sea was something they had grown up hearing about. Their parents and grandparents had told it around fires, passed it down through songs and memories. But this was different. This was their own crossing; their own story being written in real time. The God who rescued the generation before them was doing the same thing right in front of their eyes.

 **What Do You Think?** Is there a time in your life where God made a way out of no way?

Stones That Tell a Story (*Joshua 4:19-22*)

KJV

19 And the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and encamped in Gilgal, in the east border of Jericho.
20 And those twelve stones, which they took out of Jordan, did Joshua pitch in Gilgal.
21 And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones?

22 Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land.

NIV

19 On the tenth day of the first month the people went up from the Jordan and camped at Gilgal on the eastern border of Jericho.

20 And Joshua set up at Gilgal the twelve stones they had taken out of the Jordan.

21 He said to the Israelites, “In the future when your descendants ask their parents, ‘What do these stones mean?’

22 tell them, ‘Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground.’

The people came up from the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month and set up camp at Gilgal, on the eastern border of Jericho. Joshua took twelve stones pulled from the middle of the Jordan, one for each tribe of Israel, and set them up right there at the campsite. They were ordinary stones from a riverbed, but Joshua gave them a purpose that would outlast everyone standing there that day.

He told the people, “In the future when your descendants ask their parents, ‘What do these stones mean?’ tell them, ‘Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground.’” The memorial was built for children who had not been born yet. Joshua was thinking ahead, past the battle plans and the logistics of settlement, to the question that would inevitably come when a child looked at a pile of rocks and asked why they were there. That question would open a door to a conversation about who God is and what He had done.

Faith has always moved from one generation to the next through storytelling. It travels through testimonies shared at the dinner table, through traditions that families and churches hold on to year after year, through sacred objects that carry meaning because someone took the time to explain them. Joshua understood that if no one told the story, the story would eventually be forgotten. The stones at Gilgal were a way to remember.

 **What Do You Think?** Look around your room or home. Are there objects in your possession that help remind you of God’s love for you?

A Witness for Every Generation (*Joshua 4:23-24*)

KJV

23 For the LORD your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over:

24 That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the LORD your God for ever.

NIV

23 For the LORD your God dried up the Jordan before you until you had crossed over. The LORD your God did to the Jordan what he had done to the Red Sea when he dried it up before us until we had crossed over.

24 He did this so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the LORD is powerful and so that you might always fear the LORD your God.”

In these closing verses, Joshua pulls the Red Sea and the Jordan together into one narrative. He tells the people, “The Lord your God dried up the Jordan before you until you had crossed over. The Lord your

God did to the Jordan what he had done to the Red Sea when he dried it up before us until we had crossed over.” His choice of words is intentional. He says “you” when he talks about the Jordan and “us” when he talks about the Red Sea. He is placing himself inside both stories and reminding the people that what God did decades ago and what God did that morning belong to the same unfolding promise.

Verse 24 widens the lens even further. Joshua says God did this “so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the Lord is powerful and so that you might always fear the Lord your God.” The stones at Gilgal carried a message beyond Israel. God’s faithfulness was never meant to stay between Him and His people. It was meant to be seen, talked about, and remembered by anyone paying attention.

The word “fear” here points to reverent awareness—the kind a person develops after watching God do something no human effort could explain. For anyone trying to find steady ground in a world that keeps shifting, this passage offers something solid. The God who held back rivers for His people is still at work, and remembering what He has already done is one of the surest ways to build trust for whatever comes next.

 **What Do You Think?** What stories of God’s faithfulness have been passed down in your family or your faith community? How have those stories shaped the way you trust God today?

Your Life

Young adults often juggle dreams, expectations, disappointments, and hopes. Looking back over the years and being able to identify God’s faithfulness can fortify our faith. Consider what rituals or memorials you could create to mark a significant time in your life when you experienced God’s steadfast love.

Your World!

The words “do this in remembrance of Me,” the instructions given by Jesus during the Last Supper can be found etched in the center of the communion table in worship spaces across the world. Take a look around your sanctuary and consider what other symbols or rituals are practiced.

 Closing Prayer

Dear God, our Way Maker, let us never forget the experience of Your grace and saving power. Help us to remember how Your steadfast love has guided and protected us from generation to generation. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.

Home Daily Bible Readings		
MONDAY, September 14	“Live as God’s Treasured Possession”	(Deuteronomy 7:1-11)
TUESDAY, September 15	“God Will Love, Bless, and Multiply”	(Deuteronomy 7:12-26)
WEDNESDAY, September 16	“Strengthened in Every Circumstance”	(Philippians 4:10-19)
THURSDAY, September 17	“Armed for Spiritual Warfare”	(2 Corinthians 10:1-5, 15-18)
FRIDAY, September 18	“Christ Has Conquered the World”	(John 16:23-33)
SATURDAY, September 19	“God Fights for God’s People”	(Joshua 10:40–11:5)
SUNDAY, September 20	“God Brings Victory”	(Joshua 11:6-9, 16-23)