

Day 1

Be Strong and Courageous

The Future

Do you wish God would show you a snapshot of your future life? What if you held just one photograph of you living your life ten years from now?

Who knows, perhaps your photo would include a second home at your favorite vacation spot! Maybe you would land a dream job, have a new kitchen, or another kid! Grandkid?!?! The possibilities of your future in a photograph are endless.

Can you imagine your feelings if your picture looked completely different than you planned? Maybe your clothes would give hints of a job you never even considered. Maybe the photograph shows you standing with your family...minus one. Would you be smiling? What if you wore a headscarf with no hair peeking out, or were sitting in a wheelchair? Would you believe it?

The future contains so many unanswered questions.

God rarely hands over a snapshot of the future, but in Deuteronomy 31:1-5, God spells out the plan for the Israelite people.

Read the verses in the chart on the next page and write in the details. Verse 1 contains no pertinent details and verse 2 is done for you as an example. Finish completing the chart by listing details God reveals about Israel's future.

Future Snapshot of Israel

- Verse 2
- Moses will not be your leader anymore
 - You shall not cross the Jordan

- Verse 3
- _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____

- Verse 4
- _____

- Verse 5
- _____
 - _____

- Verse 6
- _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____

Wow! What an amazing picture of success! If you were an Israelite, how would you feel about the future after hearing God's plan and promises in Deuteronomy 31:1-5?

You and your future look different than the future of the Israelites in Deuteronomy 31, but some of the principles still apply to your future.

Consider:

1. What new thing is God asking you to do in the coming days/weeks/year?
2. In verse 3, part of God's plan is going before them. How can God go before you in your future?
3. In verses 4 and 5, God tells the Israelites He will destroy the inhabitants of the land so the Israelites can take over, but also reminds them they must follow all of His commands.

What does God need to wipe out in your life? Who or what are the enemies keeping you from doing the next thing?

What challenges do you face in keeping God's commands? What commands are hardest for you to keep?

Pray:

- Pray for God to take out whatever is in the way of the future for you. Ask Him to make a path!
- Repent for any ways in which you have not followed His word. Ask God to help you to turn to Him and follow all of His commands.

Apply:

Write verse 6 in a place where you will see it often to be reminded of God's plan for your future and the fearless way you can step into whatever is next.

“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.”

Deuteronomy 31:6

Day 2

Be Strong and Courageous

Work

When is the last time someone asked you to do something? At your job? At home? Maybe someone needed a ride, a meal, or an errand run. Whatever the task, did you jump up to accomplish it? Complain but finish the work? Put off the task for later? Avoid it altogether?

Learning to work for God's kingdom is part of God's plan. In 1 Chronicles 22, David knows his work on earth is about done but wants to be sure the work continues. In verses 6-10, David tells Solomon what his work in life will be.

Read 1 Chronicles 22:6-13 and list the work David speaks of:

The Work David Commissions

Verse 6

- Who is he asking to do the work?

- What is the work to be done?

Verse 7-10

- Why doesn't David do the work?

Verse 11

When the Bible uses the word “and” it usually reveals a list. In this verse, there is a list of things David speaks over Solomon. The list says:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Verse 12 Another list! Here are two more things:

1. _____
2. _____

When the Bible says “so” it gives a reason why the list should be accomplished. What is the “why” for Solomon? David says it in verse 12 after he says, “so...”

Verse 13 When will they have success?

And the last part of this verse tells Solomon what he should be and should not be:

“Be _____”

“Do not be _____”

Whew! David expects Solomon to do a lot of work! If you were Solomon, how would you feel about the work? What part of the work would be the hardest?

God likely will not appoint you to build a church, but He wants you to work for His kingdom! He will ask you to accomplish something in the physical sense, but like Solomon, wants you to obey Him to ensure success in your work.

Consider:

Solomon ended up building what God asked, and did it in splendid fashion. Solomon proved excellent at building a temple.

God knows your skills and the opportunities in the future. Do you feel like God has already asked you to use your skills for Him? Or what skills do you hope God allows you to use in the future to further His kingdom?

God spells out the formula for Solomon's success in verse 13. The same principle applies today. In what specific ways do you think obedience to Christ will give you success in your future work?

Pray:

- Ask God to help you to know what you're good at. Pray that He will sharpen your skills and give you joy in the work He has for your life.
- Thank God for His plan of success in your work. Ask Him to help you live in obedience to Him.

Apply:

Use the lists you wrote from verses 11-12 to guide specific prayer for your future work. Write this list in a place where you will be reminded to pray for your future part in building God's kingdom. (Your list should include: the Lord will be with you, you will have success, you will have discretion and understanding.)

“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged.”

1 Chronicles 22:13b

Day 3

Be Strong and Courageous

God's Will

Have you ever prayed for God's will in your life?

When Christians pray for the will of God in their lives, it generally demonstrates they know God and want to do what God wants them to do. If you made a list of the things you would like to do and a separate list of what you think God would want you to do, they would likely contain some differences. Praying for God's will in your life means accepting His purposes, even if they get in the way of what you want.

It's quite a sacrifice!

David gave a speech in front of all the leaders of Israel, recounting the way God's will played out in His life and forecasting God's will for Solomon's life.

Can you imagine what Solomon must have been thinking in front of all of those people, hearing the tall tasks laid out before him as a part of God's will for His life?

The speech may have felt like a lot of pressure, but Solomon also receives words of encouragement. God's call on Solomon's life meant so much more than work and sacrifice.

Read 1 Chronicles 28:1-20 and write out God's will for David and Solomon

God's Will for David and Solomon

Verses 1-3 What *wasn't* God's will for David?

Verse 4 What *was* God's will for David?

Verses 5-7 What was God's will for Solomon?

1. (Verse 5)

2. (Verse 6)

3. (Verse 7)

Verse 19 How can the audience be confident David knew God's will for Solomon's life?

God's Will for David and Solomon

Verse 20

1. What does David say Solomon should be?

“Be _____”

2. What does David say Solomon should not be?

“Do no be _____”

3. What does David tell Solomon about God?

“God is _____.”

He will not _____

or _____

until all the work for the service of the temple of the Lord is finished.”

Solomon may have been feeling a lot of pressure to be commissioned with such important work in front of all the leaders of Israel, but he also received encouragement in their presence. When Solomon walked away from this assembly, do you think he was confident or insecure about God’s will for his life? Why?

God may or may not commission His will for your life in front of an audience, but He does want you to be confident in His will for you!

Consider:

1. Has anyone ever spoken to you about God’s will in your life? What kind of encouragement have you received from a leader, a friend, or someone with authority?
2. If someone were to ask you today, “What is God’s will for your life?” What would you say?
3. Like Solomon, we can be encouraged by verse 20. We must be strong and courageous about God’s will for our lives. We need not be afraid of God’s will or discouraged that it won’t come to pass. We can stand on the promise that God

will never fail His will for our lives or forsake His will for our lives. How do these sentences make you feel about God's will for your life?

Pray:

- Pray for God to reveal to you His will in your life.
- Ask God to make the statements in verse 20 firm in your understanding.

Apply:

Meet with someone older than you, a trusted Christian leader or friend. Ask them if they have any encouragement for you in your life as you consider God's will. Ask them to pray for you consistently, that God would reveal His will plainly to you and that you would not be afraid or discouraged about God's plan unfolding in your life.

“Be strong and courageous, and do the work. Do not be afraid or discouraged; for the Lord God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you until all the work for the service of the temple of the Lord is finished.”

1 Chronicles 28:20

Day 4

Be Strong and Courageous

Your Battles

What are you up against today?

Do you have a physical enemy? Do you have an emotional enemy?

You certainly have a spiritual enemy on the prowl to bring you down. No matter how aware you are of the battles you face, they exist.

As a Christian, your feelings while you fight against the enemy can be unreliable. God's word, however, contains truth about fighting your battles. You can learn to fight with strength and courage by studying the Bible.

Read 2 Chronicles 32 in sections marked out to discover details about one particular battle we can learn from today.

God's Plan in Hezekiah's Battle

Verse 1 **Who is Hezekiah?**

Well, back in 2 Chronicles 29:1, we discover Hezekiah was king of Israel and reigned in Jerusalem. Between that verse and where we pick up in chapter 32, Hezekiah's work for God is described extensively. He focused on building up God's kingdom on earth through Israel.

Who is Sennacherib? _____

Verse 1 What was Sennacherib set out to accomplish?

Verses 2-6 What did Hezekiah do to prepare for battle?

1. (Verses 3-4)

2. (Verse 5)

3. (Verse 6)

Verses 7-8a Hezekiah encouraged the people with these words:

(Fill in the blanks...)

“Do not be _____ or _____
because of the king of Assyria and the vast army with him, for there
is a greater _____ with us than with
him. With him is only the arm of flesh, but with us is the
_____ our _____ to
help us and to _____ our battles.”

Verse 8b How did Hezekiah’s encouragement make the Israelites feel?

Verses 9-19 Here's where Sennacherib begins talking smack against Israel and specifically against the God of Israel.

List at least three things he or his officers say against God:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Verse 20 What is Hezekiah's response to all this smack talk?

Verse 21 What was God's response to Hezekiah?

Hezekiah proved faithful and confident in God. His enemy, victorious over many others could not contend with Hezekiah's God. Hezekiah didn't even have to lift his sword— he only had to kneel in prayer.

Have you prayed desperately for God to send an angel to annihilate your enemy? He can do that! He did it for Hezekiah and God wants to do it for you too.

Consider:

1. Who is your enemy? Who or what needs annihilated in your life?
2. How much have you prayed for this person or issue? Hourly? Daily? Monthly? Never?
3. Not only did God "take care of them on every side" but the enemy ended up bringing offerings to the Israelite God— valuable gifts— and God became highly respected by all the nations (verse 23). Do you think God can do this with your battle? Not just win it, but make the person or issue you face bow down and

respect God too? What would happen if the very thing you are fighting would become reverent to God?

Pray:

Pray for God to fight your battle– to send an angel to annihilate your enemy.

Apply:

Find a trusted friend who will help you as you pray for God to fight your battles. Plan to check in weekly with this friend and ask them if you can pray for them too. Pray victory over whatever they are facing. Pray the words of 2 Chronicles 32:

“...but with us is the Lord our God to help us and to fight our battles...”

2 Chronicles 32:8

Day 5

Be Strong and Courageous

Your Relationship with God

When was the last time you prayed fervently? I mean *really* prayed?

Did you feel like God was near?

Did He answer your prayer?

The way we talk to God through prayer demonstrates our faith in His ability to hear and intervene in our lives. When God answers our prayers specifically, He grows our faith. When prayers go unanswered, we can often wonder if He even heard our prayer. Sometimes we grow weary of praying when we think God is distant which makes it difficult to want to pray with big faith.

Approaching God boldly through prayer shows a trust in God no matter the outcome. Boldness learned through life experiences ministers and encourages everyone around you. Your prayers can change circumstances and/or your perspective in the circumstances.

Daniel, a Bible character known for his boldness, shows us how to be bold in our relationship with God. His story shows what it looks like to be strong and courageous in your relationship with God.

Read Daniel 10:1-19 and make observations about his encounter.

Daniel's Relationship with God

- Verses 1-6
1. What was the message to Daniel about? (Verse 1)
 2. What was Daniel doing when he received the vision/message?
(Verse 2)
 3. How does Daniel describe the man who brought the message
(Verse 6)

Body:

Face:

Eyes:

Arms and Legs:

Voice:

Verses 7-9 Why did those with Daniel leave him alone?

Verses 10-11 Daniel uses the word "trembling" two times to describe himself in these verses. What is he doing as he trembles in each instance?

Verse 10:

Verse 11:

Verses
12-14

What general message does the messenger speak in these verses?

Verses
15-17

List five words from these verses showing how Daniel felt during his interaction with the messenger:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Verses
18-19

The messenger repeats himself in these verses. First, he calls Daniel something he already stated in verse 11. What does he call him again in verse 19?

What other phrase does the messenger repeat in verse 19?

Daniel's character proves tried and true. Famous Bible stories like "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego," "The Writing on the Wall", and "Daniel in the Lion's Den" contain evidence of Daniel's strong faith. Ironically, in this passage, Daniel doesn't seem very strong.

Consider:

1. What are some past situations or stories from your own life that prove you are strong in your faith in God?
2. What are some past situations or stories from your own life that demonstrate a lack of boldness or trust?
3. Even though Daniel felt overwhelmed and overcome by the presence of God's message, the messenger calls him "highly esteemed." When have you experienced a humble moment or season that resulted in you feeling close to God?
4. Daniel's encounter struck fear in him, but ended up offering a message about end times that people continue to study today! If it weren't for Daniel's boldness to hear the message, understand it, and write it down, we wouldn't have these fascinating details about the end times. Have you ever received an overwhelming message from God?
5. The beginning of this chapter (verse 2) tells of Daniel abstaining from choice food, wine, and even lotions. Have you ever abstained from something in order to grow closer to God? A food fast, for example? Or a media fast? If so, did you feel as though it helped you hear God in a specific area more clearly?

Pray:

- Pray for an encounter with God to bring you to a place of humility.
- Ask God to cultivate in you a character and spirit He would call "highly esteemed."

Apply:

Challenge yourself to abstaining from something that would be a sacrifice for you. Perhaps certain types of food like Daniel did. Perhaps you can give up something else you indulge in like television or social media. Commit to a period of time and stick with abstaining from whatever you choose for that set period of time. During your fast, ask God for a fresh encounter in a specific area of your life. Pray Daniel 10:19, trusting God will honor your sacrifice.

"...Speak, my lord, since you have given me strength."

Daniel 10:19