

The Way of Wisdom
SM: Joshua 1:8
The Word That Makes Us Family

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We are in a series on Scripture Memory: tonight we will talk about Joshua 1:8.

The WORD that
makes us Family!

Joshua 1:8

All of life is shaped by words: they create experience for us. Negative words, however, may shape us the most. Neurobiology says we are primed to pay attention to negative words because they signal danger, needing to protect ourselves. These words describe our fears and anxiety. Shame and ambition fill our family stories, staying in our heads, defining who we are. Such words don't lift us up.

What word is
shaping you right
now?

Fear has words.

Anxiety has words.

Shame has words.

Ambition has words.

Old family stories have words.

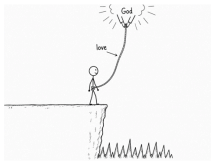
The enemy has words.

Joshua was from the OT: the Judeans were in captivity for 400 years until Moses delivers them. Eventually they travel to the promised land and Moses dies.

Joshua 1:1-2

1 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.

Joshua traveled into the Promised Land to spy the land and told the truth. Other than that, he had only seen the miracles of Moses but hadn't done any miracles. And now Moses is dead and people are watching him.



- Moses is dead.
- The wilderness is behind them.
- The promised land is ahead of them.
- The people are watching.

This is a picture by Dr. Larry Crabb that illustrates how Joshua now must jump off a cliff and perhaps crash because God's love rope cannot hold him. This is also a picture of the majority of decisions in my life and yours. Things as simple as going to a new school or job or having a difficult conversation can feel like this picture. We have to trust that God will be with us.

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. 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."

There is a sandwich here with our memory verse in the middle.

The metaphor of rock climbing is valuable here: Rock climbers need footholds that they put weight on so they can grab onto higher handholds. You rest your weight on verse 8 so you can move onto verse 9. Psychology tells me that the Bible has all the understandings about

who we are built into this one verse. Let's take a look at verse 8 and rest our weight on it.

What is God asking Joshua to do?



The first thing is to keep this book of the Law but how much of the Scriptures did he have? At least he had the Ten Commandments and maybe some of Deuteronomy.

Keep...
Book of the Law

who they (Israel) are

who God is

how they are to live as his people

For us, the Book of the Law means all Scripture. It tells who Israel is, who God is, and what the Israeli people are to do.

For us, it is the same. It tells us our identity and what we are to do. Joshua is obviously scared and God is telling him to keep this book: Know who you are and who God is.

Always on your lips

God's Word was never meant to sit in a library.
It was meant to live in the mouth of His people.

We speak it.

We pray it.

We teach it.

We remind each other of it.

It becomes the language of life.

God's word is not a dusty, old library: it is always to be on our lips.

The Village has many children: many of these are on summer break: swim team and negotiating screen time. In the 70s and early 80s, we rode our bikes to the swimming pool and the library where we checked out a huge stack of books in the summer. One summer, I attempted to read every Hardy Boys book: there were hundreds! But I don't know any of these

today. The library is the place we put information into our brain. But this text says to keep this book always ready to speak, pray, teach: the language of life. I know even now, what I'm saying has the potential to get deposited in to your library. It must become part of your vocabulary. This is what transforms people.

Why?

Fear has a voice; Anger has a voice; Shame has a voice;
Temptation has a voice.

John 14:21 - Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them."

meditate on it

to meditate, mutter, speak,
murmur, or quietly repeat.

We put it in a place where it follows us around.

How many scrolled on your phone today? You most likely, then, heard voices that were not God's voice. John 14:21 is our memory verse from last week: The Book of the Law is the language of love.

Jewish and Christian meditation are different from Eastern Meditation: it involves repeating the Word over and over; you've reached "Christian Meditation" when you can't stop thinking about it. It follows us around. We are depositing Scripture in our hearts: It's the creation of a mobile Scripture system.

day and night

The rhythms of life.

Morning and evening.

Work and rest.

Strength and weakness.

Decision and disappointment.

Scripture is meant to live in those rhythms.

We do this day and night. My mother practiced this and I was resistant to it. I know what you're thinking! Is this really what Christian meditation is all about? However, it combats the voice of fear, temptation, and greed, the dark stories of your family.



We practice it:

Two Village men are pictured here: Daniel McConnell and Tim Williams were on a high school basketball team I coached. I had them do a lot of repetition, over and over and over. The result is that the YMCA would give me the worst teams; I didn't complicate things. Repetition would make them better and then they would get excited and practice at home: then they would start winning.

so that you may be **careful to do** everything written in it.

Be careful to do.

That phrase has two movements.

Careful means to keep, guard, watch, and pay close attention.

To do means to make, practice, carry out, or obey.

So, the goal is not simply information.

The goal is action.

I have recently gotten clumsy and for some reason, things fly out of my hands. I have learned that I have to be more careful with coffee cups: practice helps us focus. Focusing is hard, yet Joshua is telling us to focus to do everything written in the book of the law. That means practice, practice, practice. The goal is not information: the goal is to take action and jump off the cliff, confident of God's love: to step into the thing you are afraid of.

so that you may be **careful to do** everything written in it.

Luke 8:21

Jesus says, "My mother and brothers are those who **hear** God's word and put it into **practice**."

The family of Jesus is formed around **hearing and doing**.

We hear the Word.

We speak the Word.

We practice the Word.

You are learning a language of family: the family of Jesus is formed around hearing and doing. You and I become the family of Jesus when we hear the Word and respond to it.

Then you will be **prosperous and successful**.

Prosperous **means your life is moving in a good direction**.

It means the way before you is being shaped by God.

Successful means skillful living.

It means you are learning **how** to walk with wisdom.

When God's Word follows you around, your way begins to take shape.

You learn how to walk.

You learn how to lead.

You learn how to obey.

Does being prosperous and successful mean you become like Elon Musk? What does this mean? This is a translation issue: In English, prosperity conjures up images of movie stars and nice houses but the Hebrew word means moving in a good direction. Successful means skillful living. This happens when we become consumed with the book of the Law.

What word is shaping you right now?

Fear has words.

Anxiety has words.

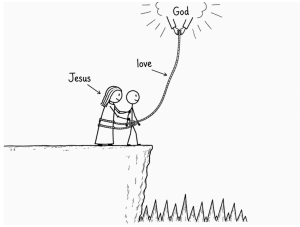
Shame has words.

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The enemy has words.

What Words are shaping you now? How much power do you give to your parents' words, the culture's words, your friends' words?



Think about this drawing again: God is inviting you into the Promised Land. The beauty is that you are not standing alone: Jesus makes himself known to us. Notice that in this drawing, Jesus has love tied around him and he swings with you as you step off the cliff. You can recognize this when you keep this Book of the Law always on your lips. As you face scary situations, as the Scripture is on your mind, you are more keenly aware of Jesus's presence with you.

Let His Word become the language of your life.

Joshua 1:8 shows us the pattern:

The Word on our lips.

The Word in our life.

The Word practiced with intention.

Let Scripture become that thing we are obsessed with: on our lips, in our life, practicing it with intention.

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. 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."

If these theories are really footholds, our weight is on verse 8. It makes us able to move to verse 9: The point is our eyes are opened to Jesus, where He is and where we should go.

Let's practice this together.

