

*January 2021*



*Emmanuel*

# *21 Day Challenge Devotional Guide*

*21 Days with*

*Moses and Joshua;*

*Be Strong and Courageous*

*By*

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Pastor Ryan Cooper is originally from Billings. He grew up at Emmanuel and gave his life to Jesus as a child while attending with his family.

Pastor Ryan has a Bachelor's Degree in Science / Secondary Education from MSU-B and a Master's Degree in Biblical Counseling from Trinity Theological Seminary in Newburgh, IN.

Pastor Ryan grew up at Emmanuel and after spending 10 years in Iowa, he returned as our Overflow Pastor in 2015 and launched InStep Counseling Ministry in 2019. Ryan is married to **Kim** and they have 4 children.

**Introduction to study:** As I thought about doing a study for 2021 focused on the lives of Moses and Joshua, I simply started out reading the story starting in Exodus 1 looking for a theme to highlight. Within the first few chapters, it was clear to me: courage. From the Hebrew midwives all the way through Joshua's career, Israel had to display courage countless times in the face of great peril and overwhelming odds. In short, they needed God to show up miraculously. As we step into 2021 after such a tumultuous 2020, there is hardly anyone thinking this year will be easier. In fact, you may be increasingly filled with anxiety and fear as you ponder the future in our country. These are unsettling times for sure.

You know who isn't dramatically altered, unsettled, or threatened? Our Heavenly Father. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. His promises are true. They are just as true for you as they were for Moses, Joshua, and Israel. God's promises are true for the church. They are true for me. They are true for you. Just like the words in Exodus 2:24-25, God hears you, remembers you, sees you, and knows you. And God will act. He is for you, He fights for you, and He will stop at nothing to accomplish His will, in His timing, for His glory. Please join me the next 21 days as we walk together through some major highlights of Israel's story while focusing on the occurrences of courage and how God continually showed Himself to be faithful and strong. So be strong and courageous! We are on the Lord's side and He will fight for us.

## **Day 1: Courage Initiated: The Hebrew Midwives**

**Welcome:** What will you do when an edict is issued from those in power that clearly violates your convictions? Will you stand up for what is right or fold under pressure? Today we see where Israel's story of redemption begins, with some most unlikely, ordinary characters.

**Background:** At the end of Genesis, Joseph's family moved to Egypt and were well taken care of during his lifetime, but as time went on, other Egyptian rulers came to power who didn't acknowledge Joseph or the Israelites as anyone worth respecting. Instead they began to mistreat, oppress, and eventually Egypt enslaved them. The story of Israel's deliverance is a powerful story of God's power, love, and care for His people, but it didn't start with Moses—it started with an unlikely group of servants.

**Read:** Exodus 1:1-22

**Highlight:** "But the midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded."

**You?** Consider the revolution the midwives started in Egypt. Several ordinary women decided that their faith in God mattered more than a murderous edict. So they purposefully disobeyed and inspired others to disobey and start a revolution. It's shocking they weren't killed instead of the babies they saved. What stand is God asking you to take in your life? In what area of your life can you demonstrate the fear of the Lord by your obedience? Just like the Hebrew midwives, you never know what God can do when you demonstrate courage grounded in a healthy fear of the Lord.

**Pray:** God, you are awesome. Thank you for the courage of the Hebrew midwives. They are ordinary people just like me. I commit myself to fear you and allow your courage to flow through me by faith today.

## **Day 2: Courage Extended: Moses' Mother**

**Welcome:** Courage begets courage! Don't you love it when you see someone else standing up for what's right? It is so inspiring! Today we will look at how the courage of the midwives extended to one expectant Hebrew mother.

**Background:** After Pharaoh issued his murderous decree aimed at destroying the Hebrew population boom, the Hebrew midwives courageously banded together to defy the edict, inspiring acts of courage from others, and earning the special favor of God.

**Read:** Exodus 2:1-4

**Highlight:** "The woman conceived and bore a son...she hid him three months."

**You?** Look around you at the people in your life. Who do you see living a courageous life? Who do you see stepping out in faith even if they aren't sure what the outcome is going to be? In what situation is God asking you to imitate them and write your own story of courage?

**Pray:** God, I can have courage when I am following you. Thank you that Moses' mother had strong courage against the tyranny of Pharaoh's law. Please give me the courage I need to stand up for you. And may my faith be an inspiration for others around me.

### **Day 3: Courage Reflected: Moses' Sister**

**Welcome:** When we are courageous, it can be easy to forget that even the little ones are watching and long to practice the same courage in their lives. Today we see how the courage of the Hebrew midwives and Moses' mother is reflected in one of the Israelite children.

**Background:** Pharaoh started slaughtering Hebrew baby boys, but the Hebrew midwives boldly defied the edict leading Moses' mother to courageously hide her baby boy from the Egyptians.

**Read:** Exodus 2:1-10

**Highlight:** "Shall I go and call you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?"

**You?** Moses' young sister imitated the courage of the midwives and her mother by demonstrating extreme courage to keep her brother safe. Though she was just a child, she showed wisdom and courage beyond her years. You never know who is watching your life and who longs to imitate you and your courage. What opportunities can you look for to show courage, then rejoice when you see the same courage displayed in those of the next generation?

**Pray:** God, I love the courage displayed by the women of Israel in fear of you. You are so worthy of our honor and worship. Please help me to be aware of those around me who are watching me and who long to be courageous themselves. Please lead me as I lead them.

## **Day 4: Courage Misplaced: Moses Attacks the Egyptian**

**Welcome:** Being courageous sounds really heroic and cool, but have you ever demonstrated courage in the wrong way at the wrong time? Today we see a situation where courage is misplaced and causes trouble.

**Background:** Moses has grown up in Pharaoh's house as a prince but begins to understand that he is different, a foreigner, and doesn't belong. He is an Israelite.

**Read:** Exodus 2:11-15

**Highlight:** "He [Moses] looked on their burdens...and struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand."

**You?** Moses saw a wrong being committed and tried to make it right, but got it all backwards. Is there a situation where you were too harsh in your courage trying to right a legitimate wrong? How can you courageously humble yourself to renew your love for God and people? It is important to let God do the leading in our courage.

**Pray:** God, I want to be courageous, but for the right purpose and in the right situation. It is so overwhelming when I see so many wrongs that need to be righted. Please help me to control my displays of courage to bring glory to you alone.

## Day 5: Courage Settled: Moses Settles in Midian

**Welcome:** Do you ever display courage then are totally satisfied with your accomplishment? Like your one display of courage was the climax in your life and now it's time to bask in the glory of that singular event. Today we see Moses showing courage then deciding he's satisfied.

**Background:** Moses is fleeing for his life from Egypt because he killed an Egyptian giving Pharaoh the motivation to finally eliminate the Hebrew from his household. After making a narrow escape, Moses ends up very far away in Midian. His goal is to disappear and forget about his past and he finds a great opportunity to do just that.

**Read:** Exodus 2:16-22

**Highlight:** "And Moses was content to dwell with the man, and he gave Moses his daughter, Zipporah."

**You?** Moses was running for his life and used his residual courage to rescue some damsels in distress, then settled down for a lifetime of comfort, work, family, and forgetting. But God wasn't done with him. God's not done with you and has more for you. How have you been simply satisfied with the past? In what way is God calling you to more? How is He challenging your faith today? Will you step out in courageous faith and ask him?

**Pray:** God, I don't want to simply settle for a little courage and live off the glory of a singular event, but I want to be courageous in everything. I know you are not done with me. Please help me to find more opportunities for courage.



## Day 6: Courage Ignited: The Burning Bush

**Welcome:** God is not done with you. You always have potential in Him for His kingdom. In fact, He is always leading you to more faith, more love, more truth, and more courage. It doesn't matter if you are young or old, God has more for you. Today we see God reach back out to Moses after many years to reignite the courage in him.

**Background:** Many years have passed. Moses is married, has kids and has been content to mind his own business in an unremarkable life in Midian, far away from Egypt. Moses is doing fine as an inconspicuous shepherd...until God shows up.

**Read:** Exodus 2:23-3:12

**Highlight:** "Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. And **God heard** their groaning, and **God remembered** his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. **God saw** the people of Israel—and **God knew.**"

**You?** Are you in distress? Are you overwhelmed by the burdens of your life? Are you crying out for help? Does your cry reach to heaven? Are you desperate for your loving, perfect, heavenly Father to move in your life? The God who sees, remembers, hears, and knows is the God who acts!

**Pray:** God, you hear me, you remember me, you see me, and you know me. And you act on behalf of those you love. Thank you.

## **Day 7: Courage Personified: God Introduces Himself**

**Welcome:** Sometimes when we face a difficult situation, we are afraid, anxious, filled with unbelief, and frankly need some serious convincing. Moses was no different. Today we see what happens when he encounters God for the first time; the Great I AM.

**Background:** Moses has been minding his own business for decades, but now not only is the bush burning, but God is talking with Moses through it. Still, Moses isn't interested in doing anything courageous, is skeptical, and wants to be left alone. But no one stops the plans of the Almighty.

**Read:** Exodus 3:13-22

**Highlight:** "God said to Moses: 'I am who I am.' And he said, 'Say this to the people of Israel, "I am has sent me to you.'""

**You?** How often do we simply forget God? Have you been overwhelmed by the struggles of your life because you haven't been able to change things like you want them to be? Are you content to simply live out your life in the safety of your little world? What happens to you when God shows up uninvited and asks you to do the impossible? Will you answer His call or argue with Him?

**Pray:** God, I confess I don't know you or understand you very well and far too often I simply forget about you. Help me to see you, hear you, remember you and know you so I can act by faith. Thank you for revealing yourself to me.

## **Day 8: Courage Corroborated: God Demonstrates His Power**

**Welcome:** We are human—frail and weak. What God calls us to is often hard, forcing us to fully rely on His help. He is patient and gracious with our small faith. Today we see God’s persistent forbearance with Moses.

**Background:** God has invaded Moses’ life and though He reveals Himself to Moses, more evidence is needed to convince Moses to believe.

**Read:** Exodus 4:1-17

**Highlight:** “Who has made man’s mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak.”

**You?** What is God asking you to do, say, or give today? Has he already spoken clearly and you’re dragging your feet? Remember who He is and His power. Say “yes” and be bold because of who He is and what He can do in and through you.

**Pray:** God, I admit I am frail, weak, and my faith is so small but you have all power and nothing is impossible for you. Please be patient with me as I seek to be obedient and courageous. Please continue to convince me of your love and power.

## **Day 9: Courage Refined: Bricks without Straw**

**Welcome:** God's way is never cut and dry but usually contains complexities. What do you do when you step out on faith, but things just get worse? Today we see that things didn't immediately go Israel's way when they obeyed the Lord.

**Background:** Moses met with Aaron and the elders to give them the plan from God. Everyone was excited about His promises and united in their determination. So they boldly brought the message before Pharaoh for the first time.

**Read:** Exodus 4:27-5:23

**Highlight:** "Let my people go...Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice and let Israel go? I do not know the Lord, and moreover, I will not let Israel go."

**You?** Just because you've stepped out in faith doesn't mean it's all going to go according to your plan. One thing you can be sure of; it will go according to God's plan. What adjustments to your plan do you need to make to align them with God's plan? In what way is God trying to deepen your faith and courage in Him? Have you given up because things didn't happen like you projected?

**Pray:** God, I don't understand what you are doing in my life. Sometimes it seems like when I trust you, things get worse. Please help me to continue to have faith even when things don't seem to be going well. May your will be done and not mine.

## Day 10: Courage Intensified: God Sharpens the Focus

**Welcome:** Ever found yourself confused after a step of faith? What do you do when things get worse? Today we see God show up again and remind Moses of who He is and what He has promised.

**Background:** Moses stepped out in faith courageously by leaving comfort, moving to Egypt, convincing Israel's leadership of God's plan, and confronting Pharaoh...but the suffering only intensified. Now what is he supposed to do and believe?

**Read:** Exodus 6:1-13

**Highlight:** 22 times God uses the word "I" or "my" in 8 verses. It is clear God is serious about His promises and His people.

**You?** So you were obedient and your situation worsened and you concluded, "God, that didn't work." Do you need to revisit His promises and reconfirm your faith in Him even if you don't understand His ways? Wait on the Lord and watch Him work.

**Pray:** God, I know your ways are higher than mine; please strengthen my faith and keep my eyes focused on you especially when circumstances worsen. Remind me of your goodness, faithfulness, love, and promises.

## Day 11: Courage Multiplied: The 10<sup>th</sup> Plague

**Welcome:** Have you ever felt like you've had a long period of faith with multiple small victories, but ultimate freedom hasn't arrived? Today, we will see God act in a final culmination and display of power for Israel.

**Background:** Nine plagues have decimated Egypt and yet Israel remains enslaved. The showdown continues as God leads up to the knock-out punch.

**Read:** Exodus 11:1-12:50

**Highlight:** "All the people of Israel did just as the Lord commanded Moses and Aaron. And on that very day the Lord brought the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their hosts."

**You?** So many things happened to Israel and so many things may be happening in your life that a good outcome may seem impossible and you're not sure how much more you can take. God seems to be working and moving and yet you are longing for a final, significant victory. Hold on a little longer. Trust Him. Let Him work. He is faithful!

**Pray:** God, you are so faithful. Just a little longer, Lord, and I know you will answer my prayer. Please help me to continue to be faithful and trust you. You are able!

## Day 12: Courage Confronted: The Crossing of the Red Sea

**Welcome:** So God has come through in a massive way and you think your crisis is over. But what if it's not? You feel like you are finally free but something unexpected happens throwing your whole life in turmoil again. Today we see what happens when Israel's newfound freedom is immediately threatened.

**Background:** A triumphant Israel is liberated from Egypt — rich, numerous, and free. The celebratory procession marches out of Egypt and into the wilderness and all seems wonderful...until Pharaoh changes his mind.

**Read:** Exodus 13:17-14:31

**Highlight:** “Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today...The Lord will fight for you, and you only have to be silent.”

**You?** So you think the battle's over and the victory is won, but it might not be. In what area do you need to continue to keep your guard up and your faith strong to fully see your victory through? How can you continue to remain vigilant with your trust firmly planted in the Lord?

**Pray:** God, thank you for the victories you've won in my life. Help me to remember that I need to be patient and wait on your salvation. Just because one victory has been won does not mean that I stop trusting in you. Increase my courage to trust you and stand firm.

## **Day 13: Courage Celebrated: Israel Celebrates Victory over Egypt**

**Welcome:** When the Lord clearly displays His power and blows you away, it is so invigorating! It makes you want to jump for joy and celebrate with those around you! Join us today as Israel joyfully expresses their thankfulness.

**Background:** Israel has been released from slavery, the Red Sea parted, the Egyptian army is demolished, and the struggle is over. After 430 years they are finally free!

**Read:** Exodus 15:1-21

**Highlight:** “The Lord is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise him, my father’s God, and I will exalt him. The Lord is a man of war; the Lord is his name.”

**You?** Life comes so fast and furious. I wonder if we forget to take time to really praise the Lord for the incredible victories He’s won and the strongholds He’s demolished in our lives. What triumphs do you need to celebrate right now?

**Pray:** Oh God, thank you for the massive victories in my life.

I will praise you with my whole heart, mind, and body.  
You are so good to me!



## **Day 14: Courage Glorified: Jesus Staves Off Temptation with Deuteronomy**

**Welcome:** How many times have we read the Old Testament and wondered how it applies to what we are facing right now? Today we see how Jesus took the words God spoke to Israel through Moses and used them to demonstrate courage in an extremely difficult situation.

**Background:** Two stories interplay here: Moses is giving Israel God's instructions one last time before his death and Jesus is fighting off heavy temptation in the wilderness before His ministry begins.

**Read:** Deuteronomy 6:1-8:20; Matthew 4:1-11

**Highlight:** "The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."

**You?** Ever feel like you're just trying to hold on in the midst of withering temptation? Your Heavenly Father has given you everything you need to fight the battle and win. Jesus used Deuteronomy to fight Satan's schemes head on and won the victory. You can too!

**Pray:** God, I confess that I fall short of loving you with all that I am. In truth, I give up far too easily. Please help me to resist temptation and obey you wholeheartedly as I walk with you.

## Day 15: Courage Reborn: Joshua and the 12 Spies

**Welcome:** What's it like to be courageous and no one joins you? How do you respond when you are ridiculed for your actions and attitude? Today we see that sometimes trusting God is unpopular.

**Background:** God brought Israel to the cusp of the Promised Land and 12 spies are sent into the land to scope it out and bring back a report to Israel. Joshua and Caleb are two of the spies in this company.

**Read:** Numbers 13:1-14:38

**Highlight:** "If the Lord delights in us, he will bring us into this land and give it to us, a land that flows with milk and honey. Only do not rebel against the Lord. And do not fear the people of the land, for they are bread for us. Their protection is removed from them, and the Lord is with us; do not fear them."

**You?** Stepping out in faith can be incredibly unpopular and following God is often hard. What is God asking you to do where you feel like you would be leaving someone behind in their faith? How do you fight against the fear of people and what they will think of you when you courageously step out in faith?

**Pray:** Lord, I trust you and will go forward in faith not fear.

I know you are with me when I am obedient to you even if I am the only one following you. Please give me the courage to do what's unpopular.

## **Day 16: Courage Commissioned: Moses Passes the Torch to Joshua**

**Welcome:** Changing leadership is hard. Releasing children from the nest is often a tumultuous experience. Control is not easily abdicated. Trusting the next generation to be faithful is complicated. Today we see the proper passing of the torch of leadership in Israel.

**Background:** Moses is not going into the Promised Land. He's been leading Israel 40 years and grooming Joshua as his successor. It's finally time to give up command and commission him as Israel's next leader.

**Read:** Deuteronomy 31:1-23

**Highlight:** "Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you."

**You?** There are times in our lives when we need to pass the torch of faith and leadership to others in our lives. How well are you preparing the younger generation to courageously lead when you are gone? How about your children? Your grandchildren? It can be hard to give up control, but eventually we all have to step aside and let others lead. How can you actively look for opportunities to raise up the next generation of leaders?

**Pray:** God, you are constantly at work in our lives calling new people to large acts of faith. May I be the one to answer your call and obey you. And may I be faithful to commission others to follow after me in faithful courage and obedience.

## **Day 17: Courage Verified: God Verifies Joshua's Leadership**

**Welcome:** Being out on your own can bring many potential anxieties. Surely, when someone significant leaves your life, things can get scary fast. Today we see that God continues to speak tenderly to His people.

**Background:** Moses is dead and has transferred leadership to Joshua, but what's next? Are things going to be the same for Israel under Joshua's leadership? Will God be with Joshua as He was with Moses?

**Read:** Joshua 1:1-19

**Highlight:** "No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will never leave you or forsake you."

**You?** Whatever God's called you to, He's given you the power to accomplish. Go forward in strength and the faith of the Lord. If you are the one stepping into a new role, how can you demonstrate your faith in God?

**Pray:** God, you are the same yesterday, today, and forever. You never change. Please lead me in whatever endeavor you call me to and I will follow, knowing you are with me. Thank you for calling and confirming others who are to come after me.

## Day 18: Courage Certified: Spying Out Jericho

**Welcome:** Following God can be an unsettling business. Though it feels weak, sometimes we need that last little bit of confirmation from the Lord that what we are doing pleases Him. Watch today as the Lord goes above and beyond to certify the mission of Israel.

**Background:** The plan is to cross the Jordan and begin the conquest of the Promised Land by taking out Jericho first. Like a wise commander, Joshua seeks to scout out the city before attacking.

**Read:** Joshua 2:1-24

**Highlight:** “I know that the Lord has given you the land...for the Lord your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath.”

**You?** God asks us to display courage in many ways. In what way do you need some certification for your faith? Don't be afraid to ask questions and seek confirmation. Take the next step and watch God show up in a very real way.

**Pray:** God, we all need more guidance, wisdom, and confirmation in our faith. We admit that our faith is small and often lacking. Thank you for providing exactly what we need when we need it.

## Day 19: Courage Duplicated: Crossing the Jordan

**Welcome:** God never changes! What a beautiful reminder and promise of His goodness and stability! Today we see God duplicate a special miracle for Israel, solidifying His mission for them.

**Background:** The spies have returned from scouting Jericho and the Lord has certified His plan and protection. Only one barrier stands in the way — the swollen, flooded Jordan River.

**Read:** Joshua 3:1-17

**Highlight:** “The Lord said to Joshua, “Today I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you.””

**You?** God is in the business of the impossible, but maybe you’re wondering if He will do it for you. If He parted the Red Sea for Moses and the Jordan River for Joshua, then He can make the impossible happen in your life. What ways is God looking to remind you of His love and faithfulness from years past?

**Pray:** God, nothing is impossible for you. You graciously and powerfully led Israel into the Promised Land and I know you will lead me, too. Thank you for confirming your will in my life even in the same ways you have moved in the past.

## **Day 20: Courage Exploded: The Fall of Jericho**

**Welcome:** What is it about faith and courage that seems to breed more faith and courage? After a time of hardship and difficulty, a little faith can really start an avalanche of blessing. Today we see one of the most extraordinary victories in Israel's history.

**Background:** Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground, instituted circumcision for all males, celebrated the Passover and are making plans to attack Jericho.

**Read:** Joshua 6:1-27

**Highlight:** "Shout, for the Lord has given you the city."

**You?** Our God is the God of the sensational. He completely blew away Israel's expectations by providing a resounding supernatural victory over Jericho while saving Rahab and her family. The Lord longs to give you the victory over your stronghold. In what area of your life do you need to increase your faith and courage? Remember who your God is!

**Pray:** God, you are the same God who made the walls of Jericho fall down. I have walls that need to crumble and stay ruined. I believe you can tear them down just like you destroyed Jericho. Please show me what I can do to demonstrate my faith in you.

## Day 21: Courage Commanded: Joshua's Last Words

**Welcome:** As we reach the end of our study, we have seen the courage of Moses and Joshua displayed as they exercised their faith in Almighty God. Today is all about God's call to you to take courage in your life.

**Background:** The Lord granted success after success to Israel over their enemies. Joshua led the people and faithfully followed the Lord. Now it's time for him to give them one last message.

**Read:** Joshua 24:1-33

**Highlight:** "Now therefore fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness...as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

**You?** When it all comes down to it and you are forced to make a choice, who will you serve in 2021? Yourself? Money? Fear? Lust? Approval? Will you go back to the old gods you used to serve or will you be strong and courageous and serve the Lord from now on and forevermore?

**Pray:** God, I long to serve you with all my heart all the days of my life. I choose to follow you and to put away all that leads me away from you. Help me to practice the process of dying to myself and living courageously in service to you.

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