

Be Strong and Courageous

At our annual Charisma Women's Conference this spring, God spoke a powerful word to the nearly 8,000 women who attended. He said that it is time for us as women to step forward and accept the authority He has given us. He reminded us that we are empowered and authorized by His Word to do whatever He tells us to do.

The promised land described in the Old Testament is a picture of what God has available to us (see Josh. 1). He has a promised land for each of our lives—a destiny that only we can fulfill. Your promised land is the will of God for your life, and the only place you will find total fulfillment.

But to take your land, you must heed the admonition given to Joshua: "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" (v. 7, NIV).

The Word says "be strong," not in your own strength but in the power of God. According to Acts 1:8, when we receive that power through the Holy Spirit, we are equipped just as the early church was to be witnesses for Christ. And one of the qualities we will exhibit in our Spirit-filled state is courage—the ability to face difficulties without fear.

Fear is one of the first weapons the enemy launches at us. It is the atmosphere of his realm just as faith is the atmosphere of God.

In the recent war in Iraq, one of the tactics the United States employed against our enemies was psychological warfare. When successful, this tactic convinces the opposing army to surrender because they believe they are already defeated.

Our enemy, the devil, is more experienced than the Coalition forces in using this tactic since he has had thousands of years to perfect it. The Bible warns us not to be ignorant of his devices (see 2 Cor. 2:11).

The first place he stages a battle is in our minds. But we have been given the strategy in the Word to "pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God" and to "take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5), replacing the devil's lies with what God has promised us in His Word.

If you agree with the lies, it is easy to fall prey to discouragement. Discouragement will steal your faith, depress your spirit, take your strength and ultimately cause you to miss the plan God has for your life. That, of course, is the enemy's ultimate goal.

If you have become captive to discouragement, ask God to forgive you for listening to the lies of the enemy. Though He has promised to accomplish His plan through us, we have to do our part.

We must choose to believe His promises and trust Him to act. We must be strong and of good courage so we can fulfill all He has promised for our lives.