

Courage in Daily Life

Deuteronomy 31:1-6

Today, we will consider what part courage plays in our daily lives as Christians.

Most times, we think of courage as something extraordinary, something unusual; something people are called upon to exhibit only in dangerous, life-threatening situations. But most of the time, we don't think we need it. Most of the time, we view our lives as being governed by more mundane character qualities, like honesty, and integrity, and faithfulness. We just don't see "courage" coming into play very often. But that point of view is mistaken. Courage is not the same thing as heroism. Courage is not just for extreme situations. In fact, *courage is basic to the exercise of every other virtue.*

Honesty – We lie because we fear the consequences. We're afraid of what people might think, or we're afraid of losing something. We fail to be completely honest, because we lack courage. Confession, as they say, is good for the soul, but it can be bad for the reputation.

Generosity – Generosity is freely giving to the church or using your financial resources to meet the needs of others who are less fortunate. We are not generous because we are afraid of not having enough for our own needs. Instead of trusting God for your future and giving generously, you hold tightly onto everything you get. You may do it under the guise of "prudence" and "responsibility," but often it's just fear. You lack the courage to depend completely on God for your financial well-being, and so you seek to accumulate enough money and possessions so that you don't have to depend on God.

Diligence - Diligence is nothing more than sustained effort—keep working hard. The lack of diligence could be due to a fear of failure. You struggle staying on task because the possibility of failing consumes your thoughts and paralyzes your actions. You might consider failure a sin.

People can be so controlled by this phobia, that they either become people-pleasers (fearing mankind more than God), perfectionist (a prideful desire to set excessively high standards, strive for flawlessness, and are overly critical of themselves and others who fail to reach their standards), or pessimists (nothing that is hoped for will ever come true).

To be diligent, to keep working hard in the Christian life, to overcome the fear of failure, you and I must first have the courage to admit and face our fear of failure. Then we must explore the causes of your fears. Are your fears rooted in people-

pleasing, perfectionism, or pessimism? Finally, seek God's solution to the problem of fearing failure by trusting in God, boasting in God, and hoping in God.

Evangelism – We don't evangelize because we fear rejection and looking foolish. We fear mankind more than we fear God, and because we do so, we lack the courage to confront and tell others about a Savior who can rescue us from the punishment of our sins. Therefore, we need courage to trust God that He will control our conversations with others and strengthen our resolve. There is a reason why the Scriptures reveal such lavish promises for those who overcome the fear of man and severe warnings for those who don't.

Servanthood - A refusal to serve others with our time and talents may stem from a fear of being taken advantage of and exploited. Since you have been abused and ignored in your servanthood, you decide not to serve anyone or very few people because it either hurts too much or you were disappointed to the point of discouragement, and you fear going there again. It takes courage to admit you have been hurt. It takes courage to trust God to heal the hurt, to squash the bitterness and pessimism, and to trust Him that your serving is never in vain. You serve to glorify God. He will never exploit you.

Courage is foundational to virtually every virtue. So much so that it's impossible to mature in Christ without it. It's impossible to consistently live in obedience to Christ, and to have fellowship with him, and please him, if we're dominated by fear instead of courage. And that's why this topic is so important, so central to our daily lives as followers of Christ. Without courage, all our other virtues will be weak and easily compromised. They'll fade away at the slightest challenge. For us to be strong, God-honoring disciples, we must exercise courage. Courage to trust. Courage to obey. Courage to hope. Courage to follow. Our courage must be grounded in the fear of the Lord.

So, this week, I challenge you to identify a fear that you have. Admit you are afraid. Repent of your fear and your lack of trust in God. Ask God to give you the courage to take action, and remember, Christ is with you always, He goes before you. He fights for you.