

The Christian And Courage

Intro: *Courage* comes from an Old French word meaning “heart.” It is “strength in the face of pain or grief” or “the ability to do something that frightens us.” It is placed in opposition to fear from a Biblical standpoint.

I. COURAGE OF BIBLE CHARACTERS

A. Some Old Testament characters.

1. Joseph.
 - a. Refusing the advances of Potiphar’s wife.
 - b. Gen. 39.
2. Moses
 - a. Exo. 5-12
 - b. Going to Pharaoh and telling him to let God’s people go.
3. David
 - a. 1 Sam. 17
 - b. Facing Goliath’s challenge.
4. Nathan confronting David; 2 Sam. 12.
5. Just about every Old Testament prophet.
6. Daniel
 - a. Not eating the food of the king; Dan. 1.
 - b. Refusing to only make request of the king; Dan. 6.
7. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego
 - a. They, like Daniel, refusing to eat the food of the king; Dan. 1.
 - b. Refusing to bow to the image made by the king; Dan. 3.
8. Vasthi
 - a. Commanded by the king to come show off her body to drunken men.
 - b. She refuses; Est. 1:12 “¹² But the queen Vashti refused to come at the king’s commandment by *his* chamberlains: therefore was the king very wroth, and his anger burned in him.”

B. Some New Testament characters.

1. John the Baptist
 - a. He tells Herod that it was not lawful for Herod to have his brother’s wife (Herodias).
 - b. He was put in prison and finally beheaded; Mark 6.
2. Peter and John before the Sanhedrin;
 - a. The Sanhedrin threatens them; Acts 4:17-18 “¹⁷ But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. ¹⁸ And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.”
 - b. They answered; Acts 4:19-20 “¹⁹ But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. ²⁰ For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.”
 - c. Arrested a second time, released by an angel, then brought before the Sanhedrin again.
 - (1) They were threatened again.

- (2) They responded; Acts 5:29 ²⁹“Then Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.”
- (3) Then the Sanhedrin beat them but they rejoiced over it; Acts 5:40-41 ⁴⁰“And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten *them*, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. ⁴¹And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.”
3. Peter in Acts 2
4. Stephen
 - a. Acts 7
 - b. Before the Sanhedrin.
5. Paul rebuking Peter to his face
 - a. Peter had committed the sin of dissimulation (hypocrisy); Gal. 2:12-13 ¹²“For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. ¹³And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.”
 - b. Peter rebuked him in public; Gal. 2:11, 14 ¹¹“But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.... ¹⁴But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before *them* all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?”
6. All preaching; 2 Tim. 4:1-2 ¹“I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; ²Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.”

II. COURAGE IS A GREAT NEED.

A. In preachers.

1. Much of their responsibility is reproof and rebuking.
2. Jer. 1:10 ¹⁰“See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.”
3. 2 Tim. 4:2-5 ²“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. ³For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; ⁴And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. ⁵But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.”

B. In Elders.

1. In stopping the mouths of false teachers; Tit. 1:9-11 ⁹“Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. ¹⁰For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: ¹¹Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake.”
2. In leading the congregation in withdrawal of fellowship; 2 The. 3:6 ⁶“Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.”

C. In Young people.

1. In standing against peer pressure.
2. Takes courage to be different from everyone else.

D. In All Christians.

E. In spreading and defending the Truth.

III. SOME SOURCES OF REAL COURAGE.

A. Faith in God;

1. Heb. 11: (especially vs. 32-38 ³² And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: ³³ Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, ³⁴ Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. ³⁵ Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: ³⁶ And others had trial of *cruel* mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: ³⁷ They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; ³⁸ (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and *in* mountains, and *in* dens and caves of the earth.)
2. These great men and women of God were able to be courageous because of their faith.

B. Realizing God will help us;

1. 1 Cor. 10:13 ¹³ There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*.”
2. Heb. 13:5-6 ⁵ *Let your* conversation *be* without covetousness; *and be* content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. ⁶ So that we may boldly say, The Lord *is* my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.”

C. Prayer;

1. The apostles prayed for boldness:
 - a. Acts 4:29 ²⁹ And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,”
 - b. Thus, they spoke with boldness; Acts 4:31 ³¹ And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.”
2. Eph. 6:18-19 ¹⁸ Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; ¹⁹ And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,”

D. Fellowship of faithful brethren;

1. 1 Cor. 15:33 ³³ Be not deceived: evil communications [company—NKJV; companionships—ASV] corrupt good manners [habits—NKJV; morals—ASV].”
2. When Peter and John were released by the Sanhedrin; Acts 4:23 ²³ And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.”
3. When Peter was released from Herod’s plan to kill him; Acts 12:12 ¹² And when he had considered *the thing*, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying.”

E. Our own faithfulness

1. Overcoming past challenges helps us to be courageous as we face new challenges.
2. 2 Cor. 12:9-10 ⁹ And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.”

Conclusion: There is a need for individual and congregational courage. We need courage in all that is done. Paul exhorted the Corinthians; 1 Cor. 16:13 ¹³ "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong."