



COURAGE

OUR FUEL FOR THE FIGHT

Growing Christians Study #3

“Be strong and of a good courage...” Deuteronomy 31:6

Deuteronomy chapter 31 contains Moses giving the children of Israel instructions on how to be victorious and grow as a nation. In verse six of this chapter he tells them to, “Be strong and of good courage.” Moses knew that as Israel left the bondage of Egypt and journeyed to the victorious land of living in Canaan, that they would encounter many instances and situations that would require courage!

Moses understood that courage is a requirement for victory. Today courage is still a requirement for victory in the life of a Christian. Just as Israel had to possess courage to make their journey, so we must possess the same courage if we are to make our journey into the land of victorious Christian living.

Lesson Overview

- I. The Necessity Of Courage
 - A. To Defeat Our Foes
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 - 3. The Devil - Satan
 - B. To Dismantle Our Fears
- II. The Availability Of Courage
 - A. Through Faith In The Promises Of God
 - B. Through Faith In The Presence Of God
 - C. Through Faith In The Proven Word Of God

Study this graph and see if you can see the comparison between the children of Israel and a New Testament Christian.

CHILDREN OF ISRAEL

N.T. CHRISTIAN

Delivered from bondage of Egypt

Delivered from bondage of Sin

Promised a new place to dwell- Canaan

Promised a new place to dwell- Victorious Christian Life

Faced many foes to get to Canaan

Face many foes to get to victorious life

Faced foes to remain in Canaan

Face foes to remain victorious

Led by God

Led by God

Victory over enemies promised if Courage was present

Victory over enemies promised if courage is present

Let me make it clear. If we want to grow as a Christian we must win battles, and winning those battles requires courage!

Courage is a necessity for every growing Christian!

I. THE NECESSITY OF COURAGE

Would you agree with me that if the Lord told Israel to have courage in Deuteronomy 31:6 that he knew that they would need it? What if he told them not once but seven times!

- Deut. 31:7 “Be strong and of good courage”
- Deut. 31:23 “Be strong and of good courage”
- Joshua 1:6 “Be strong and of good courage”
- Joshua 1:9 “Be strong and of good courage”
- Joshua 1:18 “Be strong and of good courage”
- Joshua 1:25 “Be strong and of good courage”

Do you see that? God told Israel and Joshua *SEVEN TIMES* to possess courage. If God said it once it is true. If God said it seven times it is not only true but of invaluable importance.

God said it seven times not because He has a short memory. God said it seven times because we are often thick headed and don't hear the first time. God is using repetition to illustrate importance and teach an important truth.

COURAGE IS A NECESSITY NOT A LUXURY!

A. A NECESSITY TO DEFEAT OUR FOES

When Israel came out of bondage and crossed the Jordan River a welcoming party was not waiting for them. There were many enemies that were not excited about their arrival and were committed to their defeat. Here are just a few of them:

- Jericho (Joshua 6)
- Ai (Joshua 7-8)
- A League of Nations (Joshua 9:1-2)
Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perezites, Hivites, and Jebusites
- Hazor (Joshua 11)

By the time that you get to Joshua chapter 12 the children of Israel had conquered 31 kings and kingdoms. You can see them all in Joshua 12:9-24.

You do not conquer 31 kingdoms without courage from the Lord. A lesson to be learned is, occupying the land of victory that God has for you requires fighting many battles that can only be won if we possess courage!

There will be enemies that will oppose us, we must fight them in order to stay in the land of victorious Christian living and that will require us to have courage.

As you begin to grow as a Christian your enemies begin to present themselves. These enemies are many but all fight for one of three armies that war against the Christian.

1. The World or Society

If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. John 15:19

This world (*Greek word kosmos*) is a system of values that constitutes a way of life that is directly opposed to God's system of values.

This worldly value system will fight against a every growing Christian. God can give us the victory over this enemy and all of its soldiers, but we must have courage!

2. The Flesh or Self

Our old sinful nature does not go away after salvation. That old sinful nature fights against our Spiritual nature every day.

For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. Romans 7:18-23

For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. Galatians 5:17

One of our greatest enemies is our own lust. Our flesh is an ugly, evil enemy that will require courage to fight and defeat.

3. The Devil or Satan

Let me remind you of something. If you are a growing Christian, the Devil HATES you! He has the utmost contempt for us because:

- We are a soldier of the cross
- We are the sons of God
- We changed sides and he lost a warrior
- We have the Spirit of his enemy in us
- He knows he has forever lost our soul
- We can do great harm to his cause
- We can recruit his soldiers of darkness

There has never been anything that we you have hated as much as the Devil hates you! He is your enemy and he wants to devour you!

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.
1 Peter 5:8

Satan is a formidable enemy.

- He commands a host of demons
- He is a deceiver, liar, murderer, accuser, tempter, and the prince of evil.
- He beguiles, seduces, opposes, hinders, tempts, and blasphemes.
- He is personal, intelligent, and destructive
- He has his own gospel, ministries, ministers, and doctrine.

How can we ever face an enemy of this caliber without courage? We can not. Every growing Christian must possess courage if we are going to fight the enemy of Satan. If we do

not possess courage when we encounter Satan we will turn our backs and run while screaming with fear like a scared little girl.

Courage is not only necessary to defeat our foes but also to dismantle our fears.

B. A NECESSITY TO DISMANTLE OUR FEARS

Fear is a paralyzing emotion. Fear is a stealing emotion. It will steal our joy and our peace in Christ. It is important to know that this spirit of fear is not from the Lord.

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. 2Timothy 1:7

Courage and fear are the enemies of one another. One is always fighting against the other. Imagine two swordsmen battling one another. Let one swordsmen represent us and the other our enemies. Our sword represents courage while the sword of our enemy is fear. The only defense that we have against the sword of fear is the sword of Courage. If we drop our sword of courage we are easy prey to the sword of fear. Don't drop your sword!

God linked the possession of courage and the fleeing of fear.

"Be strong and of good courage, fear not.." Deuteronomy 31:6

"And Joshua said unto them, fear not, nor be dismayed, be strong and of good courage" Joshua 10:25

And David said unto Solomon his son, be strong and of good courage, and do it: fear not..." I Chronicles 28:20

Again, courage is a necessity not a luxury. We can not be successful without the Courage of the Lord!

Now that we have seen the necessity of courage lets examine the availability of courage.

II. THE AVAILABILITY OF COURAGE

If courage is a necessity, then how do I get it? Is it readily available to Christians? Yes, it is readily available. But first a Christian must be aware that Biblical courage is not the same as self confidence.

If your ability, knowledge, determination, or talent is the source of your so called courage, you are in trouble.

Biblical courage for a Christian is never a bi-product of ourselves it is a working of god through us.

Many Bible characters had a self produced so called courage. (by the way it is really pride) But they all failed in their self made courage. Here is one example.

Isaiah 14:13-14 says in part...
vs. 13 *"I will ascend"*
vs. 13 *"I will exalt"*
vs. 13 *"I will sit"*
vs. 14 *"I will be like"*

Sounds like courage doesn't it? But it wasn't it was pride.

The Lord's answer to this self made courage called pride was *"Yet thou shalt be brought low"* vs.15

This passage is Lucifer or Satan talking of his so called courage. When we allow pride to serve as courage we are in bad company.

Perhaps the best picture of Biblical courage is found in Philippians 4:13.

I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Real courage to face our foes and our fears is only found through the Lord never ourselves. Paul's courage was an outcry of his faith in the Lord.

Faith in God is the only place where true courage is made available. Without faith Bible courage can never exist.

- Noah had courage to build the ark.
- Abraham had courage to leave Ur.
- Moses had courage to face Pharaoh.
- Rahab had courage to spare Joshua and Caleb

All of these Bible characters are found in Hebrews chapter 11, the Hall of Faith. It was their faith that gave them their courage.

Show me your measure of faith and I will show you your measure of courage!

Courage is made available in Faith in God!

A. FAITH IN THE PROMISES OF GOD MAKES COURAGE AVAILABLE TO US

In Joshua 1:6 God tells Joshua, "Be strong and of good courage." Moses had just died and the Lord is installing Joshua as his successor. But God knows Joshua must have courage to fill the role. The availability of this courage is found in the preceding verses.

- vs. 4 "No man shall stand against you"
- vs. 5 "I will be with thee"
- "I will not fail thee"
- "Nor forsake thee"

All of these are the promises of God. God's promises were the fuel that filled Joshua's tank with courage. When we have faith in the promises of God it will fill our tank with courage also.

Here are a few verses that contain some of God's precious promises. Take a moment to read them and fill your courage.

Psalms 50:15 *I John 4:4* *Matthew 19:26*
Philippians 4:13 *Hebrews 13:5* *Isaiah 41:13*

Get a hold of a few promises and put your faith in them and watch your courage grow!

B. FAITH IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD MAKES COURAGE AVAILABLE TO US.

Again, refer to Joshua 1:6 where God said, "*Be strong and of good courage.*" The question again is how do I become courageous. The Lord uses verse 5 of the same chapter to answer that question.

vs. 5 "I will be with thee.."

The presence of God gives us courage. There is something about.....

The creator of the universe
The victor over death
The ancient of days
The I AM
The Alpha and Omega
The Saviour of my soul
The conquerer of Satan

Being "with me" that gives me courage! Christian do you know who is with you? Do you know who lives inside of you? Do you know who is guiding you? The very God that was "with" Moses and Joshua is "with" us. Praise the Lord. That gives me

courage. I think of the verse that says, *if God before us, who can be against us.*

Many of us have lost our courage because we have lost our faith of who is with us! Faith in the presence of God makes courage available to us.

C. FAITH IN THE PROVEN WORD OF GOD MAKES COURAGE AVAILABLE TO US.

Focus back on Joshua 1:6 "*Be strong and of good courage.*" Again the question is how to have this courage. Another source of this courage is found in verse 8..

This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

God is telling Joshua to stay in the book! Meditating on God's Word always produces courage! The Christian who is not faithfully in the Bible will not faithfully possess courage!

God's Divinely, Inspired, Preserved Word puts courage in the heart of every believer who will study it!

We lack courage because we lack spending time in His Word!

How is your courage today? Have you given up the fight for the victorious Christian life? If so why not get some Biblical courage and stand toe to toe with your enemies and fight the good fight of faith and watch God give you the victory.

Why not be strong and of good courage?