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What Does Courage Look Like?

Joshua 1:9: (NASB) *Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.*

Courage. It is an attribute we all can envision somehow or other. Courage is digging deep within to do what others won't. It is acting in spite of fear, it is standing up when no one else will, it is joining with others against the odds and it is facing an enemy when you are overmatched. Courage is being, doing, seeing and thinking beyond what you thought possible. It is strength personified, perseverance in action and focus revealed. Courage changes things. Can you develop courage? Can you actually make yourself more likely to be courageous? Stick around and find out!



There are many examples of courage in the Bible. We will begin with one: Joshua 1:1-6: (NASB) *¹Now it came about after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' servant, saying, ²Moses My servant is dead; now therefore arise, cross this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them, to the sons of Israel. ³Every place on which the sole of your foot treads, I have given it to you, just as I spoke to Moses. ⁴From the wilderness and this Lebanon, even as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and as far as the Great Sea toward the setting of the sun will be your territory. ⁵No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you. ⁶Be **strong <2388>** and **courageous <553>**, for you shall give this people possession of the land, which I swore to their fathers to give them.*

Moses was a deliverer and one of the greatest prophets of God. Joshua was to take over the role of Moses after he died.

Strong: Strongs #2388 to fasten upon; hence, to seize, be strong (figuratively, courageous, causatively strengthen, cure, help, repair, fortify), obstinate; to bind, restrain, conquer

Courageous: Strongs #553 to be alert, physically (on foot) or mentally (in courage)

What is the difference between being strong and courageous?

Without courage, strength is merely an attribute that can seize upon and hold something either in a physical or intellectual sense. While this is a necessary and important attribute, it is limited in its reach. Courage, on the other hand, is driven of the heart and is necessary to act on one's strength, to be able to apply that strength to the challenges and tragedies of life.

Courage is strength that comes out of you - you have to have strength before you can show courage. Courage is meaningless unless it is outward. Strength is meaningful when it is inward.

Psalm 27:14: (NASB) *Wait for the LORD; be strong and let your heart take courage; yes, wait for the LORD.*

Psalm 31:24: (NASB) *Be strong and let your heart take courage, all you who hope in the LORD.*

Strength and courage belong together.

Courage is great! But where is the “on” button?

Let's take those Joshua 1 Scriptures apart and see what they tell us about how courage works.

For courage to present itself, what does it require?

Opportunity: Is there a leadership void? Are there enough voices to stand against the tide? Is there something in your personal life that needs to be addressed in a different way? Is there an opportunity that requires courage?

Joshua 1:1-2: Moses died, leaving a leadership void. Someone had to step in. But not too many of us will be in such a dramatic situation. How does this give us a practical example? We probably overlook a lot of smaller opportunities. For example, we live in an immoral society that generally looks down upon Christianity. There are multiple opportunities to have the courage to stand up for principles of morality. Standing for something requires courage.

Elements of Joshua's opportunity for courage:

- Moses, God's standard-bearer, was now dead. (A void in leadership)



- Joshua was well prepared for responsibility.

But while Joshua could not be Moses, the leader, commander, lawgiver, he was faithful as a follower of Moses, as one who obeyed the divine law, and whose faith and influence with the people were helpful to them. Joshua’s training as general assistant, private secretary, etc., to Moses made him familiar with the divine plans and methods. To him was entrusted the command of the people in their first battle. It was Joshua who went with Moses into Mount Sinai; it was he who led one of the companies of spies who brought back a good report and who courageously stood with Moses in advising that the people have faith in God and proceed to conquer and possess the Promised Land.

Joshua had a lot of experiences that molded him into being ready to take such a big role.

- Joshua was seasoned.

He must have been either the oldest man in all the nation or next to the oldest, for only himself and Caleb of all the nation that were above 20 years of age at the Exodus remained alive.

What are the elements of *our* opportunities for courage?

- Jesus died and led us to follow his footsteps - this is an opportunity for our courage, as it is no easy task.

Luke 9:23-24: The cross was a symbol of shame, torture and eventually death. Jesus told his followers we would have to be willing to face these things. That takes courage applied every day.

- Our preparation begins with our *lack* of preparation.

1 Corinthians 1:26-31: The qualifications require those who do not think so highly of themselves that He would not be able to guide and lead us. He wants those who have fallen down, who do not know everything, who are not looked upon by those of the world with the greatest respect - God can work with such a person.

- Our seasoning is developed in our walk with Jesus.

It will be tough but Jesus already walked that walk and shows us how to be courageous in our everyday lives.

John 16:33: (NASB) *These things I have spoken to you, so that in me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.*

Does courage need a focus to be effective?

Opportunity is in place, but what is our objective? What is it that must be done or said?

God told Joshua his objective: Joshua 1:3-4: To be recognizable, courage must have an objective. For Joshua, it was two-fold. First, Israel needed a leader, and second, they needed that leader to literally take them to the Promised Land!

The objective of our courage has many facets - some are internal, some are external and all require the combination of strength and courage.



A caller from Connecticut volunteers at a memory care unit where most of the patients have dementia or Alzheimer’s. Their friends and relatives tell her she is very courageous to visit, because they will not go because their relatives do not recognize them and sometimes get combative. She asks how she can encourage them to be courageous and visit them. The patients ask her where their relatives are and she does not have the answer.

We will address this as we lay out the program. They have an opportunity, but what will their objective be? To go there so *they* can feel good, or is it to go to add to the life of someone else whose life is confused and drifting away? If they can decide their objective is outside of “me” and is for the other person, the process begins for them to have courage. Perhaps the objective is to honor your mother and father and remember the love that person showed you and show love in return. Where do you get the strength for that? More soon!



The Objective of Our Courage: Soldier-Like Devotion

2 Timothy 2:1-4: (NASB) *(First is strength...)* ¹You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. ²The things, which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. (...now comes courage) ³Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.

The Objective of Our Courage: Sacrificial Non-Conformity

Romans 12:1-2: (KJV) *(First is strength...)* ¹I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. (...now comes courage) ²And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Our overall objective is to be Christ-like. We cannot change the world around us, but we can influence the world around us. Positive influence takes courage. Our courage has to come from the right places for the right reasons.

In the Fiery Furnace account, the strength of the three Hebrews had been developed over a long period of time. **This test would show that courage lived as a result of that strength:** Daniel 3:15-18

The Objective of Our Courage: Blessing Through Trial:

1 Peter 4:12-14: If you are reviled for the name of Christ, if you have made a stand and people persecute you or make fun of you, you have expressed yourself in a courageous way. People do not normally do that unless they have strength first.

For courage to surface it requires the right elements to be in place. First, *strength* - be it of a physical or mental nature - is needed to feed courage. Strength by itself does not produce courage; it merely produces an environment for courage to shine. Next, courage needs an *opportunity*, some kind of a vital void that cries to be filled. Beyond filling this void, courage needs an *objective*, something specific that needs action.

Being a footstep follower of Christ (1 Peter 2:21) means to become more Christ-like, living with integrity, motivated by love and sacrifice. We should be looking every day for opportunities of courage. Moment by moment, we have to be strong and courageous in what we think about, what we do, what we say and where we go.

With opportunity and objective clear, courage now needs a power source. Where does the strength come from to stand firm?

Joshua 1:5-6: (NASB) ⁵No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you. ⁶Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land, which I swore to their fathers to give them.

God is SPECIFIC in His power and promise to Joshua. God would be the power source.

Example: Gideon needed reassurance. As a matter of fact, he needed reassurance several times! Judges 6:11-17: Gideon displayed strength in word and action. His strength would soon blossom into courage.

God is SPECIFIC as to the source of power for Gideon's newly discovered courage. Because it was new, Gideon needed assurance. Was he courageous? Yes, but he was also human.

Sometimes we need that extra assurance when we are called upon to go beyond our normal limits: 1 Corinthians 10:13

God is SPECIFIC as to our source of power for our courage as well. Isaiah 40:28-29

Lifetime courage needs ENDURANCE: How does one maintain the strength for a long and hard battle?

Joshua was given THE secret for attaining enduring courage! Joshua 1:7-8: (NASB) ⁷Only be strong and very <3966> courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses



My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go. ⁸This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

Very: Strongs #3966 properly, vehemently; by implication, wholly, speedily, etc.

THE secret for Joshua to lead a life of enduring courage was to immerse himself in the word of God. It was to ever be his companion, to ever be before him, spoken by him and remaining within him.

Our lifetime courage needs ENDURANCE. We need the same secret: 2 Timothy 2:14-16: If we don't read, think, rehearse, speak, act and live the Scriptures, how can we have true, deep, focused and abiding courage? Without the immersion of Scripture upon our lives, our enduring courage is subject to submersion.

All acts of courage are not righteous, godly or even good. The courage we are to have is supposed to be righteous, godly and good - and scriptural. The only way we can tell the difference is if we are immersed in the word of God.

Back to our first caller's question, the motivation (power source) for the folks she wants to be more courageous is because their relatives need them. How can that work in their everyday lives? Fear overrides that motivation and the balance needs to change. Perhaps the caller could volunteer to go with them and let her courage rub off on them. Perhaps they can do it together. We can reflect our power source, God, which could encourage and spread courage to others.

Notice strength and courage: Isaiah 40:30-31 **The power source:** Deuteronomy 11:18-20
We can feed this supply line to each other: Galatians 6:2

Fear is contagious. It changes the way people think and act. But courage is also contagious. We have the ability to make courage more contagious than fear. Together in fellowship, those with the same objective can often rise above things each individual might not have been able to do alone.

Encouragement is best when based upon the timeless wisdom and hope of Scripture:
Romans 15:4 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Fear gets in the way of our courage. How do we keep fear subdued and enduring courage sustained? Joshua 1:9: (NASB) *Have I not commanded you? **Be strong and courageous!** Do not tremble <6206> or be **dismayed <2865>**, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.*

God showed Joshua the process and told him to be very courageous by keeping the Law. He assured Joshua He would be with him wherever he went.

Tremble: Strongs #6206, arats (aw-rats'); to awe or (intransitive) to dread; hence, to harass

Dismayed: Strongs #2865, chathath (khaw-thath'); properly, to prostrate; hence, to break down, either (literally) by violence, or (figuratively) by confusion and fear

Joshua was told what could distract and destroy his enduring courage - the gnawing, wearing and exhausting power of fear and the shattering power of darkness. Joshua was also COMMANDED that God could and would utterly defeat these things - as long as Joshua stayed focused on God, his power source.

Focus and faith foil fear! Matthew 14:23-33 Hebrews 12:2-3: Find your focus to foil fear and live with courage! There is opportunity, an objective, a power source, enduring strength...and then there is fear. Put it all together and look at how God showed Joshua to overcome fear to become courageous. We can do the same thing in Christ. It is all about deciding...fear is a reaction, courage is a choice. Decide to be courageous. Find your strength in Scripture and fellowship and do what must be done.

**So, how do we develop endurance?
For Jonathan and Rick (and Kathy!) and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!**