

Mighty Men and Women of God Have Courage

Location: Adventure Camp 2019

Introduction: Mighty men and women of God exhibit a key character trait when faced with challenges: courage.

Courage is like a bad friend: It's there when the times are good, but fails to show up when things turn bad.

Shakespeare quote, from Richard III: "*A thousand hearts are great within my bosom. Advance our standards. Set upon our foes. Our ancient word of courage, fair Saint George, Inspire us with the spleen of fiery dragons!*"

SPS: Let's look at the "What, why, who and how" of courage: what is it, why it's important, who had it, how to obtain it? (spoiler alert: not from the spleen of a fiery dragon)

Defining courage: what is it?

English (Merriam Webster): "mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty."

Latin: "Cor" meant heart. (**Core** = center. **Cordial** = with heart. **Encourage/discourage**).

Old English: used broadly for "what is in one's mind or thoughts."

We need to have the heart and the strength to stand up against the odds without flinching, no matter the cost.

Psalm 31:24 - "*Be of good courage. And He shall strengthen your heart. All you who hope in the Lord."*

- Courage: To fasten upon, to seize, be strong. Courage is and requires strength, heart, and hope.

The importance of courage: why have it?

Proverbs 3:5 - "*Trust in the Lord with all your heart. And lean not on your own understanding; 6 "In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths."*

- He will direct you, watch over you, take care of you.

Deuteronomy 1:28-30 - "*Where can we go up? Our brethren have discouraged our hearts, saying, "The people are greater and taller than we; the cities are great and fortified up to heaven; moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakim there. 29 Then I said to you, 'Do not be terrified, or afraid of them. 30 The Lord your God, who goes before you, He will fight for you, according to all He did for you in Egypt before your eyes,"*

- God will fight for you; He will be there for you.

Deuteronomy 1:34-35 - "*And the Lord heard the sound of your words, and was angry, and took an oath, saying, 35 'Surely not one of these men of this evil generation shall see that good land of which I swore to give to your fathers"*

- There can be harsh penalties for lacking courage, to be bold and step out on faith.

Deuteronomy 1:42-43 "*And the Lord said to me, 'Tell them, "Do not go up nor fight, for I am not among you; lest you be defeated before your enemies." 43 So I spoke to you; yet you would not listen, but rebelled against the command of the Lord, and presumptuously went up into the mountain."*

Luke 21:8-9 - "*And He said: 'Take heed that you not be deceived. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He,' and, 'The time has drawn near.' Therefore do not go after them. 9 But when you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified; for these things must come to pass first, but the end will not come immediately."*

Luke 21:12 - "*But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake."*

- We may be put in a position to defend our beliefs, to publically pledge allegiance to Jesus Christ/our Father.

2 Biblical examples: who had it?

Men:

Deuteronomy 20:8 - *"The officers shall speak further to the people, and say, 'What man is there who is fearful and fainthearted? Let him go and return to his house, lest the heart of his brethren faint like his heart.'*

- "Laws concerning warfare." Fainthearted = tender (H7390). If you were fearful, you weren't wanted.

2 Samuel 23:20 - *"Benaiah was the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man from Kabzeel, who had done many deeds. He had killed two lion-like heroes of Moab. He also had gone down and killed a lion in the midst of a pit on a snowy day."*

- Introduced to Benaiah; family was valiant; "force, strength, power"; modern English = courageous. "Snowy day"

2 Samuel 23:21-22 - *"And he killed an Egyptian, a spectacular man. The Egyptian had a spear in his hand; so he went down to him with a staff, wrested the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and killed him with his own spear. 22 These things Benaiah the son of Jehoiada did, and won a name among three mighty men."*

- "Spectacular man"; 1 Chronicles 11:23 = 5 cubits tall. 1 cubit = 18 inches. 7.5 feet tall.
- Staff vs. spear: who will win? "Wrested" = taken away by **force**.

Women:

Deuteronomy 28:56 - *"The tender and delicate woman among you, who would not venture to set the sole of her foot on the ground because of her delicateness and sensitivity, will refuse to the husband of her bosom, and to her son and her daughter"*

- "Blessings and Cursings." Tender = fainthearted (H7390). Same word! Venture = to test, prove, try, adventure.

Esther 4:10-11 - *"Then Esther spoke to Hathach, and gave him a command for Mordecai: 11 'All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that any man or woman who goes into the inner court to the king, who has not been called, he has but one law: put all to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter, that he may live. Yet I myself have not been called to go in to the king these thirty days.'*

- Here are the stakes: death, if you disobey the king's law.

Esther 4:15-16 - *"Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai: 16 'Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!'"*

- Esther made up her mind; she was going to do it, even if it meant death for her.

Esther 5:2-4 - *"2 So it was, when the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, that she found favor in his sight, and the king held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand. Then Esther went near and touched the top of the scepter. 3 And the king said to her, 'What do you wish, Queen Esther? What is your request? It shall be given to you—up to half the kingdom!' 4 So Esther answered, 'If it pleases the king, let the king and Haman come today to the banquet that I have prepared for him.'*

Esther 5:7-8 *"Then Esther answered and said, 'My petition and request is this: 8 If I have found favor in the sight of the king, and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and fulfill my request, then let the king and Haman come to the banquet which I will prepare for them, and tomorrow I will do as the king has said.'"*

- The result; notice that while courageous and bold, she was also *respectful*.

Developing courage: how to obtain it?

Courage can't be bought, inherited or given. Like faith, it must be developed.

Society's examples: "Become an avid reader to develop intellectual courage." "Practice what you preach to develop moral courage." "Exercise to develop physical courage."

Joshua 1:8-9 - "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. 9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

- Observing God's Laws. (**Joshua 2**, story of Rahab; their courage melted when the Lord intervened for Israel)

Deuteronomy 8:1-2 - "Every commandment which I command you today you must be careful to observe, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land of which the Lord swore to your fathers. And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not."

- Observing God's Laws; be humble; be willing; stand up and be willing to venture out!

Psalm 119:2 - "Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, who seek Him with the whole heart!"

- Seek God with your whole heart; He will bless and strengthen you.

Luke 21:14-15 - 'Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist.'

- Focus on developing the mind of Christ. He will provide. Don't **worry**. Worry creates fear and lack of courage.

Conclusion: When times get tough, God's people show their courage. We must stand up for the truth when the time comes.

What is it?: Courage is the strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty without flinching.
Why have it?: Courage will be needed if we're put in a position to defend what we believe. God promises to provide.
Who had it?: Courage was exhibited by Benaiah and Esther; written for our benefit and example.
How to obtain it?: Courage is a byproduct of centering your life on God, His Laws, and His way of life.

1 Corinthians 16:13 - "Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong."