



# Courage

## How to truly have “No Fear!”

Note: The Scripture references in this Bible study are taken from the New King James Version.

**Joshua 1:9** - 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.

### Is it a sin to be fearful?

Yes it is. The only thing we should be fearful of is acting outside God's will.

Matthew 10:28 - do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

### What did God command Joshua?

Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed.

### Why did God command Joshua to be of good courage?

God was calling Joshua to succeed Moses as leader of the Israelites. God knew Joshua's thoughts and how he had reservations about the responsibility of leading the Israelites to take possession of the promised land.

### What is courage?

Webster's dictionary defines courage as mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty.

### How do people come by courage?

Courage is an act of the will, it is a decision that is made as a result of a person's faith in someone or something that will be their salvation.

### How does a person come by the faith that gives him courage?

The Christian has faith that is a gift from God...

Eph 2:8 - For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God

### How is a non-Christian able to have courage?

All people have faith in something. If not God, they are either trusting in themselves, or others, or the government, or someone else to be their savior.

### Why is the Christian's source of courage superior to that of the non-believer?

Our faith is based on truth that is 100% dependable. Faith in anyone or anything besides God will eventually fail.

### So who would you expect to have the most courage, a man of God or an agnostic who has an “open mind” about spiritual matters?

The agnostic who claims to have an open mind is a hypocrite who has really already made up their mind. There is no fence-sitting with God... either you trust in Him or you are opposed to Him. Clearly the man who trusts in God will have more courage...

Proverbs 28:1 - The wicked flee when no one pursues, but the righteous are bold as a lion.

### How do demonstrations of courage argue against evolution?

One of the theories of natural processes that has come out of belief in evolution is survival of the fittest or natural selection. This process is one of competition where the animals with the better adaptive mutations survive over those that do not change or have unbeneficial mutations.

### If man got to where he is by survival of the fittest, how do you explain why firemen would risk their lives running into a burning building to rescue people trapped inside?

Such displays of courage makes it clear that the process of natural selection certainly does not apply to men. And if natural selection does not apply to men, it is illogical to apply it to any other creature.

### Back to Joshua 1:9, what reason did God give Joshua for why he should not be afraid?

The Lord your God is with you wherever he was to go.

### What does it mean for God to be on your side? Does this mean that whatever you do, God will support it?

No, God being on your side really means that you are on God's side. God supports those who are on His side acting in His will but opposes those who try to bring God over to their worldly plan.

### How does knowing that the Lord is with you give you courage?

If you are with the Lord, you are not acting alone. When you are on God's side, you have access to His unlimited resources. The Almighty Creator of the universe will make sure that His will be done.

I read a story about an eight-year-old boy who anticipated a day at an amusement park with his family and friends. The roller coaster was terrifyingly large. As the boy waited in line he heard scream after scream. For him, they were screams of terror. But the boy was encouraged by his dad and held there by peer pressure. When he got on the ride, he discovered that the screams of the riders were screams of joy, not fear. And while the ride appeared treacherous, it was completely safe. His father was right. The boy was anxious to get back in line for another ride.

**Have you ever been that little kid, standing in line for something you have been told is so great yet fear holds you back?**

Courage is a key ingredient in a life that wins. When God tugs at your heart to do something and you do it, your courage grows. You begin to realize—and apply—His principles to your life in dynamic ways.

**What examples of courage in the Bible come to mind?**

There are many examples...

- Abraham, in going to “the land I will show you”
- Joshua and Caleb, in advising that Israel go at once and possess the land
- Gideon, in attacking the confederate armies of the Midianites and Amalekites with three hundred men
- Deborah, in leading Israel's armies
- David, in killing Goliath, in entering into the tent of Saul, and carrying away Saul's spear
- Esther, in going to the king to save her people
- Joseph of Arimathea, in caring for the body of Jesus
- Peter and the other disciples in preaching the gospel.
- Paul, in going to Jerusalem, despite his impressions that bonds and imprisonments awaited him

**What is God calling you to have courage about today?**

For me it is to be a bolder witness

**What kind of fears keep us from being bold in our witness?**

- I admit to being fearful of having to defend a faith that is not easy to express in words that the world will understand.
- I know that I'm also fearful of having to depend on my own resources forgetting that it is God the Holy Spirit that does all the heavy lifting in bringing people to Christ.
- The biggest obstacle I have is fear of deviating from my own agenda. Bob refers to himself as a type “A” personality and I can certainly identify with that. The biggest problem this mindset presents for me is that I get so focused on the task at hand that I fail to take

advantage of witnessing opportunities that the Lord makes for me.

**What would you recommend for a Christian whose fears are holding him back from being a bold witness?**

- Probably the biggest thing is to remember that I am not alone as a witness and this is an activity that clearly puts us on God's side.  
2 Peter 3:9 - The Lord is... not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.
- I need to remember that my witness is only the tip of the iceberg to the witness of the Holy Spirit.
- God has empowered us with the Holy Spirit who will bring to our remembrance God's Word and help us with our fear...  
2 Tim 1:7 - For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

**Where does the spirit of fear come from?**

It certainly can come from Satan and his demons. It is Satan's agenda to so immobilize Christians with fear that they will be ineffective in participating in God's work to extend His kingdom. Satan knows what the end for him is and his only hope is to cause the inevitable to be delayed.

2 Peter 3:11-12 - Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and **hastening** the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?

**What is the “day of God”?**

It is the time period when Jesus is glorified on the earth. Note that in context here Peter is talking about the return of the Lord and said, “*with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day*” (2 Peter 3:8). Those of us who take Scripture literally except where it is obviously intended to be taken figuratively, see this day of God as a reference to the time Jesus will reign on the earth following His physical return...

Rev 20:6 - Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

**Note that 2 Peter 3:12 says that we can hasten the coming of the day of God. How is this possible?**

The previous verse says that this hastening of the coming of the Lord may be accomplished by living holy lives in obedience to Him. If we are living in obedience, we are fulfilling the Great Commission and working to lead people to Christ. I believe that there is a set number that only God knows of people who will be saved during the Age of Grace. When that number is reached, the Lord will call out His church and bring the Age of Grace to an end with the

tribulation to follow. We can hasten His coming for the church by accelerating the rate at which people come into the church.

### **Where else besides Satan does the spirit of fear come from?**

I also think that Satan gets a lot more credit than he is due and that our human thought process causes us to fear. This is why Jesus counseled us not to worry...

Matt 6:25 - Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?

### **Recall the resource God has given us for fear...**

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

### **What three things does the Holy Spirit provide us to counter the spirit of fear?**

Power and love and a sound mind...

### **How does the power that the Holy Spirit provides us help with the fear of witnessing?**

As we mentioned before, it is the Holy Spirit who does all the heavy lifting in bringing someone to Christ. Even before we witness as well as during and after, the Holy Spirit prepares the hearts of those who hear the gospel...

John 16:7-8 - "Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment"

The Holy Spirit will even help us to know what we need to say...

John 14:26 - "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you."

We can trust that God's Word is powerful and is used by Him supernaturally to turn the hearts of people to Him...

Isaiah 55:10-11 - For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

### **How does the love that the Holy Spirit provides us help with the fear of witnessing?**

The Holy Spirit makes it possible for us to have the sacrificial agape love of Christ for others, it is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). If we love others we will seek to help them avoid destruction by sharing the good news about

Christ. You hide the truth from people you don't care about but those you love you should make sure they know the truth.

1 Corinthians 13:4-6 - Love... rejoices in the truth Scripture makes it clear that we should love all people as God loved all people not wanting any to perish.

Matt 22:39 - "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Jesus told the parable of the Good Samaritan when he was asked to define who our neighbor is, our neighbor is anyone God brings into our zone of influence. Everyone we encounter is our neighbor. We should even love our enemies...

Matt 5:44 - "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you"

### **Why is it logical to love your enemy?**

- If you love them enough to expose them to the gospel, they may come to Christ and no longer be your enemy.
- So as God loves all people, we should also love all those who He brings into our lives. We should love them enough to make sure they have seen and heard enough of truth about God and eternal life that they may be saved.

### **How does the sound mind that the Holy Spirit provides us help with the fear of witnessing?**

The term "sound mind" refers to reasoning ability. Our faith is not a blind faith, it is based on facts and belief in God and His word is logical. There are good, reasoned answers to those who are sincerely seeking the truth. And we should be prepared to help such truth seekers...

1 Peter 3:15 - But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear

God has given people reasoning ability to both explain the truth to others and to recognize the truth...

Isaiah 1:18 - "Come now, and let us reason together," says the LORD, "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

### **What should we do with someone who is not being rational in response to your witness?**

If someone is not being logical in their response to your defense of the faith, turn them over to Satan and move on. They are someone that God has hardened their hearts due to their unbelief...

Romans 1:28 - And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; To continue to try to witness to such a person will actually be counter-productive...

Matthew 7:6 - Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.

Jesus made it clear that not everyone will want to hear the truth and we should quickly move on to those who do...

Matt 10:14 - And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet.

**What is the prerequisite for having courage?**

Having a saving faith in the Almighty Creator-God who is in control of all things and is 100% dependable.