

Courage in Uncertainty

Most people need courage in some area of their life on an average day. While in crisis, people need a whole other level of courage.

Whatever your need today, it's hard to underestimate the importance of courage. As C.S. Lewis wrote in *The Screwtape Letters*, "Courage isn't simply one of the virtues, but the form of every virtue at the testing point..."

But what is courage actually, particularly spiritual courage?

Here's one definition I've been working on: Spiritual courage is choosing to follow Jesus even when you are shaking inside or out.

I suspect Ananias' knees were knocking when he followed God's direction to reach out to a blinded Saul in Acts 9. I think we are safe to assume Esther's heart was beating at the speed of light as she entered the king's hall to plead for her people. I bet Nathan's mouth was dry and palms clammy when he launched into his rebuke of David. Spiritual courage isn't about eliminating feelings of fear. Instead, spiritual courage is, by God's grace, choosing to trust and obey God in the face of fear.

I'm also reminded of Peter and John's remarkable courage after being jailed and brought before the Sadducees in Acts 4. Filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter and John didn't back down. Instead, they continued to boldly declare the gospel. I love how Acts 4:13 records the reaction of the Sadducees, "*When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished, and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.*"

Be encouraged by the accessibility of Peter and John's credentials for remarkable courage. They had been filled with the Holy Spirit, and they had been with Jesus. These two factors were, and are, the difference-makers for living out spiritual courage.

It's also important to remember that spiritual courage isn't a solo endeavor. If spiritual courage is choosing to follow Jesus, we are not alone. Jesus is with us and is even ahead of us leading, guiding, providing and protecting.

Let me close with two questions for reflection and action:

Where do you need courage today? Ask God for it. Know that God is faithful, for you and with you. Remember God's faithfulness in the past. Abide and depend on the Holy Spirit. Choose to trust and follow him in your specific area of need.

Whom could you give courage to today? Reach out. Pray. Write a note. Make a phone call. Come alongside. There are people all around you who need the encouragement of a Barnabas.

An Arrow resource developed by Dr. Steve A. Brown or Dr. Rick Franklin

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