

## Courage

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*by Wayne Goff*

It takes courage to be a leader of God's people. Moses admonished Joshua "Be strong and of good courage, for you must go with this people to the land which the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall cause them to inherit it" (Deut. 31:7). Moses was soon to die and Joshua would be the new leader. He would have to stand and oppose the enemy on the battleground. That takes great courage. He would have to silence the complainers and naysayers among them, even against obvious odds. Joshua 1:6 records God telling Joshua at the beginning of his work "Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them." The same is required today of faithful preachers, faithful elders, faithful deacons and faithful members. Be courageous and stand firm on the Word of God! You will have many obstacles, but you can overcome because God is with you if you obey Him.

Sometimes people get the mistaken idea that courage is the absence of fear. Instead courage is "the ability to do something that frightens one" (Oxford American Dictionary). Courageous people experience fear, but they do not let it keep them from doing what needs to be done. Fear can paralyze one and cause him to fail to do the right thing. Paul admonished the young preacher Timothy "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (2 Tim. 1:7). Paul wrote these words as he sat in a Roman prison waiting to be judged by Nero! The physical persecution exacted upon the early church required courage to face and overcome.

The apostle Paul was not always courageous, as we might suppose. On his journey to Rome as a prisoner awaiting trial, Luke writes "And from there, when the brethren heard about us, they came to meet us as far as Appii Forum and Three Inns. When Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage" (Acts 28:15). He was afraid of being rejected by Roman Christians when they saw him come to the Empire's capital in chains. On the contrary, Paul was greeted and well-received, giving him courage. Joseph of Arimathea needed courage to go to Pilate and ask for the body of Jesus for burial, Mk. 15:43. We need courage to face our friends and family and stand for the gospel. We need courage to face the trials and temptations of life. We need courage to be a godly example. Pray for courage and wisdom. Remember, it's easier to be courageous when you know you're doing the right thing.

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