



## **The Courage to Venture like Peter**

Adapted from "Courage" series by Dennis Marquardt

There is a law of nature that states that everything takes the path of least resistance. Whether it is electricity flowing, rocks falling, or water running, things follow the path of least resistance when left to themselves. Have you ever noticed how a river differs from a canal? Canals, being man-made, cover the shortest distance between two points. However, a river meanders around all kinds of angles and obstacles going from point A to point B. The river may take twice the distance to go from point A to B than a canal would. Left to itself, a river will naturally follow the path of least resistance. If a river hits a hard spot, it will simply go around it rather than try to go through it.

Human nature is the same way. In our fallen sinful condition, we tend to take the path of least resistance. It is naturally easier to take easy ways rather than the tougher ways. Only with the power of the Holy Spirit do we find the courage and strength to press through hard places. The Bible teaches us that with faith we can venture with courage against the strongest opposition. The secret is keeping our eyes on Christ and not on the storms of life.

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## COURAGE

**C1:** Describe a time in your life when you took the path of least resistance. Why was it easier to take that path rather than the hard road? When it comes to your walk with Christ, do you find yourself taking the easy road? Why or why not?

**C2:** Read and answer the following.

**Matthew 14:22–36 (ESV)** Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them. And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" and they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid." And Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me." Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God." And when they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret. And when the men of that place recognized him, they sent around to all that region and brought to him all who were sick and implored him that they might only touch the fringe of his garment. And as many as touched it were made well.

- Jesus commanded His disciples to get into the boat and go to the other side. Have you ever felt God calling you to do something? What?
- Have you ever felt afraid when God has called you to step out of a situation like Peter stepping out of the boat? Describe your feelings.

- The boat ride became rough due to storms. Describe a time in your life when you did something God asked and the ride became rough. How did you feel during this time?
  
- Jesus was there to grab Peter's hand and comfort him when he took his eyes off Jesus and began to sink. Describe a time in your life when you felt you were sinking and reached out to God.

**C3:** Describe the following:

- The difference between being disappointed and discouraged.
  
- The difficulty in stepping out of the boat verses staying in the boat.
  
- Following where God is leading even if it is into a storm.

## STRENGTH

**S1:** Has there ever been a time God has asked you to go into a storm or even walk on the stormy waters? Describe that time in your life.

**S2:** Read and answer the following.

### Matthew 14:22–36 (ESV)

- The disciples followed where Christ led them. Describe where is Christ leading you?
- Despite the storm, Christ asked Peter to walk to him. How much faith did it take to step out of the boat into the stormy seas? Where do you get the faith to step into a stormy situation?
- Peter had a desire to be near Christ. On a scale of 1-4, with 1 being very much and 4 being not very much, rate your desire to be near Christ. Write out a plan to improve.

**S3:** In the next thirty days, discuss this lesson with three men. What did you glean from this conversation? Make sure to include in your discussion the courage needed to be in the situation where God has asked you to go.

## ENDURANCE

**E1:** The path of least resistance is a law of nature. Describe how being a Christian goes against that law?

**E2:** Read and answer the following.

**Matthew 14:27 (ESV)**

- Jesus told his disciples “Don’t be afraid.” Describe a time in your life when you were afraid and Jesus came to you?

**E3:** Read and answer the following.

**Matthew 14:22-36 (ESV)**

**Mark 6:45-56 (ESV)**

**John 6:16-24 (ESV)**

- What similarities and differences do you see in these stories?
  
- After reading through these passages, sit and reflect on “Where you are in this story?”

**E4:** Twelve ordinary men set out to sail across the lake at the command of Jesus. For the next thirty days ask the Holy Spirit to show you what Jesus is asking you to do.