



Be Strong and Courageous

Text: Joshua 1:1-9

Pastor Ken Werlein

Like Joshua, God calls all of us to live courageously. However, this is easier said than done. If we are going to be strong and courageous, we need to constantly be aware of God's presence and rooted in Scripture.

1. Have you ever been in a season where you had no idea what you were going to do next? How did you feel? Stressed? Hopeful? Nervous? Fearful? Excited?
2. Read Joshua 1:1-9. God commands Joshua to be "strong and courageous" 3 times. According to this passage, what did Joshua need to do or remember in order to be strong and courageous?
3. God promises His constant presence numerous times throughout this passage. Are you aware of God's constant presence in your life? If not, what is it that distracts you from God's presence? How does your perspective change when you are aware of God's presence?
4. Pastor Ken notes a pattern we need to be aware of as Christians: Lack of study -> Lack of obedience -> Lack of fruitfulness -> Lack of victory -> Lack of courage and strength. If God puts such an emphasis on the importance of studying, meditating and obeying His Word, what do you feel causes the disconnect in so many Christians (including yourself) who struggle with doing this?
5. What are some ways you can prepare yourself ahead of time – as did Ulysses by filling his crew's ears with beeswax – to avoid these particular "sirens" in your life that attempt to draw you away?

Challenge: What are some ways that we can practice becoming aware of God's presence? Think of 3 practices that you can implement every day this week. Be prepared to share your experience with the group the next time you meet.

Prayer: Pray for one another concerning:

- What areas of your life do you lack strength and courage? Pray that you would trust in God's promises over your fear.
- What areas of your life do you struggle to experience God's presence? Pray for eyes to see God's glory all around you.
- What makes it difficult for you to regularly dive into Scripture? Pray for an obedient heart and the removal of all distractions.

STUDY DEEPER

“11 Brother Lawrence Quotes that Will Challenge How You Practice Faith” by Jesse Carey

After a dramatic religious conversion, young soldier Nicholas Herman decided to devote his life to following God and learning more about Christ. He joined a monastery and took the name Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection. There, he spent the rest of his life working in a kitchen and repairing his brothers' sandals. But during his decades of doing seemingly menial jobs, Brother Lawrence discovered a profound truth about having a relationship with God: Experiencing His presence can—and should—happen everywhere.

Though during his life, much of his time was spent serving others, the wisdom Brother Lawrence gleaned from praying throughout each day has been inspiring Christians for more than 300 years. His letters and discussions with peers were later compiled into the now classic book *The Practice of the Presence of God*.

Brother Lawrence died today (Feb. 12) 324 years ago, but his teachings about prayer are just as relevant today as they were back then.

Here are 11 quotes that can help re-inspire how you practice faith.

ON GOD'S NEARNESS

You need not cry very loud: He is nearer to us than we think.

ON A MINDSET OF PRAYER

One way to re-collect the mind easily in the time of prayer, and preserve it more in tranquility, is not to let it wander too far in other times: you should keep it strictly in the presence of God; and being accustomed to think of Him often, you will find it easy to keep your mind calm in the time of prayer, or at least to recall it from its wanderings.

ON MOTIVATION

We ought not to be weary of doing little things for the love of God, who regards not the greatness of the work, but the love with which it is performed.

ON WORSHIP

We ought to propose to ourselves is to become, in this life, the most perfect worshippers of God we can possibly be, as we hope to be through all eternity.

ON CONSTANT PRAYER

There is not in the world a kind of life more sweet and delightful, than that of a continual conversation with God; those only can comprehend it who practice and experience it.

ON DEVOTION

We should put life in our faith. We should give ourselves utterly to God in pure abandonment, in temporal and spiritual matters alike, and find contentment in the doing of His will, whether he takes us through sufferings or consolations.

ON COURAGE

I did not pray for any relief, but I prayed for strength to suffer with courage, humility and love.

ON A FORMULA FOR SPIRITUALITY

That there needed neither art nor science for going to GOD, but only a heart resolutely determined to apply itself to nothing but Him, or for His sake, and to love Him only.

ON KNOWING GOD

The more we know Him, the more we will desire to know Him. As love increases with knowledge, the more we know God, the more we will truly love Him. We will learn to love Him equally in times of distress or in times of great joy.”

ON GOD’S VIEW OF US

“THE KING, FULL OF MERCY AND GOODNESS, VERY FAR FROM CHASTISING ME, EMBRACES ME WITH LOVE, MAKES ME EAT AT HIS TABLE, SERVES ME WITH HIS OWN HANDS, GIVES ME THE KEY OF HIS TREASURES; HE CONVERSES AND DELIGHTS HIMSELF WITH ME INCESSANTLY, IN A THOUSAND AND A THOUSAND WAYS, AND TREATS ME IN ALL RESPECTS AS HIS FAVORITE. IT IS THUS I CONSIDER MYSELF FROM TIME TO TIME IN HIS HOLY PRESENCE.”

ON ACTS OF LOVE

“BY RISING AFTER MY FALLS, AND BY FREQUENTLY RENEWED ACTS OF FAITH AND LOVE, I AM COME TO A STATE WHEREIN IT WOULD BE AS DIFFICULT FOR ME NOT TO THINK OF GOD AS IT WAS AT FIRST TO ACCUSTOM MYSELF TO IT.”

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