

QUALITY
OF
LIFE
BIBLE
STUDY



Courage®

COMPILED BY
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COURAGE

“Quality of Life Series”

LEADER: What is the definition of courage?

READER: QUOTE #1

Source ~ <http://www.bible.org/illus/c/c-142.htm#TopOfPage>

“Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear—not absence of fear.” - Mark Twain, 1835-1910 America’s greatest author and humorist. Wrote Tom Sawyer & Huckleberry Finn

READER: QUOTE # 2

Source ~ <http://www.bible.org/illus/c/c-142.htm#TopOfPage>

“Courage is being scared to death but saddling up anyway.” - John Wayne, 1907-1979 AKA “The Duke” Megastar of western films

READER: QUOTE # 3

Source ~ <http://www.bible.org/illus/c/c-142.htm#TopOfPage>

“Courage is doing what you’re afraid to do. There can be no courage unless you’re scared.”- Eddie Rickenbacker 1890-1973. One of world’s top race car drivers and America’s top-scoring fighter pilot of World War One

READER: QUOTE # 4

Source ~ <http://www.christianglobe.com/illustrations/theDetails.asp?whichOne=c&whichFile=courage>

“I would define true courage to be a perfect sensibility of the measure of danger, and a mental willingness to endure it.” - W.T. Sherman, 1820-1891 Major General of the Union army in the Civil War

READER: QUOTE # 5

source ~ <http://www.bible.org/illus/c/c-142.htm#TopOfPage>

“True heroism is remarkably sober, very undramatic. It is not the urge to surpass all others at whatever cost, but the urge to serve others at whatever the cost.” - Tennis Star Arthur Ashe

READER: Webster’s

courage - noun: the capacity to meet danger without giving way to fear; to have the courage of one’s convictions; to be willing to put one’s opinions into practice.

READER: “A Monster to Hug” (Excerpt)

http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon2b/monster_to_hug.htm

In 1972 David Miln Smith, an adventurer, author, and professional speaker, decided to spend a night alone in St. Michael’s Cave on the island of Gibraltar as a test of courage. In his book, HUG THE MONSTER (Kansas City: Andrews and McMeel, 1996), he tells of hearing strange sounds all around him as he lay there in the pitch-black, damp, deserted cave that night. Particularly, he came to believe he was not alone!

Fear became panic and he was afraid he was losing his mind. Then suddenly, as he was approaching his psychological breaking point, Smith thought to himself, “Whatever the monster looks like, I will hug it.” That simple, almost silly thought, brought great relief to his restless mind. He soon fell into a deep and peaceful sleep until morning. He learned that embracing his fear, literally or figuratively, allowed him to subdue it.

We each have our nights of fear. We each encounter monsters of some sort. We may fear spiders or insects, heights or crowds, abandonment or loneliness, the future or death. And most of us are occasionally visited by shadows of these monsters in the dark of night.

An interesting sequel to Smith’s story is that the curator of St. Michael’s Cave later informed the adventurer that he had discovered unusual footprints in the cave the morning after his overnight stay! Which shows, of course, that though fears may be legitimate, they must still be embraced.

The next time you’re afraid, try “hugging the monster.” Face that fear head-on, whatever it is, and embrace it. You may be surprised at how quickly it slips away, and at how confident you begin to feel. Like that beautiful spirit Eleanor Roosevelt said, “You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you stop to look fear in the face.”

READER: “When You’ve Been Thrown”

Source ~ http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon2d/when_you've_been_thrown.htm

It is well said: “Strength and courage aren’t always measured in medals and victories. They are measured in the struggles we overcome. The strongest people aren’t always the people who win, but the people who don’t give up when they lose.”

A story is told that Andrew Jackson’s boyhood friends just couldn’t understand how he became a famous general and then the President of the United States. They knew of others who had greater talent but who never succeeded. One of Jackson’s friends commented, “Why, Jim Brown, who lived right down the pike from Jackson, was not only smarter but he could throw Andy three times out of four in a wrestling match. But look where Andy is now.”

Another friend responded, “How did there happen to be a fourth time? Didn’t they usually say three times and out?”

“Sure, they were supposed to, but not Andy. He would never admit he was beat -- he would never stay ‘thrown.’ Jim Brown would get tired, and on the fourth try Andrew Jackson would throw him and be the winner.”

Andrew Jackson just wouldn’t stay ‘thrown’! And that determination served him well for many years.

Life will knock us off our feet again and again. You’ve been there and so have I. But some people just won’t stay ‘thrown.’ They get up again, dust themselves off and go for it one more time. These are people of courage. They are also people of faith and hope.

Maybe you have been knocked off your feet. Will you stay ‘thrown,’ or will you rise and give it your best one more time?

READER: QUOTE # 6

Source ~ <http://www.followyourdreams.com/courage.html>

“You haven’t failed till you quit trying.” - Anonymous

LEADER: How do we muster courage?

READER: QUOTE # 7

Source ~ http://www.wisdomquotes.com/cat_courage.html

“Moral excellence comes about as a result of habit. We become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts.” - Aristotle, 384-322 BC Greek Philosopher

READER: QUOTE # 8

Source ~ <http://www.followyourdreams.com/courage.html>

“One learns by doing a thing; for though you think you know it, you have no certainty until you try.” - Sophocles, 496-406 BC, Ancient Greek Playwright

READER: QUOTE # 9

Source ~ http://www.wisdomquotes.com/cat_courage.html

“You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You must do the thing which you think you cannot do.” - Eleanor Roosevelt, 1884-1962, First Lady to Franklin Roosevelt

READER: “Back Off!” By Paula Friedrichsen

Source ~ http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon4/back_off.htm

I love to walk! It is truly one of my very favorite things to do. So I usually make it a point to get out of the house daily and have a trek through my neighborhood. And the other morning as I was walking down the street, minding my own business, a large German Shepard mix bolted out of nowhere snarling, snapping and growling. This dog meant business!

So, there I was, standing stock-still, as that menacing dog approached me steadily - teeth showing with a low mean growl - and it appeared he had every intention of biting me. I looked around for his owner, but the street was completely deserted. And before I had time to really even think about it, something akin to indignation rose up in me. I thought "This is my neighborhood! Who do you think you are?" I just couldn't believe the audacity of that stupid, ugly dog, to think he was going to bite me on my street, in my neighborhood!

So, I charged toward him a step or two and yelled "BACK OFF!" And I can tell you I meant it. And he knew I meant it. He sullenly took a few steps back, letting me pass without incident.

This was a real victory for me, because as a child I was bitten several times by neighborhood dogs and I had developed a real fear of dogs. And it's only been in the last few years that I had felt some relief of these fears. But this was the pinnacle of my success. The interesting part being, that my fears only seemed to diminish when I allowed myself to become outraged and angry at that stupid, ugly dog (and in reality at my stupid, ugly fears).

Fear is a bully that preys on the wounded. Fear will take a past event from your life - something that caused trauma, hurt, injury, or wounded-ness - and capitalize on it, until the fear is so blown out of proportion that it doesn't even resemble the initial event. For many years my fear of dogs dominated my walks. Even if I came upon a friendly tail-wagging dog, my heart would start to pound and I would literally have to stop myself from running home at full speed (now how would that look - a grown woman running in frenzied terror from a friendly, galloping Golden Retriever?)

I had a victory the other day on my walk and it's gotten me thinking about the other fears I want to conquer in my life. I believe God has put courage in each one of us - but it's up to each individual to "unearth" it and put it into action. And just like that stupid, ugly dog thought he would take some of my territory for his own, I wonder what other fears in my life have taken over territory that belongs to me?

Maybe it's time to start putting our foot down when our fears begin to loom, threatening to cast dark shadows of doom over our days and nights. Yes, it's true that we do live in a fearful time, but the fears DO NOT have the power to dominate our hearts and minds. And because we do live in a tumultuous time, let that be the catalyst that drives us deeper into our relationship with God. He is the source of all courage and bravery, so we would do well by spending time with him each day. When we determine to put God first, filling up with his word, we will find ourselves fortified and able to say with confidence to those lying, looming fears; BACK OFF!

LEADER: So...What action should we take when called upon for courage? Put God first and Go for It!

READER: QUOTE # 10

Source ~ http://www.wisdomquotes.com/cat_courage.html

"I try to avoid looking forward or backward, and try to keep looking upward." - Charlotte Bronte, 1816-1855 English author. Wrote Jane Eyre

READER: 2 Chronicles 15:7

"But you, be strong and do not lose courage, for there is reward for your work."

READER: QUOTE # 11

Source ~ http://www.wisdomquotes.com/cat_courage.html

"The best way out is always through." - Robert Frost 1874-1963 American Poet

READER: QUOTE # 12

Source ~ <http://www.followyourdreams.com/courage.html>

"The only way to pass any test is to take the test." - Anonymous

LEADER: Is any courage good courage?

READER: QUOTE # 13

Source ~ http://www.wisdomquotes.com/cat_courage.html

"Courage without conscience is a wild beast." - Robert G. Ingersoll, The foremost orator and political speechmaker of late 19th century America

LEADER: We've seen what to do when facing physical danger...what about courage to speak up?

READER: "Peer Pressure" By Chuck Swindoll

Source ~ <http://www.bible.org/illus/c/c-142.htm#TopOfPage>

There was a test conducted by a university where 10 students were placed in a room. Three lines of varying length were drawn on a card. The students were told to raise their hands when the instructor pointed to the longest line. But 9 of the students had been instructed beforehand to raise their hands when the instructor pointed to the second longest line. One student was the stooge. The usual reaction of the stooge was to put his hand up, look around, and realizing he was all alone, pull it back down. This happened 75% of the time, with students from grade school through high school. The researchers concluded that many would rather be president than be right.

READER: "Andrew Johnson, Guilty or Not?"

You Can Stand Strong in the Face of Fear, Jon Johnston, 1990, SP Publications, pp. 56-58

Source ~ <http://www.bible.org/illus/c/c-142.htm#TopOfPage>

Who was United States Senator Edmund G. Ross of Kansas? I suppose you could call him a "Mr. Nobody." No law bears his name. Not a single list of Senate "greats" mentions his service. Yet when Ross entered the Senate in 1866, he was considered the man to watch. He seemed destined to surpass his colleagues, but he tossed it all away by one courageous act of conscience.

Let's set the stage. Conflict was dividing our government in the wake of the Civil War. President Andrew Johnson was determined to follow Lincoln's policy of reconciliation toward the defeated South. Congress, however, wanted to rule the downtrodden Confederate states with an iron hand.

Congress decided to strike first. Shortly after Senator Ross was seated, the Senate introduced impeachment proceedings against the hated President. The radicals calculated that they needed thirty-six votes, and smiled as they concluded that the thirty-sixth was none other than Ross.' The new senator listened to the vigilante talk. But to the surprise of many, he declared that the president "deserved as fair a trial as any accused man has ever had on earth." The word immediately went out that his vote was "shaky."

Ross received an avalanche of anti-Johnson telegrams from every section of the country. Radical senators badgered him to "come to his senses." The fateful day of the vote arrived. The courtroom galleries were packed. Tickets for admission were at an enormous premium.

As a deathlike stillness fell over the Senate chamber, the vote began. By the time they reached Ross, twenty-four "guilties" had been announced. Eleven more were certain. Only Ross' vote was needed to impeach the President. Unable to conceal his emotion, the Chief Justice asked in a trembling voice, "Mr. Senator Ross, how vote you? Is the respondent Andrew Johnson guilty as charged?"

Ross later explained, at that moment, "I looked into my open grave. Friendships, position, fortune, and everything that makes life desirable to an ambitious man were about to be swept away by the breath of my mouth, perhaps forever."

Then, the answer came—unhesitating, unmistakable: "Not guilty!" With that, the trial was over. And the response was as predicted.

A high public official from Kansas wired Ross to say: "Kansas repudiates you as she does all perjurers and skunks." The "open grave" vision had become a reality. Ross' political career was in ruins. Extreme ostracism, and even physical attack awaited his family upon their return home.

One gloomy day Ross turned to his faithful wife and said, "Millions cursing me today will bless me tomorrow... Though not but God can know the struggle it has cost me." It was a prophetic declaration.

Twenty years later Congress and the Supreme Court verified the wisdom of his position, by changing the laws related to impeachment.

Ross was appointed Territorial Governor of New Mexico. Then, just prior to his death, he was awarded a special pension by Congress. The press and country took this opportunity to honor his courage which, they finally concluded, had saved our country from crisis and division.

READER: QUOTE #14

Source ~ http://www.wisdomquotes.com/cat_courage.html

“Moral cowardice that keeps us from speaking our minds is as dangerous to this country as irresponsible talk. The right way is not always the popular and easy way. Standing for right when it is unpopular is a true test of moral character.” - Margaret Chase Smith, 1897-1995, US Senator 1949-1973. First woman to be placed in nomination for the presidency at a major party convention.

READER: “Set Your Own Agenda” By Steve Goodier

Source ~ http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon7/set_your_own_agenda.htm

Have you ever heard of Hank Greenberg? The year was 1934. For the first time in 25 years, the Detroit Tigers were a strong team who had an excellent chance to play in baseball’s prestigious World Series. Hank was a key player on a team that had come to rely on his superb skills at first base, and his strong batting, to win games. An important and decisive game was scheduled on Yom Kippur. Hank, the son of Romanian immigrants to the United States, announced that he would not don his uniform and play on this day, one of the most sacred of Hebrew fasts.

The city of Detroit was outraged. Citizens screamed that the Day of Atonement could be celebrated any year, but this year the Tigers may go all the way to the Series! Anti-Semitic remarks were viciously hurled, but Hank Greenberg remained resolute.

The Detroit Tigers indeed lost that day, although the team did secure the pennant that year. And Hank, when more rational minds prevailed, attained the respect of the community. In fact, a poem was written and published honoring the man who held steadfastly to his beliefs. The tribute ended with this verse:

Came Yom Kippur - Holy fast day world-wide over to the Jews, And Hank Greenberg to his teaching and the old tradition true Spent the day among his people and he didn’t come to play.

Said Murphy to Mulrooney, “We shall lose the game today! We shall miss him in the infield and shall miss him at the bat, But he’s true to his religion - and I honor him for that!”

Hank still teaches us an important lesson in how to live effectively. He decided what was important to him and, regardless of pressure applied, he honored his own values. Hank Greenberg -- not the team, nor the coaches, nor even emotional Detroit fans -- set his agenda. What he did required tremendous courage. He let nobody lower standards he had chosen for himself. And though the team lost that day, the city of Detroit won because it gained an important role model in a young man who courageously followed an inner voice.

Choosing our own way may not always be easy. But effective living occurs once we decide how we will live our lives and, regardless of outside pressure, we honor that decision.

If you are struggling with a difficult decision today, what is your inner voice leading you to do? Perhaps that is the voice that should be honored.

LEADER: How does it make you feel when you don’t speak up?

READER: QUOTE # 15

Source ~ http://www.wisdomquotes.com/cat_courage.html

“History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be unlived, but if faced with courage, need not be lived again.” - Maya Angelou, Internationally respected poet, writer and educator

READER: “COURAGE” (A Poem)

Source ~ <http://www.funsilly.com/courage.shtml>

Courage

Courage is the price that Life exacts for granting peace.
The soul that knows it not Knows no release from little things:
Knows not the livid loneliness of fear,
Nor mountain heights where bitter joy can hear
The sound of wings.

How can life grant us boon of living, compensate
For dull gray ugliness and pregnant hate
Unless we dare The soul's dominion?
Each time we make a choice, we pay
With courage to behold the restless day,
And count it fair.

- Amelia Earhart, 1835-1897, One of the world's most celebrated aviators

LEADER: If we don't speak up...it robs of us of our peace doesn't it.

On the other hand, doing the right thing brings peace and joy and is a real class act.

READER: "A Class Act" (Excerpt) John Berendt, Esquire

Source ~ <http://www.christianglobe.com/Illustrations/theDetails.asp?whichOne=c&whichFile=courage>

One day in 1956, songwriter Johnny Mercer received a letter from Sadie Vimmerstedt, a widowed grandmother who worked behind a cosmetics counter in Youngstown, Ohio. Vimmerstedt suggested Mercer write a song called "I Want to Be Around to Pick Up the Pieces When Somebody Breaks Your Heart."

Five years later, Mercer got in touch to say he'd written the song and that Tony Bennett would record it. Today, if you look at the label on any recording of "I Wanna Be Around," you'll notice that the credits for words and music are shared by Johnny Mercer and Sadie Vimmerstedt. The royalties were split 50-50, too, thanks to which Vimmerstedt and her heirs have earned more than \$100,000.

In my opinion, Mercer's generosity was a class act. By "class act," I mean any behavior so virtuous that it puts normal behavior to shame. It was a class act, for instance, when Alexander Hamilton aimed high and fired over Aaron Burr's head. Benjamin Gegggenhiem performed a class act on the Titanic when he gave his life jacket to a woman passenger and then put on white tie and tails so he could die "like a gentleman."

On the stage, the tradition that the show must go on has produced a number of class acts. Katharine Hepburn and Orson Welles have both appeared on-stage in wheelchairs. During the run of *The King and I*, Gertrude Lawrence was dying of cancer but told no one. When she missed a series of performances, the producers wrote her lawyers, suggesting she was faking illness. They warned that if this continued, she would forfeit her share of the profits. The letter arrived on a Monday; Gertrude Lawrence had died over the weekend.

It was a class act of a different order, but a class act nonetheless, for writer Laurence Housman to take off his jacket at a proper English tea party so that a man who had just arrived in shirt sleeves would not feel embarrassed. Even simple good sportsmanship can rise to the level of class act, as it did with tennis player Mats Wilander in the semifinals of the 1982 French Open. At match point, a shot by Wilander's opponent was ruled out. Wilander walked over to the umpire and said, "I can't win like this. The ball was good." The point was played over, and Wilander won fair and square.

LEADER: Will God give you the courage you need when you need it?

READER: "He Couldn't Swim" - Paul Harvey, Los Angeles Times Syndicate

Source ~ <http://www.bible.org/illus/c/c-142.htm#TopOfPage>

One summer morning as Ray Blankenship was preparing his breakfast, he gazed out the window, and saw a small girl being swept along in the rain-flooded drainage ditch beside his Andover, Ohio, home. Blankenship knew that farther downstream, the ditch disappeared with a roar underneath a road and then emptied into the main culvert. Ray dashed out the door and raced along the ditch, trying to get ahead of the floundering child. Then he hurled himself into the deep, churning water. Blankenship surfaced and was able to grab the child's arm. They tumbled end over end. Within about three feet of the yawning culvert, Ray's free hand felt something—possibly a rock—protruding from one bank. He clung desperately, but the tremendous force of the water tried to tear him and the child away. "If I can just hang on until help comes," he thought. He did better than that. By the time fire-department rescuers arrived, Blankenship had pulled the girl to safety. Both were treated for shock.

On April 12, 1989, Ray Blankenship was awarded the Coast Guard's Silver Lifesaving Medal. The award is fitting, for this selfless person was at even greater risk to himself than most people knew. Ray Blankenship can't swim.

READER: Deuteronomy 31:6

“Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid or tremble at them, for the LORD your God is the one who goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you.”

READER: “King Frederick the Great” - Today In The Word

Source ~ <http://www.bible.org/illus/c/c-142.htm#TopOfPage>

The Prussian king Frederick the Great was widely known as an agnostic. By contrast, General Von Zealand, one of his most trusted officers, was a devout Christian. Thus it was that during a festive gathering the king began making crude jokes about Christ until everyone was rocking with laughter—all but Von Zealand, that is. Finally, he arose and addressed the king:

“Sire, you know I have not feared death. I have fought and won 38 battles for you. I am an old man; I shall soon have to go into the presence of One greater than you, the mighty God who saved me from my sin, the Lord Jesus Christ whom you are blaspheming. I salute you, sire, as an old man who loves his Savior, on the edge of eternity.”

The place went silent, and with a trembling voice the king replied, “General Von Zealand—I beg your pardon! I beg your pardon!”

And with that the party quietly ended.

READER: “A Lion Tamer” By Alan Smith

Source ~ http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon2b/lion_tamer.htm

A first grade teacher seated her students in a circle. She asked them what they wanted to be when they grew up. One by one, each child got up and announced, “I’d like to be a nurse like my mother,” or “I want to be a banker like my father,” or “I want to be a teacher like you, Miss Smith.”

The last child to speak was the most shy and timid little boy in the class. He said, “When I get big, I’m going to be a lion tamer in the circus. I’m going to face those animals with my whip and chair and make them leap through hoops of fire and obey all of my commands.”

Seeing the disbelieving looks on the faces of his classmates that he could ever act so boldly or bravely, he was quick to reassure them, “Well, of course, I’ll have my mother with me.”

We are sometimes shy and timid about standing up for Christ in the midst of an immoral society. We keep quiet when we ought to speak up. We cower when we ought to take a stand. Where do we get the inner strength to be bold and brave? Only through the assurance that we have Christ by our side.

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” (Phil. 4:13).

With that knowledge, take courage today to do something for God that you’ve been hesitant to do.

READER: “A Stand for Christ at Estes Park”

Source ~ http://www.preachingtoday.com/index.taf?_UserReference=E8F43A2A9C5921CF40576BE1&_function=illustration&_op=show_norm&IID=14530&sr=1

Twenty years ago, my wife and I were vacationing in Estes Park, Colorado, and had breakfast in a coffee shop. It was empty except for four men at another table. One was mocking Christianity; in particular, the resurrection of Christ. He went on and on about what a stupid teaching that was.

I could feel the Lord asking me: “Are you going to let this go unchallenged?” However, I was thinking, But I don’t even know these guys. He’s bigger than me. He’s got cowboy boots on and looks tough. I was agitated and frightened about doing anything. But I knew I had to stand for Jesus.

Finally, I told Susan to pray. I took my last drink of water and went over and challenged him. With probably a squeaky voice, I said, “I’ve been listening to you, and you don’t know what you’re talking about!”

I did my best to give him a flying rundown of the proofs for the resurrection. He was speechless, and I was half dead. I must have shaken for an hour after that. But I had to take a stand.

We cannot remain anonymous in our faith forever. God has a way of flushing us out of our quiet little places, and when he does we must be ready to speak for him. 1 Peter 3:15 says, *“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.”*

READER: Romans 1:16

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

READER: “ Being Bolder” By David

Source ~ <http://www.cfdevotionals.org/devpages/de961113.htm>

My family and I went to Disney World two week ago for five days. I told Jan before I left that I was sure a devotional would come out of this trip. Little did I know that a defining moment would happen in my own walk with our Lord. So, today is confession time for David. ;)

My wife and our three children ages 11, 8 and 4 arrived in Orlando on a Wednesday Morning, checked into our motel, and immediately headed for the “Magic Kingdom”. We all had a blast and practically covered the whole park in 7 hours. (Yeah, I may write a book “Disney in Seven Hours or Less”). The next day its off to MGM Grand. The next day its EPCOT. By the third day I am getting pretty tired and quite honestly fed up with people in general. The kids were getting tired and just a tad cranky. I found myself snapping at some folks, mumbling stuff under my breath at impatient people, judging others by their appearance and the worst thing to me... snapping at the kids.

On the fourth day an interesting thing happened. That morning I decided to wear a Ray Boltz shirt. It has a lamb the back and the words to the song “I Pledge Allegiance to the Lamb”. Funny thing happened to my attitude. Suddenly I was back to Mr. Christian, Mr. Friendly, Mr. Father of the Year Candidate (kidding), Mr. Nice to everyone, Mr. How can I make this person have a better day. When we ordered lunch the lady taking our ordered looked particularly frazzled. After we ordered and I talk to her for a bit, she looked up and said “You folks sure made my day by being so nice”.

After lunch my wife and the kids went for ice cream while I stayed on a bench and prayed. Lord, I am so shallow? Is my faith so weak I have to wear a Christian Shirt to remind myself who I belong too? Lord have I fallen into that trap I so often teach about in bible studies and write about in the devotionals? The trap of being a part time Christian, of being a hypocrite? Lord forgive me and help me in the constant struggle to be a Fully Devoted Follower of Christ. As I finished praying I looked up and a lady was sitting across from me with a T-Shirt saying “Prayer is the Key”. I smiled at her and said “amen” and then looked up to God and said “thank you Lord for that reminder”.

So, God used that moment to refine me just a little be more. To make me just a little bolder in proclaiming Him as my Lord and living the Christian Life 24 hours a day, seven days a week. My prayer for you is that this devotional will help refine you as well.

READER: “Where the Going’s Smooth” By Edgar A. Guest

Source ~ <http://www.bible.org/illus/c/c-142.htm#TopOfPage>

Where the going’s smooth and pleasant
You will always find the throng,
For the many—more’s the pity—
Seem to like to drift along.

But the steps that call for courage,
And the task that’s hard to do
In the end results in glory
For the never-wavering few.

READER: QUOTE # 16

Source ~ <http://www.followyourdreams.com/courage.html>

“The best thing about the future is that it only comes one day at a time.” - Abraham Lincoln 16th President of United States

LEADER: Let’s take courage in “20 Cans of Success” by Dr. Anderson (paraphrased)

Source ~ http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon2d/twenty_cans_of_success.htm

READER: I CAN #1 Philippians 4:13

I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

LEADER: The Bible says I can what?... (let them answer)

Do all things through Christ.

Because?...He strengthens me.

READER: I CAN #2 Philippians 4:19

And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

LEADER: The Bible says I can what? ...Have all my needs met.

Because?...God says He will supply them according to His riches and glory in Christ Jesus.

READER: I CAN #3 2 Timothy 1:7

For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.

LEADER: The Bible says I can what?... Not fear

Because?...God has not given me a spirit of timidity but of power, love sound mind.

READER: I CAN #4 Romans 12:3

For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

LEADER: The Bible says I can what?... I can have faith.

Because?... God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

READER: I CAN #5 Psalm 27:1

*The LORD is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear?
The LORD is the defense of my life; Whom shall I dread?*

Daniel 11:32 (second half of scripture)

but the people who know their God will display strength and take action.

LEADER: The Bible says I can what?... Display strength and take action.

Because?... The Lord is my light and my salvation and the defense of my life.

READER: I CAN #6 1 John 4:4

You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.

LEADER: The Bible says I can what?... Overcome Satan.

Because?...Greater is He who is in me than he who is in the world

READER: I CAN #7 2 Corinthians 2:14

But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place.

LEADER: The Bible says I can what?... I can be triumphant.

Because?... God always leads me to triumph in Christ...through the knowledge of Him in every place.

READER: I CAN #8 James 1:5

But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

LEADER: The Bible says I can what?... Have wisdom.

Because?...God gives it generously to those who ask.

READER: I CAN #9 Lamentations 3:21-23

This I recall to my mind, Therefore I have hope. The LORD'S loving kindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.

LEADER: The Bible says I can what?... Have hope.
Because?... The LORD'S loving kindnesses never cease, His compassions never fail
AND...THEY ARE NEW EVERY MORNING!

(So if you're ever feeling down...remember tomorrow is a new day when His loving kindness and compassions are new...they never wear out...cease or fail.)

READER: I CAN #10 1 Peter 5:7

Casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

LEADER: The Bible says I can what?... Cast all my anxieties on Him.
Because?... He cares for me.

READER: I CAN #11 2 Corinthians 3:17

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

LEADER: The Bible says I can what?... Be free.
Because?... Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

READER: I CAN #12 Romans 8:1

Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

LEADER: The Bible says I can what?... Be free from condemnation.
Because? ...There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ.

READER: I CAN #13 Matthew 28:20

Teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age

LEADER: The Bible says I can what?... Observe all that the Lord commands me.
Because?... He is with me always...even to the end of the age.

READER: I CAN #14 Galatians 3:13, 14

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us--for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE"-- in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

LEADER: The Bible says I can what?... Receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.
Because?... Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law by becoming the curse for us by hanging on the cross.

READER: I CAN #15 Philippians 4:11

Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.

LEADER: The Bible says I can what?... Be content.
Because? ... I can learn to be content in whatever circumstances I am.

READER: I CAN #16 2 Corinthians 5:21

He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

LEADER: The Bible says I can what?... Become the righteousness of God in Him.
Because?... He made Christ who knew no sin to become sin on my behalf.

READER: I CAN #17 1 Corinthians 14:33 and 2:12

For God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God,

LEADER: The Bible says I can what?... Know peace and the things freely given us by God.
Because? ... God is not a God of confusion
I have received the Spirit who is from God not of the world.

READER: I CAN #18 Romans 8:31

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?

LEADER: The Bible says I can what ...I can have courage, I can succeed....I can...(you fill in the blank.)
Because? ... If God is for me, who is against me?

READER: I CAN #19 Romans 8:37

But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.

LEADER: The Bible says I can what?... Conquer all things.
Because?... Of Him who loves me.

READER: I CAN #20 John 16:33

"These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."

LEADER: The Bible says I can what?... Have peace and courage.
Because?... He has overcome the world and its tribulations.

LEADER: So....should you chance it...courage?

READER: QUOTE #17

Source ~ http://www.wisdomquotes.com/cat_courage.html

"It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbled, or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly, who errs and comes short again and again, who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, and spends himself in a worthy cause, who at best knows achievement and who at the worst if he fails at least fails while daring greatly so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat."

- Theodore Roosevelt, From a speech given in Paris at the Sorbonne in 1910

READER: Joshua 1:9

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

READER: QUOTE #18

Source ~ <http://www.followyourdreams.com/courage.html>

"Every exit is an entry somewhere else." - Tom Stoppard, Czechoslovakian Playwright Born 1937, Has worked with Mike Nichols, and Steven Spielberg.

READER: QUOTE #19

Source ~ <http://www.followyourdreams.com/courage.html>

"One can never consent to creep when one feels an impulse to soar." - Helen Keller, 1880-1968, American Blind/Deaf Author, Lecturer, Amorist

LEADER READ: QUOTE #20

Source ~ <http://www.followyourdreams.com/courage.html>

(THIS IS ONE OF MY FAVORITES)

"If you are not living on the edge, you take up too much room." - Native American saying

LEADER: So what's your definition of courage now?...

Are you living it?

If not...can you start today?

COMMENTS IF TIME:

**ALLOW 10 MINUTES PRIOR TO CLOSING FOR
PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES:**

COPY AND DISTRIBUTE FOR TO READERS' FOR PARTICIPATION:

READERS

QUOTE #1

“Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear—not absence of fear.” - Mark Twain, 1835-1910 America’s greatest author and humorist. Wrote Tom Sawyer & Huckleberry Finn

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QUOTE # 2

“Courage is being scared to death but saddling up anyway.” - John Wayne, 1907-1979 AKA “The Duke” Megastar of western films

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QUOTE # 3

“Courage is doing what you’re afraid to do. There can be no courage unless you’re scared. “ - Eddie Rickenbacker, 1890-1973, One of world’s top race car drivers and America’s top-scoring fighter pilot of World War One

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QUOTE # 4

“I would define true courage to be a perfect sensibility of the measure of danger, and a mental willingness to endure it.” - W.T. Sherman, 1820-1891 Major General of the Union army in the Civil War

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QUOTE # 5

“True heroism is remarkably sober, very undramatic. It is not the urge to surpass all others at whatever cost, but the urge to serve others at whatever the cost.” - Tennis Star Arthur Ashe

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Webster’s Definition:

courage - noun: the capacity to meet danger without giving way to fear; to have the courage of one’s convictions; to be willing to put one’s opinions into practice.

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“A Monster to Hug”

In 1972 David Miln Smith, an adventurer, author, and professional speaker, decided to spend a night alone in St. Michael’s Cave on the island of Gibraltar as a test of courage. In his book, HUG THE MONSTER (Kansas City: Andrews and McMeel, 1996), he tells of hearing strange sounds all around him as he lay there in the pitch-black, damp, deserted cave that night. Particularly, he came to believe he was not alone!

Fear became panic and he was afraid he was losing his mind. Then suddenly, as he was approaching his psychological breaking point, Smith thought to himself, “Whatever the monster looks like, I will hug it.” That simple, almost silly thought, brought great relief to his restless mind. He soon fell into a deep and peaceful sleep until morning. He learned that embracing his fear, literally or figuratively, allowed him to subdue it.

We each have our nights of fear. We each encounter monsters of some sort. We may fear spiders or insects, heights or crowds, abandonment or loneliness, the future or death. And most of us are occasionally visited by shadows of these monsters in the dark of night.

An interesting sequel to Smith’s story is that the curator of St. Michael’s Cave later informed the adventurer that he had discovered unusual footprints in the cave the morning after his overnight stay! Which shows, of course, that though fears may be legitimate, they must still be embraced.

The next time you’re afraid, try “hugging the monster.” Face that fear head-on, whatever it is, and embrace it. You may be surprised at how quickly it slips away, and at how confident you begin to feel. Like that beautiful spirit Eleanor Roosevelt said,

“You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you stop to look fear in the face.”

“When You’ve Been Thrown”

It is well said: “Strength and courage aren’t always measured in medals and victories. They are measured in the struggles we overcome. The strongest people aren’t always the people who win, but the people who don’t give up when they lose.”

A story is told that Andrew Jackson’s boyhood friends just couldn’t understand how he became a famous general and then the President of the United States. They knew of others who had greater talent but who never succeeded. One of Jackson’s friends commented, “Why, Jim Brown, who lived right down the pike from Jackson, was not only smarter but he could throw Andy three times out of four in a wrestling match. But look where Andy is now.”

Another friend responded, “How did there happen to be a fourth time? Didn’t they usually say three times and out?”

“Sure, they were supposed to, but not Andy. He would never admit he was beat -- he would never stay ‘thrown.’ Jim Brown would get tired, and on the fourth try Andrew Jackson would throw him and be the winner.”

Andrew Jackson just wouldn’t stay ‘thrown’! And that determination served him well for many years.

Life will knock us off our feet again and again. You’ve been there and so have I. But some people just won’t stay ‘thrown.’ They get up again, dust themselves off and go for it one more time. These are people of courage. They are also people of faith and hope.

Maybe you have been knocked off your feet. Will you stay ‘thrown,’ or will you rise and give it your best one more time?

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QUOTE # 6

“You haven’t failed till you quit trying. “ - Anonymous

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QUOTE # 7

“Moral excellence comes about as a result of habit. We become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts.” - Aristotle, 384-322 BC Greek Philosopher

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QUOTE # 8

“One learns by doing a thing; for though you think you know it, you have no certainty until you try.” - Sophocles, 496-406 BC, Ancient Greek Playwright

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QUOTE # 9

“You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You must do the thing which you think you cannot do.” - Eleanor Roosevelt 1884-1962 First Lady to Franklin Roosevelt

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“Back Off!” By Paula Friedrichsen

I love to walk! It is truly one of my very favorite things to do. So I usually make it a point to get out of the house daily and have a trek through my neighborhood. And the other morning as I was walking down the street, minding my own business, a large German Shepard mix bolted out of nowhere snarling, snapping and growling. This dog meant business!

So, there I was, standing stock-still, as that menacing dog approached me steadily - teeth showing with a low mean growl - and it appeared he had every intention of biting me. I looked around for his owner, but the street was completely deserted. And before I had time to really even think about it, something akin to indignation rose up in me. I thought “This is my neighborhood! Who do you think you are?” I just couldn’t believe the audacity of that stupid, ugly dog, to think he was going to bite me on my street, in my neighborhood!

So, I charged toward him a step or two and yelled “BACK OFF!” And I can tell you I meant it. And he knew I meant it. He sullenly took a few steps back, letting me pass without incident.

This was a real victory for me, because as a child I was bitten several times by neighborhood dogs and I had developed a real fear of dogs. And it’s only been in the last few years that I had felt some relief of these fears. But this was the pinnacle of my success. The interesting part being, that my fears only seemed to diminish when I allowed myself to become outraged and angry at that stupid, ugly dog (and in reality at my stupid, ugly fears).

Fear is a bully that preys on the wounded. Fear will take a past event from your life - something that caused trauma, hurt, injury, or wounded-ness - and capitalize on it, until the fear is so blown out of proportion that it doesn’t even resemble the initial event. For many years my fear of dogs dominated my walks. Even if I came upon a friendly tail-wagging dog, my heart would start to pound and I would literally have to stop myself from running home at full speed (now how would that look - a grown women running in frenzied terror from a friendly, galloping Golden Retriever?)

I had a victory the other day on my walk and it’s gotten me thinking about the other fears I want to conquer in my life. I believe God has put courage in each one of us - but it’s up to each individual to “unearth” it and put it into action. And just like that stupid, ugly dog thought he would take some of my territory for his own, I wonder what other fears in my life have taken over territory that belongs to me?

Maybe it’s time to start putting our foot down when our fears begin to loom, threatening to cast dark shadows of doom over our days and nights. Yes, it’s true that we do live in a fearful time, but the fears DO NOT have the power to dominate our hearts and minds. And because we do live in a tumultuous time, let that be the catalyst that drives us deeper into our relationship with God. He is the source of all courage and bravery, so we would do well by spending time with him each day. When we determine to put God first, filling up with his word, we will find ourselves fortified and able to say with confidence to those lying, looming fears; BACK OFF!

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QUOTE # 10

“I try to avoid looking forward or backward, and try to keep looking upward.” - Charlotte Bronte, 1816-1855 English author, Wrote Jane Eyre

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2 Chronicles 15:7

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QUOTE # 11

“The best way out is always through.” - Robert Frost 1874-1963 American Poet

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QUOTE # 12

“The only way to pass any test is to take the test.” - Anonymous

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QUOTE # 13

“Courage without conscience is a wild beast.” - Robert G. Ingersoll - The foremost orator and political speechmaker of late 19th century America

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“Peer Pressure” By Chuck Swindoll

There was a test conducted by a university where 10 students were placed in a room. Three lines of varying length were drawn on a card. The students were told to raise their hands when the instructor pointed to the longest line. But 9 of the students had been instructed beforehand to raise their hands when the instructor pointed to the second longest line. One student was the stooge. The usual reaction of the stooge was to put his hand up, look around, and realizing he was all alone, pull it back down. This happened 75% of the time, with students from grade school through high school. The researchers concluded that many would rather be president than be right.

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“Andrew Johnson, Guilty or Not?”

Who was United States Senator Edmund G. Ross of Kansas? I suppose you could call him a “Mr. Nobody.” No law bears his name. Not a single list of Senate “greats” mentions his service. Yet when Ross entered the Senate in 1866, he was considered the man to watch. He seemed destined to surpass his colleagues, but he tossed it all away by one courageous act of conscience.

Let’s set the stage. Conflict was dividing our government in the wake of the Civil War. President Andrew Johnson was determined to follow Lincoln’s policy of reconciliation toward the defeated South. Congress, however, wanted to rule the downtrodden Confederate states with an iron hand.

Congress decided to strike first. Shortly after Senator Ross was seated, the Senate introduced impeachment proceedings against the hated President. The radicals calculated that they needed thirty-six votes, and smiled as they concluded that the thirty-sixth was none other than Ross.’ The new senator listened to the vigilante talk. But to the surprise of many, he declared that the president “deserved as fair a trial as any accused man has ever had on earth.” The word immediately went out that his vote was “shaky.”

Ross received an avalanche of anti-Johnson telegrams from every section of the country. Radical senators badgered him to “come to his senses.” The fateful day of the vote arrived. The courtroom galleries were packed. Tickets for admission were at an enormous premium.

As a deathlike stillness fell over the Senate chamber, the vote began. By the time they reached Ross, twenty-four “guilties” had been announced. Eleven more were certain. Only Ross’ vote was needed to impeach the President. Unable to conceal his emotion, the Chief Justice asked in a trembling voice, “Mr. Senator Ross, how vote you? Is the respondent Andrew Johnson guilty as charged?”

Ross later explained, at that moment, “I looked into my open grave. Friendships, position, fortune, and everything that makes life desirable to an ambitions man were about to be swept away by the breath of my mouth, perhaps forever.”

Then, the answer came—unhesitating, unmistakable: “Not guilty!” With that, the trial was over. And the response was as predicted.

A high public official from Kansas wired Ross to say: “Kansas repudiates you as she does all perjurers and skunks.” The “open grave” vision had become a reality. Ross’ political career was in ruins. Extreme ostracism, and even physical attack awaited his family upon their return home.

One gloomy day Ross turned to his faithful wife and said, “Millions cursing me today will bless me tomorrow... Though not but God can know the struggle it has cost me.” It was a prophetic declaration.

Twenty years later Congress and the Supreme Court verified the wisdom of his position, by changing the laws related to impeachment.

Ross was appointed Territorial Governor of New Mexico. Then, just prior to his death, he was awarded a special pension by Congress. The press and country took this opportunity to honor his courage which, they finally concluded, had saved our country from crisis and division.

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QUOTE #14

Moral cowardice that keeps us from speaking our minds is as dangerous to this country as irresponsible talk. "The right way is not always the popular and easy way. Standing for right when it is unpopular is a true test of moral character." - Margaret Chase Smith, 1897-1995, US Senator 1949-1973, First woman to be placed in nomination for the presidency at a major party convention.

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"Set Your Own Agenda" By Steve Goodier

Have you ever heard of Hank Greenberg? The year was 1934. For the first time in 25 years, the Detroit Tigers were a strong team who had an excellent chance to play in baseball's prestigious World Series. Hank was a key player on a team that had come to rely on his superb skills at first base, and his strong batting, to win games. An important and decisive game was scheduled on Yom Kippur. Hank, the son of Romanian immigrants to the United States, announced that he would not don his uniform and play on this day, one of the most sacred of Hebrew fasts.

The city of Detroit was outraged. Citizens screamed that the Day of Atonement could be celebrated any year, but this year the Tigers may go all the way to the Series! Anti-Semitic remarks were viciously hurled, but Hank Greenberg remained resolute.

The Detroit Tigers indeed lost that day, although the team did secure the pennant that year. And Hank, when more rational minds prevailed, attained the respect of the community. In fact, a poem was written and published honoring the man who held steadfastly to his beliefs. The tribute ended with this verse:

Came Yom Kippur - Holy fast day world-wide over to the Jews, And Hank Greenberg to his teaching and the old tradition true Spent the day among his people and he didn't come to play.

Said Murphy to Mulrooney, "We shall lose the game today! We shall miss him in the infield and shall miss him at the bat, But he's true to his religion - and I honor him for that!"

Hank still teaches us an important lesson in how to live effectively. He decided what was important to him and, regardless of pressure applied, he honored his own values. Hank Greenberg -- not the team, nor the coaches, nor even emotional Detroit fans -- set his agenda. What he did required tremendous courage. He let nobody lower standards he had chosen for himself. And though the team lost that day, the city of Detroit won because it gained an important role model in a young man who courageously followed an inner voice.

Choosing our own way may not always be easy. But effective living occurs once we decide how we will live our lives and, regardless of outside pressure, we honor that decision.

If you are struggling with a difficult decision today, what is your inner voice leading you to do? Perhaps that is the voice that should be honored.

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QUOTE # 15

"History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be unlived, but if faced with courage, need not be lived again." - Maya Angelou Internationally respected poet, writer and educator

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"COURAGE"

Courage is the price that Life exacts for granting peace.
The soul that knows it not Knows no release from little things:
Knows not the livid loneliness of fear,
Nor mountain heights where bitter joy can hear
The sound of wings.

How can life grant us boon of living, compensate
For dull gray ugliness and pregnant hate
Unless we dare The soul's dominion?
Each time we make a choice, we pay
With courage to behold the restless day,
And count it fair.

- Amelia Earhart, 1835-1897, One of the world's most celebrated aviators

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“A Class Act”

One day in 1956, songwriter Johnny Mercer received a letter from Sadie Vimmerstedt, a widowed grandmother who worked behind a cosmetics counter in Youngstown, Ohio. Vimmerstedt suggested Mercer write a song called “I Want to Be Around to Pick Up the Pieces When Somebody Breaks Your Heart.”

Five years later, Mercer got in touch to say he’d written the song and that Tony Bennett would record it. Today, if you look at the label on any recording of “I Wanna Be Around,” you’ll notice that the credits for words and music are shared by Johnny Mercer and Sadie Vimmerstedt. The royalties were split 50-50, too, thanks to which Vimmerstedt and her heirs have earned more than \$100,000.

In my opinion, Mercer’s generosity was a class act. By “class act,” I mean any behavior so virtuous that it puts normal behavior to shame. It was a class act, for instance, when Alexander Hamilton aimed high and fired over Aaron Burr’s head. Benjamin Geggenghiem performed a class act on the Titanic when he gave his life jacket to a woman passenger and then put on white tie and tails so he could die “like a gentleman.”

On the stage, the tradition that the show must go on has produced a number of class acts. Katharine Hepburn and Orson Welles have both appeared on-stage in wheelchairs. During the run of *The King and I*, Gertrude Lawrence was dying of cancer but told no one. When she missed a series of performances, the producers wrote her lawyers, suggesting she was faking illness. They warned that if this continued, she would forfeit her share of the profits. The letter arrived on a Monday; Gertrude Lawrence had died over the weekend.

It was a class act of a different order, but a class act nonetheless, for writer Laurence Housman to take off his jacket at a proper English tea party so that a man who had just arrived in shirt sleeves would not feel embarrassed. Even simple good sportsmanship can rise to the level of class act, as it did with tennis player Mats Wilander in the semifinals of the 1982 French Open. At match point, a shot by Wilander’s opponent was ruled out. Wilander walked over to the umpire and said, “I can’t win like this. The ball was good.” The point was played over, and Wilander won fair and square.

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“He Couldn’t Swim”

One summer morning as Ray Blankenship was preparing his breakfast, he gazed out the window, and saw a small girl being swept along in the rain-flooded drainage ditch beside his Andover, Ohio, home. Blankenship knew that farther downstream, the ditch disappeared with a roar underneath a road and then emptied into the main culvert. Ray dashed out the door and raced along the ditch, trying to get ahead of the floundering child. Then he hurled himself into the deep, churning water. Blankenship surfaced and was able to grab the child’s arm. They tumbled end over end. Within about three feet of the yawning culvert, Ray’s free hand felt something—possibly a rock—protruding from one bank. He clung desperately, but the tremendous force of the water tried to tear him and the child away. “If I can just hang on until help comes,” he thought. He did better than that. By the time fire-department rescuers arrived, Blankenship had pulled the girl to safety. Both were treated for shock.

On April 12, 1989, Ray Blankenship was awarded the Coast Guard’s Silver Lifesaving Medal. The award is fitting, for this selfless person was at even greater risk to himself than most people knew. Ray Blankenship can’t swim.

- Paul Harvey, Los Angeles Times Syndicate

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Deuteronomy 31:6

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“King Frederick the Great”

The Prussian king Frederick the Great was widely known as an agnostic. By contrast, General Von Zealand, one of his most trusted officers, was a devout Christian. Thus it was that during a festive gathering the king began making crude jokes about Christ until everyone was rocking with laughter—all but Von Zealand, that is. Finally, he arose and addressed the king:

“Sire, you know I have not feared death. I have fought and won 38 battles for you. I am an old man; I shall soon have to go into the presence of One greater than you, the mighty God who saved me from my sin, the Lord Jesus Christ whom you are blaspheming. I salute you, sire, as an old man who loves his Savior, on the edge of eternity.”

The place went silent, and with a trembling voice the king replied, “General Von Zealand—I beg your pardon! I beg your pardon!”

And with that the party quietly ended.

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“A Lion Tamer” By Alan Smith

A first grade teacher seated her students in a circle. She asked them what they wanted to be when they grew up. One by one, each child got up and announced, “I’d like to be a nurse like my mother,” or “I want to be a banker like my father,” or “I want to be a teacher like you, Miss Smith.”

The last child to speak was the most shy and timid little boy in the class. He said, “When I get big, I’m going to be a lion tamer in the circus. I’m going to face those animals with my whip and chair and make them leap through hoops of fire and obey all of my commands.”

Seeing the disbelieving looks on the faces of his classmates that he could ever act so boldly or bravely, he was quick to reassure them, “Well, of course, I’ll have my mother with me.”

We are sometimes shy and timid about standing up for Christ in the midst of an immoral society. We keep quiet when we ought to speak up. We cower when we ought to take a stand. Where do we get the inner strength to be bold and brave? Only through the assurance that we have Christ by our side.

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” (Phil. 4:13).

With that knowledge, take courage today to do something for God that you’ve been hesitant to do.

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“A Stand for Christ at Estes Park”

Twenty years ago, my wife and I were vacationing in Estes Park, Colorado, and had breakfast in a coffee shop. It was empty except for four men at another table. One was mocking Christianity; in particular, the resurrection of Christ. He went on and on about what a stupid teaching that was.

I could feel the Lord asking me: “Are you going to let this go unchallenged?” However, I was thinking, But I don’t even know these guys. He’s bigger than me. He’s got cowboy boots on and looks tough. I was agitated and frightened about doing anything. But I knew I had to stand for Jesus.

Finally, I told Susan to pray. I took my last drink of water and went over and challenged him. With probably a squeaky voice, I said, “I’ve been listening to you, and you don’t know what you’re talking about!”

I did my best to give him a flying rundown of the proofs for the resurrection. He was speechless, and I was half dead. I must have shaken for an hour after that. But I had to take a stand.

We cannot remain anonymous in our faith forever. God has a way of flushing us out of our quiet little places, and when he does we must be ready to speak for him. 1 Peter 3:15 says, “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.”

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Romans 1:16

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“Being Bolder”

My family and I went to Disney World two week ago for five days. I told Jan before I left that I was sure a devotional would come out of this trip. Little did I know that a defining moment would happen in my own walk with our Lord. So, today is confession time for David. ;)

My wife and our three children ages 11, 8 and 4 arrived in Orlando on a Wednesday Morning, checked into our motel, and immediately headed for the “Magic Kingdom”. We all had a blast and practically covered the whole park in 7 hours. (Yeah, I may write a book “Disney in Seven Hours or Less”). The next day its off to MGM Grand. The next day its EPCOT. By the third day I am getting pretty tired and quite honestly fed up with people in general. The kids were getting tired and just a tad cranky. I found myself snapping at some folks, mumbling stuff under my breath at impatient people, judging others by their appearance and the worst thing to me... snapping at the kids.

On the fourth day an interesting thing happened. That morning I decided to wear a Ray Boltz shirt. It has a lamb the back and the words to the song “I Pledge Allegiance to the Lamb”. Funny thing happened to my attitude. Suddenly I was back to Mr. Christian, Mr. Friendly, Mr. Father of the Year Candidate (kidding), Mr. Nice to everyone, Mr. How can I make this person have a better day. When we ordered lunch the lady taking our ordered looked particularly frazzled. After we ordered and I talk to her for a bit, she looked up and said “You folks sure made my day by being so nice”.

After lunch my wife and the kids went for ice cream while I stayed on a bench and prayed. Lord, I am so shallow? Is my faith so weak I have to wear a Christian Shirt to remind myself who I belong too? Lord have I fallen into that trap I so often teach about in bible studies and write about in the devotionals? The trap of being a part time Christian, of being a hypocrite? Lord forgive me and help me in the constant struggle to be a Fully Devoted Follower of Christ. As I finished praying I looked up and a lady was sitting across from me with a T-Shirt saying “Prayer is the Key”. I smiled at her and said “amen” and then looked up to God and said “thank you Lord for that reminder”.

So, God used that moment to refine me just a little be more. To make me just a little bolder in proclaiming Him as my Lord and living the Christian Life 24 hours a day, seven days a week. My prayer for you is that this devotional will help refine you as well.

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“Where the Going’s Smooth” By Edgar A. Guest

Where the going’s smooth and pleasant
You will always find the throng,
For the many—more’s the pity—
Seem to like to drift along.

But the steps that call for courage,
And the task that’s hard to do
In the end results in glory
For the never-wavering few.

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QUOTE # 16

“The best thing about the future is that it only comes one day at a time.” - Abraham Lincoln 16th President of United States

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I CAN #1 Philippians 4:13

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I CAN #2 Philippians 4:19

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I CAN #3 2 Timothy 1:7

_____ ▪ _____

I CAN #4 Romans 12:3

_____ ▪ _____

I CAN #5 Psalm 27:1

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I CAN #6 1 John 4:4

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I CAN #7 2 Corinthians 2:14

_____ ▪ _____

I CAN #8 James 1:5

_____ ▪ _____

I CAN #9 Lamentations 3:21-23

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I CAN #10 1 Peter 5:7

_____ ▪ _____

I CAN #11 2 Corinthians 3:17

_____ ▪ _____

I CAN #12 Romans 8:1

_____ ▪ _____

I CAN #13 Matthew 28:20

_____ ▪ _____

I CAN #14 Galatians 3:13, 14

_____ ▪ _____

I CAN #15 Philippians 4:11

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I CAN #16 2 Corinthians 5:21

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I CAN #17 1 Corinthians 14:33 and 2:12

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I CAN #18 Romans 8:31

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I CAN #19 Romans 8:37

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I CAN #20 John 16:33

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QUOTE # 17

“It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbled, or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly, who errs and comes short again and again, who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, and spends himself in a worthy cause, who at best knows achievement and who at the worst if he fails at least fails while daring greatly so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat.” - Theodore Roosevelt, From a speech given in Paris at the Sorbonne in 1910

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Joshua 1:9

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QUOTE # 18

“Every exit is an entry somewhere else.” - Tom Stoppard, Czechoslovakian Playwright Born 1937, Has worked with Mike Nichols, and Steven Spielberg.



QUOTE # 19

“One can never consent to creep when one feels an impulse to soar.” - Helen Keller, 1880-1968, American Blind/Deaf Author, Lecturer, Amorist