

THE INSIDE RUNNING

It takes courage to stay true to your convictions, even when it hurts.

We often think of courage in the context of emergencies, where brave and heroic acts save lives. However, in an increasingly hostile culture it takes courage simply to live out our faith and represent Jesus to others.

Around the world, more people than ever before are dying for their faith. In New Zealand, so far we have not had to face that challenge, yet it takes courage to stay true to Christian principles.

It takes courage to go every day into a difficult or even mundane job because that's what you have to do to provide for your family. Many men unflinchingly sacrifice themselves at work hour by hour because that is how they provide for those they love.

To be a courageous man is an individual decision made daily. The friendships, support and encouragement from other like-minded men make it easier to stay true to your calling.

May you live every day with no regrets.

John Subritzky



Courageous Manhood

March 2013

by Kris Baines

What is courage?

Often when we hear the word "courage" we think of it in the context of a man who has no fears or doubts, and is always confident. Well that doesn't capture the essence of what it really means to be courageous. Here is a great quote that explains why:

"Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the judgement that something else is more important than fear."

James Neil Hollingworth

True courage is something that exists alongside real fears, not **apart** from them. During the February 22nd earthquakes here in my hometown of Christchurch, there was a great display of courage from so many people. During the catastrophic events, normal people like you and I put aside our fears and gave ourselves to the more important task of helping others. That is courage.

Why is courage important?

Any man who is attempting to follow Christ as a husband/father/man knows that there are many challenges and obstacles in his path. As I observe men in the body of Christ, and the difference between those who are walking in victory and those that aren't, something is very clear. Those who bear fruit are men who are both **informed** and

intentional about their role. These men are courageous because they are normal men with normal fears, normal challenges and normal temptations – but they **choose** to live by conviction (what is right) rather than convenience (what is easy). They feel weak at times, and fearful, but ask God for the strength to carry on – that is courage. They lose perspective and lack in passion at times, but place themselves alongside other brothers who can help and support them – that is courage. They seek the Word and wisdom from others about what God requires of them, then sacrificially prioritise those things in their lives above other things – that is courage.

How do we become courageous?

"What helps a man to be courageous is the presence of another in his life."

Ed Litton

We've all seen the boost that athletes get when someone is cheering them on from the sidelines. They gain extra energy, strength and stamina that seem to come out of nowhere! Let's consider that from a spiritual perspective. Throughout the Scriptures when God seeks to use a man for His purposes, feelings of doubt and fear often rise to the surface. However, God never responds by saying, "Ok, if you are fearful, you don't need to do what I have called you to do". Instead God says time and time again, "Fear not! For I am **with you!**" >

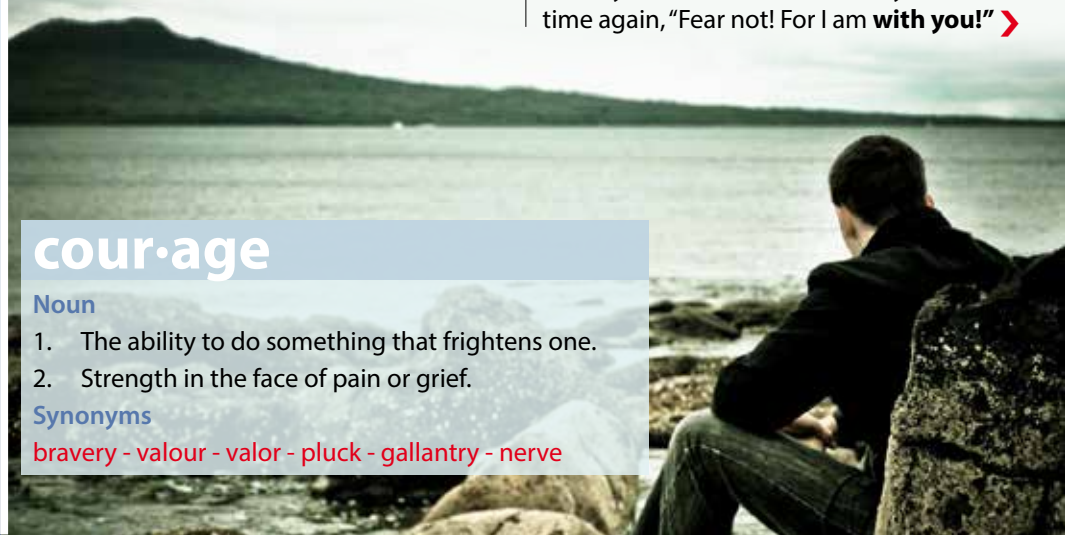
cour·age

Noun

1. The ability to do something that frightens one.
2. Strength in the face of pain or grief.

Synonyms

bravery - valour - valor - pluck - gallantry - nerve



➤ Here's just one example from Isaiah 41:10...

Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.

Numerous Scriptures say the same thing over and over again, confirming to us that God never calls us to do anything He won't give us the ability to carry out – never!

So in summary, we “get” courage, by prayer and reliance upon God's Word.

I remember a time God put it on my heart while reading the Word to challenge my unsaved neighbour about his decision to leave his wife and young child. I trembled at the thought of the confrontation, but knew if I didn't, maybe no one would. One evening, God opened the door as my neighbour was putting out his rubbish. My stomach knotted but I prayed for strength and pursued the conversation. I spoke the truth in love and left the results with God.



He gave me the courage I lacked.

Practical application

Here are some practical pointers on this subject of courageous manhood:

1. Remember courage eclipses fear but doesn't always take it away. Identify what you are fearful of and bring it to God in prayer. Write down Scriptures that help you put those fears in perspective and carry these Scriptures around and memorise them.
2. Pray daily for the courage to do and be what God has called you to.
3. Maintain your own daily devotions, seeing them as a “get to” more than a “got to”, as God's Word is your daily bread (strength).
4. Seek to spiritually “upskill” yourself by reading/listening/watching good biblical content relating to your role as a man.

5. Form accountability with other men – and meet regularly to encourage and pray for one another. When one of you is “down”, the others will help you “up”.
6. If you are a single man, seek ways in which you can serve God now, and prepare yourself to be a husband and father by seeking wisdom from men who have had to learn things the hard way – it will be time well spent!

Lastly, here is a final encouragement from God's Word, as God speaks to Joshua. The words are just as relevant to you today as they were to Joshua then.

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. (Joshua 1:9 NKJV)

So let us each commit to living courageously, choosing the “more important things” over our fears – and in God's strength, the world around us will be blessed by the fruits of **courageous manhood**.



Leaving Elephant Island

Shackleton's New Zealand Captain

In the heroic age of Antarctic exploration, Ernest Shackleton chose Frank Worsley to captain his ship *Endurance*. Worsley was born in Akaroa in 1872 and grew up helping his father clear bush from the hills above Christchurch. His love of the outdoors, risk and adventure meant that the Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition was a challenge that he faced fearlessly.

Worsley's sailing and navigational skills were key to saving the entire 28-man party. After being trapped by ice for months, Shackleton decided that they had to get help before another winter set in. The plan was to sail the 6.7m (22 ft) lifeboat *James Caird* 800 miles from Elephant Island to the tiny speck of an island, South Georgia. If they missed the island everyone was likely to perish. The conditions were harsh for that time, but seem impossibly difficult now. Sixteen days of constant stormy weather, icy conditions and some huge, rogue waves were their lot.

Courage, determination, skill and a good dose of Divine providence saved the day and created the legend.

Worsley's ability to get accurate position fixes on the sun, during the brief opportunities every few days when the clouds parted, enabled them to navigate to South Georgia.

When the whole party was eventually rescued in 1916, they discovered that they had missed a lot of the First World War. Many went on to serve and die in the military. Worsley survived the war and won two DSOs – the first was for antisubmarine warfare and the second for sailing in the Arctic ice during the Russian campaign.

The story of how a young man from New Zealand took on the world is truly inspirational.

by John Subritzky

Next Issue:
SAVED BY GRACE

PROMISE
#5

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The Call QR Code



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