

4 Ways to Draw Upon Godly Courage During COVID-19

Courage is not the absence of fear, rather the ability to move through fear to do what is right and brave. These men in foxholes drew courage as they exercised faith, as they prayed, as they turned their fears over to their Father in heaven.

Fear plus faith equals courage. So, let's dive deeper into courage and see where it fits in these crazy days of coronavirus tribulation.

In World War II, President Franklin Roosevelt reminded the nation, "We have nothing to fear but fear itself." His first lady, Eleanor, defined courage as "staring down fear." Many a combat veteran will tell you that "courage is holding on 10 seconds longer, then another and another."

The root word for "courage" in Latin is *cor*, meaning "heart." In essence, courage is motivated from the heart to do something brave and purposeful, despite the presence of potentially overwhelming fear. Finally, while we think of physical courage, such as charging an enemy machine gun nest, there are other dimensions of courage.

Collectively, there is physical, mental, spiritual, emotional and relational courage. Resilient leaders discuss these dimensions of courage in far greater detail, all of them requiring staring down fear through the power of faith. Certainly, the current coronavirus challenges us across every dimension of courage.

Let me explain where courage fits into the resilience equation. We all have a well of courage that is constantly being filled or depleted. An encouraging word from someone might add to it, while a sleepless night might reduce it. Observing a courageous act by another would be a positive,

while rejection by a respected person could diminish your well of courage. Reading a Medal of Honor citation or stories of courage from the Bible serves to refill your well, as does watching an inspiring movie or listening to heart-grabbing music.

A famous Army General, Dick Cavazos, once said “Careful you don’t dip too deeply into your well of courage.” Each of us must be wise to make physical, mental, spiritual, emotional and relational deposits into our well of courage so we will have resources to draw upon when fear raises its ugly head, when the waves start to come over the side of the boat.

A key element of weathering the storm (during the phase of the resilience life cycle) is to draw from your well of courage. Prayerfully, when all us have to dig deep (such as now), we don’t come up empty-handed. Here are some suggestions:

–Remember God’s provision for you in the past. When he gave you strength and courage to stare down fear, when you were able to choose the harder right instead of the easier wrong, when you were able to have a tough discussion to resolve a relational challenge. Remember God’s provision in the past, just as the warrior David was able to face Goliath as he remembered how God had allowed him to defeat a lion and a bear in his earlier years.

–Draw courage from others in the Bible. Hebrews 11 reminds us of inspiring characters of courage and faith, such as Abraham, Sarah, Joseph, Moses, Rahab, Gideon, David and many others—a veritable hall of fame of courageous heroes.

From Hebrews 11:37-39, “They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered around in sheepskins and goatskins, while destitute, afflicted, and tormented. The world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. These all have obtained a good report through

faith, but they did not receive the promise.”

Yes, others before us have stared down fears equal to the challenges of coronavirus and our economic downturn. Hebrews 12:1-3 continues this parade of courage by highlighting Jesus,

“Therefore, since we are encompassed with such a great cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us. Let us look to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and your hearts give up.”

Now that is faith and courage! That is resilience—God style!

—Draw courage from examples around you. You may draw courage from an elderly person who confronts the frailty of aging with dignity and grace. Or perhaps a noble figure such as “Let’s Roll” Todd Beamer, who gave his life on Flight 93 to spare many others from the terrorists on 9/11. Or, if you really get hard-pressed to find a good profile in courage, just go to Medal of Honor Citations, such as this one with Medal of Honor Recipient Gary Beikirch. Or go to Profiles in Resilience on the Resilience God Style website.

—Refill your well of courage with inspiration and encouragement. We are all different, but we are all have tap roots that feed on the particular things that nourish us, that light our fire, that bring a tear to our eye and ultimately help us “keep on keeping on.” For me, it is content such as the *Lean on Me* song and movie about a New Jersey high school that went from drug-infested to a high-performing team of underdogs, or the Rudy Rudiger story about a Notre Dame walk-on whose tenacity has inspired millions to this day, or the book and movie *Unbroken* about Olympic runner and World War II

POW Louis Zamperini, who overcame bitterness to achieve freedom. You no doubt have your own examples. And of course, the many Christian songs that allow faith and courage to rise and fear to diminish. My current favorite is "Waymaker": "promise keeper, miracle worker, light in the darkness/ my God, that is who You are!"

Now for the application phase. I encourage *you* to think about what refills your well of courage. Work hard to take in the right "living waters" so that your well is brimming with courage and expectation.

Apply some of the suggestions above. You may or may not be digging deep at this moment, but predictably during this national crisis, we all will need to draw from our well of courage. This is a key element for weathering the storms of life, both now and in the future.

As Jesus said, "In the world you will have tribulation. But be of good cheer. I have overcome the world" (John 16:33b).

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