

“Showing Integrity and Incorruptibility”

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

- A. Good men know integrity takes moral courage, but even the bravest men fall short of moral courage - Titus 2:7; Joshua 1:9
 - 1. “Moral courage is the courage to take action for moral reasons despite the risk of adverse consequences. Courage is required to take action when one has doubts or fears about the consequences. Moral courage therefore involves deliberation or careful thought. Reflex action and dogmatic fanaticism do not involve moral courage because such impulsive actions are not based upon moral reasoning. Moral courage may also require physical courage when the consequences are punishment or other bodily peril. Fortitude, honesty, incorruptibility, strongmindedness.” (Wikipedia)
 - 1. “Cowards die many times before their deaths;
The valiant never taste of death but once.
Of all the wonders that I yet have heard,
It seems to me most strange that men should fear;
Seeing that death, a necessary end,
Will come when it will come.” (William Shakespeare, The Tragedy of Julius Caesar. Act II, Scene 2)
- B. Most people have more physical or reflex courage than they realize. However, often the man who would not hesitate to risk bodily harm to save someone’s life will be unwilling to risk ridicule to save someone's soul.
 - 1. Moral courage is rarer than physical courage, but it is far more important.

I. MORAL COURAGE SOMETIMES REQUIRES PHYSICAL COURAGE

- A. True commitment to the Lord may require one to face physical danger
 - 1. Heb. 11:32-38; Rev. 12:11; Acts 20:22-24, 21:10-14
- B. It is possible that we may be required to have this kind of courage today.

II. WE ARE MORE FREQUENTLY THREATENED BY NONTANGIBLE DANGERS

- A. Peter was physically courageous, but on occasion lacked moral courage.
 - 1. Matt. 26:33; John 18:10
 - 2. He denied the Lord three times - John 18:15-18, 25-27
 - 3. He showed a similar lack of courage in Antioch before the Jews and Gentiles - Gal. 2:11-14
- B. The Adversary knows well the things we are most afraid of:
 - 1. Embarrassment, being labeled or judged, unfriendliness, being in the minority, loss of social regard, rejection, and hostility (if you call this persecution, you know nothing of true persecution)
 - 2. Satan threatens us with these things, knowing that we will do nearly anything to avoid suffering them.
- C. If we give in to those kinds of pressures, we identify ourselves with those who confess Christ only when there is little risk at stake - Luke 12:8-9; Mark 8:38

III. OUR COURAGE IS GROUNDED IN GOD

A. Only through Christ that we can do all things - Phil. 4:13; John 14:27, 16:33

1. There is no need for fear - 2Tim. 1:7

2. We follow a victorious Savior - Rev. 19:11-16

Conclusion:

A. He who overcomes will enjoy heaven - Rev. 21:1-7

B. But cowardice will send us to perdition - Rev. 21:8

C. Rom. 8:31, 37-39

D. There is more joy in one moment of integrity and moral courage than there is in a lifetime of yielding to the pressure of the world

E. "There are so many ways to be brave in this world. Sometimes bravery involves laying down your life for something bigger than yourself, or for someone else. Sometimes it involves giving up everything you have ever known, or everyone you have ever loved, for the sake of something greater. Sometimes it is nothing more than gritting your teeth through pain, and the work of every day, the slow walk toward a better life."
(Veronica Roth, Allegiant)

F. "I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it.

The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear." (Nelson Mandela)