

COURAGE FOR TODAY

By

Dr. Lewis R. Woodard

1 Chronicles 19:13; Matthew 6:34

THE TOOLS OF DISCOURAGEMENT

There is an old legend about Satan one day having a yard sale. He thought he'd get rid of some of his old tools that were cluttering up the place. So there was gossip, slander, adultery, lying, greed, power-hunger, and more laid out on the tables. Interested buyers were crowding the tables, curious, handling the goods. One customer, however, strolled way back in the garage and found on a shelf a well-oiled and cared-for tool. He brought it out to Satan and inquired if it was for sale. "Oh, no!" Satan answered. "That's my tool. Without it I couldn't wreck the church! It's my secret weapon!" "But what is it?" the customer inquired. "It's the tool of discouragement," the devil said.

Christians need to be encouraged today as never before. You and I need to be inspired to face the battles we face in our everyday lives. We need to have the courage to face what lies ahead today. We had courage yesterday (maybe). BUT, what about today? Where do we find courage for today?

The Word of God gives us much direction and illustration as to “How To Have Courage For Today”.

God's Word tells us: *“Be of good courage, and let us behave ourselves valiantly for our people, and for the cities of our God: and let the LORD do that which is good in his sight.”* **1 Chronicles 19:13**

We are also told: *“Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.”* **Matthew 6:34**

THINKING ABOUT REAL, BIBLICAL COURAGE

When thinking of Biblical, real courage, I think of David. It is recorded in Acts 13:22 that God said: *“I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.”* (Acts 13:22)

When we face a new year, a new day, a new beginning of the “unknown”, what can we expect to take place? We cannot know what will take place, with the exception of what the prophetic Word of God says.

How can we face the unknown? The “giant” of tomorrow? God tells us in His Word we are not to concern ourselves with tomorrow. We are here today. We are not to worry about tomorrow:

Luke 12:22 *And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on.*

Matthew 6:25 *Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?*

James 4:14 *Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.*

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I. OBSERVE WITH ME DAVID AND GOLIATH.

A. THE BIBLICAL ACCOUNT: (1 SAMUEL 17)

1 Samuel 17:4 *And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span.*

1 Samuel 17:24 *And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid.*

1 Samuel 17:26 *And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?*

1 Samuel 17:32 *And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine.*

1 Samuel 17:37 *David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the LORD be with thee.*

1 Samuel 17:40 *And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine.*

1 Samuel 17:42-43 *And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance. 43 And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.*

1 Samuel 17:45-46 *Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. 46 This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.*

1 Samuel 17:48-51 *And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came, and drew nigh to meet David, that David hastened, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. 49 And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth. 50 So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David. 51 Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled.*

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1. David took no thought for the next day. He knew who was with him that day, the day he slew Goliath. And, David also knew who would be with him in the future. He no doubt knew much of the old Testament. David relied upon God. David's God: the only true God. David's God keeps His Word (Deuteronomy 31:6).

Deuteronomy 31:6 *Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.*

2. **David's God:** our Savior's Father! David's God: our Heavenly Father! David's God: our God if we have trusted His Son to give us eternal life! (John 14:6).

John 14:6 *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

3. **David's God:** our Savior, Jesus Christ, God, our Great God: (Titus 2:13).

Titus 2:13 *Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;*

4. **David's God:** my God, and yours, if you have trusted Him to save you (John 1:12).

John 1:12 *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:*

II. OBSERVE WITH ME WHAT OTHER PEOPLE KNEW ABOUT DAVID.

A. OTHERS KNEW GOD WAS WITH DAVID.

1. Not only did David know God was with him, Saul knew as well (1 Samuel 18:28a).

1 Samuel 18:28a *"And Saul saw and knew that the LORD was with David, ..."*

2. Samuel knew that God was with David (I Samuel 16:13).

1 Samuel 16:13 *Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.*

This is the first time (1 Samuel 16:13) David is mentioned by name, but his name (meaning "beloved") is mentioned more in the Bible than that of Moses or Abraham or any other Old Testament personage. His biography occupies 62 chapters, more than that of anyone else except Jesus Christ.

B. WHEN YOU SERVE GOD PEOPLE WILL KNOW GOD IS WITH YOU.

1. People took notice that Peter and John had been with the Lord (Acts 4:13).

Acts 4:13 *Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.*

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2. There will be a change (2 Corinthians 5:17).

2 Corinthians 5:17 *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

III. OBSERVE WITH ME HAVING COURAGE FOR TODAY.

A. THE SECRET TO HAVING COURAGE FOR TODAY IS TO:

1. Recognize:

a. The battle is the Lord's (1 Samuel 17:47).

1 Samuel 17:47 *And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD's, and he will give you into our hands.*

b. It is through the Lord's strength that victory comes (Psalm 140:7; Zechariah 4:6).

Psalm 140:7 *O GOD the Lord, the strength of my salvation, thou hast covered my head in the day of battle.*

Zechariah 4:6 *Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.*

c. The power of prayer gives great advantage over the circumstances of today (James 5:16b).

James 5:16b *"...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."*
(*Avail means to have an advantage.* So, we can have greater courage today through prayer.)

IV. OBSERVE WITH ME WHAT DAVID DID AS HIS LIFE WAS ENDING.

A. WHEN DAVID SEEMED TO HAVE COME TO THE END OF HIS JOURNEY HERE ON EARTH, NOTICE WHAT HE DID:

1. He encouraged himself: *in the Lord* (1 Samuel 30:6).

1 Samuel 30:6 *And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God.*

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B. WHEN DAVID FINALLY CAME TO THE END OF HIS JOURNEY HERE ON EARTH, NOTICE WHAT HE SAID:

Psalm 18:1-6 *I will love thee, O LORD, my strength. 2 The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. 3 I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies. 4 The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid. 5 The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me. 6 In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears.*

V. OBSERVE WITH ME WHAT OUR ATTITUDE ABOUT TOMORROW SHOULD BE.

A. HAVE THE RIGHT ATTITUDE.

1. Don't waste your time worrying (Matthew 6:34; Matthew 10:28a).

Matthew 6:34 *Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.*

Matthew 10:28a *“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: ...”*

2. Let God take care of tomorrow (Luke 12:6-7; Psalm 18:3a; 2 Corinthians 12:9).

Luke 12:6-7 *Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? 7 But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.*

Psalms 18:3a *“I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: ...”*

2 Corinthians 12:9 *And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

3. Live today (John 10:10).

John 10:10 *The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*

B. WE NEED TO LISTEN TO THE PROMISE OF CHRIST.

1. Christ promises rest today (Matthew 11:29).

Matthew 11:29 *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*

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2. Christ promises life today (John 3:14-15, 18).

John 3:14-15 *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: 15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.*

John 3:18 *He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

Luke 23:43 *And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.*

We have the same promise the dying thief on the cross had. If our life ends today, we have the promise of God, that we will be with Jesus. If our life ends tomorrow, we have God's promise that we will be with Jesus. Whenever this life is over, we have the promise of God that we will be with Jesus.

3. Christ promises joy (John 16:33).

John 16:33 *These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*

***LOOK TO JESUS
FOR THE COURAGE YOU NEED TODAY!***