

Week Three: The Genius of Courage
Romans 8:31-39

Spend FIFTEEN - Day One

1. Spiders, snakes, public speaking and heights regularly land at the top of lists of phobias. Do you have any fears that cause you to avoid certain things or situations?
2. Have you ever conquered a fear or found yourself finally rising above a difficult situation? How did you do it, and how did you feel during and after?
3. Read Romans 8:31-39. Paul is bringing out the concept of courage as important to the life of faith. Highlight words or phrases that bring this concept out to you.
4. What does this section of scripture tell you about God?
5. If you really believed these verses and took them to heart, how would it change who you are and how you live?
6. This text really brings an incredible view of God's love and power in us and for our good. Why do you think Paul wrote these words and for what purpose do you think God wants you to hear them?
7. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Ask God for an extra measure of courage to do the work He has for you to do without fear or hesitation.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two

8. The first two weeks of this series discussed perspective and optimism. If you saw the good things in life all around you (perspective) and had a hopeful view of God's work in your future (optimism), what effect would this have on what you say and do today?
9. What happens when, despite your best efforts at maintaining a good perspective and optimism, life seems to be getting worse? List some ways you cope with the struggles of life.
10. Paul was a follower of Jesus who was not a stranger to suffering. In Acts 14, his efforts to communicate the gospel are sabotaged and he is stoned by people and dragged out of the city. Read Acts 14:19-22. How does Paul respond to what happens? How would you have responded?
11. Why do you think Paul would go back into the city later? Was he a glutton for punishment or did he actually think he could make an impact?

12. The Genius of Courage is that it begins to work in us and enables us to go after big things and try things we may never have tried in the past. What would you start doing today, if you knew you could not fail?

13. Throughout Scripture, there are many examples of God encouraging His people. Read a few of these verses and write down how they apply to your life right now:
 - a. Deuteronomy 31:16

 - b. Psalm 56:3-4

 - c. 2 Corinthians 4:7-10

14. Finish your FIFTEEN praying over the verses above. Pray also over your answer to #12, that God would give you the courage and the boldness to start something knowing He is with you.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three

15. What was your favorite story to read, watch or hear as you grew up? How did the story resonate with you?

16. If you were raised attending church, it's likely that you heard the story of Daniel and the lion's den. In Daniel 6, servants of King Darius attempt to kill Daniel by establishing a law whereby anyone praying to or worshipping anyone except the king would be thrown into a lions' den. Read Daniel 6:10. How does Daniel respond when he hears of this decree? How would you respond?

17. Have you ever been in a situation where you knew doing the right thing might end up hurting you? How does the concept of courage fit into this?

18. Read Daniel 6:19-23. What does Daniel's courage do for him in this tough situation? What impact did Daniel's courage have on King Darius?

19. Because of Daniel's courage and faith leading him to do the right thing, a pagan king comes to know the true God and worships Him. What does this tell you about the effect courage has on our faith and our willingness to share our faith with others?

20. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Ask God for the courage to do the right thing even when it's difficult and may lead to pain. Pray that God uses your courage to lead people to Him!

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four

21. Do you believe that God speaks to people? Why or why not?

22. Have you ever felt as though God was telling you to do something? If so, what was it and how did you respond? (If not, what do you think God would say to you, and how would you respond?)

23. In the Bible, Abram lived in a foreign land where most people worshipped a moon god. In the midst of his daily life, the true God called out to Abram. What happened is recorded in Genesis 12:1-4. Read these verses. What would be your thoughts and response if you were Abram?

24. God's request was surely out of Abram's comfort zone and experience level. Why would God ask that of Abram?

25. Why do you think God calls us to do things out of our comfort zones?

26. When God calls us out of our comfort zone, it takes incredible courage to respond. But God never leaves us alone; He always promises to be with us on the journey. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Ask God for the strength to step out of your comfort zone and do something that would cause you to have to trust solely on Him.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five

27. Would you rather be confronted when you are wrong or be the one to do the confronting? Explain.

28. It takes incredible courage to confront someone, especially if he or she is close to you. Read Matthew 18:15-20. What part of this process would be hardest for you? Why?

29. It's much easier to resort to gossip when we aren't happy with someone's behavior. What does this scripture say is the benefit from having the courage to confront?

30. Is there anyone in your life right now that you might need to confront in a loving and courageous way? How might you do that?

31. In verse 20, Jesus gives an incredible promise that can help us, especially in the midst of difficult confrontations. How does this promise encourage you?

32. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. If there's a relationship in your life that needs to be restored through a confrontation, ask God for the wisdom to do it well. Pray also for the courage to own up when you are confronted.