

the best *you can be*

Lesson

12



A COURAGEOUS *woman*

"I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you.... Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

Joshua 1:5, 9

A large, stylized floral graphic in shades of pink and purple, resembling a daisy or a similar flower, positioned in the upper right corner of the page. The background of the top half of the page is a light-colored wood grain texture.

THE MOST FAMOUS AND SIGNIFICANT story in the Bible about courage is found in Joshua 1. Here are words spoken by God to Joshua when he began his leadership role after Moses died. It is a wonderful story of encouragement for everyone. Promises taken from Joshua 1:5,6,7,9 say, “I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. Be strong and courageous.... Be strong and very courageous.... Be strong and of courageous; do not be afraid; do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”

These words have given many people encouragement as they faced difficult situations. They have encouraged women to speak up when they have been afraid to do so. They have encouraged mothers to stand firm with their children when dangers have come. They have encouraged women to preach when they have been hesitant to do so. They have encouraged young people to take a stand for the right when tempted to do wrong. They have encouraged missionaries to go to dangerous places. They have encouraged disabled people to move ahead and accomplish great things. Today we will take these words to heart and memorize them, never to forget them.

Sometimes we are afraid to venture out, to try something new, to take a risk. Often this is because we have experienced deep disappointments or failures in the past. What holds us back from achieving a lifetime dream? What keeps us from boldly stepping out to claim success? Why don't we have the courage to be all that we can be?



FEAR HOLDS US BACK

We may be afraid of pain, embarrassment, the unknown. We may be afraid of what people might say or worried about losing a relationship. We may be scared of making a mistake, of failing. It takes courage to rise above these fears, to walk boldly on in spite of the fear in our hearts. One writer defines courage as “fear that has said its prayers.” Another suggests that courage is simply “fear holding on a minute longer.” Courage is an act of the will—a choice on our part to go on, to take a risk regardless of our fear.

SUCCESSFUL WOMEN ARE RISK TAKERS

Every successful woman has been willing to risk failure that she might gain success. A list of courageous women might include Mary Slessor, a brave missionary to Africa; Elizabeth Fry of England who helped women prisoners; Florence Nightingale, the first nurse; Catherine Booth who helped found the Salvation Army; Amelia Earhart, famous woman pilot; Ellen White, pioneer and God's messenger for the Adventist church; Joni Eareckson Tada, paraplegic preacher and writer. These are all women who could have chosen to travel life's flat, broad highway where they would



be comfortable and safe. Instead they chose to hike a new trail. The path they travelled was uncomfortable at times, risky, and unpredictable. Their way was uncertain and uncharted, but the scenery was exciting! These are women who were unafraid to use their talents and who risked succeeding, despite their handicaps.

DEFINITION OF COURAGE

Courage is demonstrated in many ways. It can be seen in the face of one who is struggling with cancer; in the eyes of another who struggles to carry on after the death of her companion for 40 years; in the forgiveness of one whose husband has been unfaithful; in the devotion of a woman pastor as she obeys God's call in spite of prejudice; in a woman who tries single-handedly to raise three children and keep food on the table.

- Courage is asking for ginger ale when everyone else is drinking beer.
- Courage is choosing to give 110% to a marriage work.
- Courage is seeking counsel to overcome the abuse suffered in childhood.
- Courage is daring to reach out to neighbors with God's love.
- Courage is sometimes walking out of a destructive relationship.
- Courage is saying NO to the good in order to say YES to the best.
- Courage is refusing to listen to gossip about a friend.

- Courage is confronting a friend who has wronged you.
- Courage is showing kindness to an enemy or daring to be honest with a friend.

HOW TO HAVE COURAGE

1. **Talk courage.** Research tells us that the words we speak have an impact on the functions of our bodies. It is obvious that we need to control the language we use on ourselves. Our words affect our thoughts and even our bodies. At the time of the "Great Disappointment" when the Millerites were expecting Christ's return, the people were discouraged when Jesus did not come as they expected. But one brother kept saying, "Courage in the Lord," until every face was aglow and the people praised God.
2. **Praise God.** One writer tells us that if more praising of God were done, hope, courage, and faith would increase. This has been proven over and over again
3. **Have faith in God's promises.** Stories in the Bible remind us to trust God's promises. Ellen G. White tells us to have faith in God because He knows our need and is full of compassion.
4. **Accept the gift of the Holy Spirit.** The Holy Spirit is given to us who are fainthearted, to strengthen us and impart courage.

Say this to yourself and others: "I believe that God is just as willing to gift me with courage as He has done for others. By His grace and power I can become a courageous woman."

RATE YOURSELF

Check the areas of your life in which you feel a need for courage at the present time.

Marriage	Health	Career
Children	Relationships	Addictions
Finances	Church Work	Witnessing
Parents	Talents	Temptation
Trials	Recreation	Habits
Conflict	Grieving	Principles
Future	Dreams	Education

PERSONAL GROWTH EXERCISES

1. List the risks beginning with speaking in public. All of us face small risks every day, things that we are afraid to do. Which of the following are risks for you? Speaking in public. Meeting a stranger. Asking for something. Offering advice. Making a phone call. Praying in public. Arguing a grade. Interviewing for a job. Learning a new skill. Sending off a manuscript. Standing up for a friend who is being gossiped about. Telling someone to go to the end of the line.



2. Decide to take at least one small risk every day for a week. Ask God to help you do what is difficult for you. Claim the following promises to give you courage: Philippians 4:19; Isaiah 41:0; Joshua 1:9; Psalm 27:1.
3. Read "Call to Travel" in *Life Sketches* by E. G. White. Note how afraid she was to risk telling her experience as the Lord instructed her.

SUCCESS PRINCIPLE

The courageous woman follows the GIRAFFE PRINCIPLE—you have to stick your neck out if you want to reach your goal! We can do this by God's grace and with His Spirit.

PRAYER FOR TODAY

Dear God, Thank You for Your promises that tell me You will be with me. Thank You for the encouraging words I read in the book of Joshua. Help me to write them in my heart and mind, and help me to recall them whenever I am afraid or nervous. Give me a strong and courageous heart to step out in faith, trusting and knowing that You will always be there. Help me to speak up for the hurting. Help me to touch with love all those who seek direction and help. God, grant me a full measure of Your Holy Spirit today and every day.



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