

*Write Upon My Heart*  
*Courage*

*Published by Keepers of the Faith*

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# CHARACTER—WHAT IS IT?

What is character? Why do we say that one person has good character and another poor character, or that someone has character and someone else does not? What is being measured? It is not really a person's actions, for people often make mistakes acting in good faith, and we do not consider that bad character. No, it has to do with who a person is—or has become—by the *habits* that he or she has formed.

Good habits become good character, and bad habits become bad character; and yet character is not just the sum of one's habits. In many cases it has taken only a single bad habit to destroy a life. In other cases, just one outstanding good habit has prevented an otherwise mediocre life from totally crumbling. We cannot know which habit might be our most powerful support, or which might cause our complete downfall. So, the safest venture is to develop as many good habits or traits as we can, especially in areas displacing any habits that we have which may not be good.

It takes work to form habits, but the good news is that once they are formed they are a snap to keep, for then they come naturally to us! How nice it is to be so used to doing the right thing that we actually prefer to do it! *“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”* — Galatians 6:7. Develop good habits when you are young, and you will reap the benefits for all of your life.

Where can we look to find the best essence of good character? How about God's Word? It has the essence of everything good. Jesus was an example of perfect character. *“For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps;”* —1 Peter 2:21. As we study His life and God's Word, they will give us the guidelines by which to form our own habits and lives.

## HABITS—WHAT ARE THEY?

Habits are those things that we do most naturally or instinctively—without having to make a decision, because the decision has been made enough times that we do not have to think about it any more. Things said and done by habit are

sometimes done without thinking.

For example, you do not contemplate whether or not to dress in the morning. You do it out of habit. If you brush your teeth every morning, you do not ask yourself if you should each day. You do it out of habit. Each good habit that we build—diligently—doing the best thing in an oft-repeated situation—is like a fence that we build between ourselves and some sort of heartbreak. However, it requires no effort to develop bad habits, and bad character is exactly what lack of effort becomes. So, a little work early in life can do much to prevent the manifold grief and loss encountered as a poorly formed character limps on through the years of life.

## **HABITS—THEY BEGIN IN THE HEART**

*“For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he:”* —Proverbs 23:7a. That means that we are what we think. We say what we think, and we do what we think. What determines what we think? We do. Why do we think the way that we do? We taught ourselves to think that way. Often when people say, “I really didn’t think about it,” they had already taught themselves exactly what to think about “it.”

Each thought makes a tiny connection in the brain like a thread. Each similar thought strengthens that connection by adding another thread. Eventually, the threads become great enough in number that they become a rope. Often a mind becomes bound by such a rope, whether it is a good rope or a bad rope. Habit begins to affect our thinking. We begin to do things almost automatically because what we think is what we will do.

It is important to form good habits *now*. Later may be too late. We are becoming *right now* what we are going to be. We are going to become what we are thinking *now*, because *“as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.”* Our thoughts are very powerful. We cannot touch them or see them, but nevertheless, they are very real. They are more powerful than our actions because they control our actions. However, we can decide what we think! We can make our thoughts subject to our will and the will of God. We have access to a power stronger than our thoughts—the power of God. He tells how to control our thoughts. *“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) casting down imaginations, and*

*every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;” —2 Corinthians 10:3-5.*

So, why is it so important to form good habits early? Is not God powerful enough to break bad habits? Yes, He has the power to break any habit, but there are very many that He never breaks. The reason is that people grow to like their habits. They begin to hate the thought of breaking them—even the bad ones. People do not like change. The ropes that bind their minds are of their own making, and they are loath to give them up. How many drug addicts live absolutely horrid lives, bound to drugs from which they wish they were free, yet who will lie, cheat, steal, fight, and even kill to continue taking the drugs causing them so much misery? People grow to like their bad habits so much that they often will not let them go for what they wish they could have.

How do we learn not to like our bad habits? By learning to like new ones. Do what is right, and soon you will like doing it. There is a saying, “Your actions will determine your emotions.” We become comfortable with something only after we do it for a while. Another saying says, “Eat olives nine times and you will like them.” Proverbs 16:3 teaches, “*Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established.*” Do you want to think rightly? Do you want to feel good doing right even if you do not like it right now? Just do it anyway! See how much it changes the way you think and feel. Replace bad habits and have good character by simply making new habits in place of the old ones!

Lastly, it is not enough to have good character. We can have the very best character, and yet become lost for eternity, for there are none who have not sinned. The Bible tells us that the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ. Jesus paid the price for our debt of sin. Only by trusting Him will we see the Celestial City.

It is said that “character has its own reward,” and so it does. People with good character instinctively feel much better about themselves than people without it. This is a far better and happier way to live. However, this reward pales at the prospect of eternal reward. It is great to have character. But, remember, it is infinitely more rewarding to belong to Jesus, and have character for His glory.

# Courage

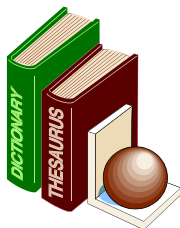
*If I am afraid to do right,  
If I cower and yield to peer pressure,  
If I am afraid to take a stand,  
I know nothing yet of courage.*

No one wants to be afraid; no one wants to be fearful, and yet mankind is very fearful! There are many “Fear nots” in God’s Word. Our Father in heaven understands fear, and He wants to help us to have courage. There are many verses about courage in the Bible too. Without courage, we will do wrong; we will sin; we will yield to temptation; we will be weak; we will stumble; we will be ashamed of ourselves, and God will be ashamed of us too. With courage, we will do right; we will not sin; we will not yield to temptation; we will be strong; we will walk straight and true; we will have self-respect, and God will be pleased with us.

Thus, “To have courage or not to have courage” is the great question for each of us. Our parents cannot give us courage. Our friends cannot give us courage. God does not give us courage, but God tells us *“Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.”* —Psalm 27:14. God will strengthen us to have the courage to do right.

So, let us examine ourselves in the light of God’s Word, and learn about courage, and how we can become more courageous.

## ***LEARNING THE TRAIT***



The word “courage” means the mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty. It implies firmness of mind and will in the face of danger, opposition, or extreme difficulty. Synonyms include mettle, spirit, resolution, and tenacity. Look up the definitions of the following words using a dictionary and write them in the space provided.

*Strength* \_\_\_\_\_

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*Mettle* \_\_\_\_\_

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*Spirit* \_\_\_\_\_

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*Resolution* \_\_\_\_\_

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*Tenacity* \_\_\_\_\_

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*Perseverance* \_\_\_\_\_

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*Bravery* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## ***SCRIPTURE STUDY***

Copy the following verse.

*Psalm 31:24*

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*What does this verse mean?*

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*How can this verse be applied to your life?*

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***BIBLE EXAMPLE***

1. Read Daniel chapter 6.
2. Answer the following questions.

(1) Why did the presidents and princes seek an occasion against Daniel?

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(2) Since they could not find anything against Daniel, except for his faith in God, what did they do? \_\_\_\_\_

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(3) When Daniel knew the decree had been signed, what did he do? \_\_\_\_\_

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(4) Do you think Daniel had courage to disregard the decree and kneel to his God? Explain your answer. \_\_\_\_\_

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(5) Why could not the king disregard his own law? \_\_\_\_\_

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(6) What did the king say to Daniel to encourage him? \_\_\_\_\_

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(7) How did the king spend his night? \_\_\_\_\_

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(8) Why was Daniel not hurt? \_\_\_\_\_

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(9) Verse 23 gives the real reason Daniel was not hurt. What does it say?

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(10) Where did Daniel's courage come from? \_\_\_\_\_

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(11) In the king's new decree, whom did he say that men should fear? Why?

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(12) Why does fear of God give us courage to stand against men?

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(13) What lessons are there for you in this Bible example?

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# Dare to Be a Daniel

PHILIPP P. BLISS

PHILIPP P. BLISS



1. Stand - ing by a pur - pose true, Heed - ing God's com - mand, Hon - or them, the
2. Man - y might - y men are lost, Dar - ing not to stand, Who for God had
3. Man - y gi - ants, great and tall, Stalk - ing thro' the land, Head - long to the
4. Hold the Gos - pel ban - ner high! On to vic - t'ry grand! Sa - tan and his



faith - ful few! All hail to Dan - iel's Band!  
been a host, By join - ing Dan - iel's Band! Dare to be a Dan - iel,  
earth would fall, If met by Dan - iel's Band!  
host de - fy, And shout for Dan - iel's Band!



Dare to stand a - lone! Dare to have a pur - pose firm! Dare to make it known!





## ***SCRIPTURE STUDY***

Copy the following verses.

*Luke 12:4-5*

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*What do these verses mean?*

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*How can these verses be applied to your life?*

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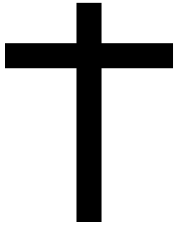
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## ***MORE ABOUT JESUS***



*“Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:” —1 Peter 2:23*

Do you ever think about Who Jesus is? He is the great Creator of the universe, of our world, of mankind. He is all powerful, all knowing. He is the beginning and end. He is the strongest, wisest, and smartest Being. He is everywhere at one time. He is faster than the speed of light, faster than the fastest computer. He can hear thousands of people praying at one time, and answer all their prayers, and keep everything straight too! And, more than that, He is love. He loves us. He came to earth as the Lamb of God, to be sacrificed for our sins. He came willingly. Did it take courage to come as a man? Yes, it did. Was He afraid? No, but it took courage to do what He did.

You see, He came and *let* other men, men He had created, and to whom He had given life, He *let* them lie about Him, *let* them whip Him, *let* them place a crown of thorns on His head, *let* them spit on Him, *let* them crucify Him—a terribly painful death. He *let* them do all that to Him. He could have stopped them at any time. He could have said, “Enough!” He could have spoken the word, and they would have been immediately destroyed, but instead, He *let* them do all this. Why? To redeem us. To pay the price for our sin—to be the perfect Lamb of God—offered to the Father in heaven for our sin. Was not this the greatest love ever shown to man?

Yes, Jesus showed great love and great sacrifice and great courage. *“Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:” —1 Peter 2:23.*

Jesus had courage to take on the job of being the Saviour of mankind. He had courage when He endured the suffering and shame of the cross. He did not fail. He saw it all through to the end. He did not fear what man could do to Him, and thereby set a powerful example for us, for He knew that His followers would receive the same treatment from the hands of ungodly men, although the ungodly men professed godliness. He knew His followers would be scorned, put out of their homes and churches, lose their jobs, be persecuted, and even become martyrs for His name’s sake. Jesus knew they would need courage, and so He showed them the

way to live and the way to die. He promises to be their help, their strength in times of trouble, and never to leave or forsake them. Jesus did all this for you; how are you living your life for Him?

1. What are some of your fears? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. What can you do to overcome these fears? We know you will pray, but God wants you to have courage and overcome them. What can you do? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Why do you think it takes more courage to receive wrong from others rather than to fight back? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Why is it important for us to have courage? \_\_\_\_\_

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### The Roman Slave Girl

Blandina was a Roman slave girl; one of a downtrodden race, for whom life had held little of love and less of pleasure. What marvel, then, when to her was made known the story of Jesus' love, that filled her heart to overflowing with gratitude. Was it possible, that God Himself loved her? That He had stooped to a slave's death to redeem and bless the slave? Matchless grace! To her heart the name of Christ became exceedingly precious; but her faith was to be sorely tried.

A fierce persecution of the Christians was then raging in Rome. Blandina was arrested with several of her companions, and on refusing to deny Christ, they were exposed to different kinds of tortures. Blandina was bound to a stake, and exposed to the attacks of wild beasts. But none of the animals would touch her, and the prayers which she offered up aloud greatly encouraged her companions. She was taken down from the stake, and remanded to prison.

A few days afterwards she was again brought out, scourged and tortured, and a final blow was given which put an end to her sufferings forever.

Dear young reader, the Bible speaks of all who are not God's children as being slaves to sin. What a dreadful fact! But the Lord Jesus died a slave's death to redeem the slave. Are you one of the redeemed? Is His name precious to you, as it was to the poor girl, who could rejoice amid the bitterest suffering, that she was "counted worthy to suffer shame for His name"?

We have not now to brave such terrible bodily dangers if we wish to serve Christ. But sometimes a foolish boy or girl will sneer or laugh at anyone who is trying to lead a Christian life. It requires moral courage to do right in such circumstances.

Are you ashamed of Jesus, or have you courage to confess His name, by living a holy life to His honor and glory?

## ***STORY ABOUT COURAGE—***

### **COURAGE AND COWARDICE**

A merry group of boys played in the sun by the quay wall one Saturday afternoon, filling the air with merry shouts and laughter that seemed to make even an old man like me young again as I heard. I took my seat on a grey stone bench by the waterside, and sat watching, now the happy boys, and now the deep tide that flowed fast to sea below my feet. Here in sunshine, there in shadow, the constant water flowed—here slipping smoothly by the seawall, there fretting against the prow of barge or ship as it ran; and as I watched it, I thought of my own past life, with its lights and glooms, joys and frets, slipping on fast to the eternity beyond; and, looking out beyond the harbor's mouth, I could see the great ocean lie in sunlight, and prayed that my eternity might be as bright as that.

Perhaps I looked a quaint old body as I sat musing, and this may have provoked the boys to play me a trick. One of them passing me knocked my hat off with a stick. It would have gone into the water, as no doubt he had intended, had not one of the other boys caught it. The others laughed, and the mischief-doer muttered something about "an accident," while my young friend handed it to me politely.

"What a lad he is!" I could hear my disturber say as he ran off; but the lad did not look disturbed by the backhanded compliment.

I was roused again presently from my musings by a shout from the boys.

"It's over!" And looking round, I saw my friend, standing hatless.

"Brice threw your cap over on purpose."

"Fight him, Wilson."

"Yes, give it him, Wilson. We'll see fair play," said the boys eagerly. Brice squared, and stood ready in due fighting position.

"I will not fight," said my friend Wilson. "I am sorry you threw the cap over, Brice, for it was all but new, and I don't see the fun in mischief of that sort. No—I am not going to fight you."

"Come on, if you dare," said Brice, with an irritating look and gesture; and all the boys gathered round Wilson, and urged him to "go on," and "give it to him."

"I don't like fighting, and I will not fight," said the boy.

A moment before the boys had been ready to make a hero of Wilson; but now

their mood changed, so fickle a thing is popular applause, and two or three cried, "Coward!" "He daren't!"

"I am no coward; and I dare do anything that is right," he said, while his crimsoning face showed how he felt the taunt.

"Coward! Never mind him, Brice: he's nothing but a milksop. He'll come here in a new cap tomorrow, and let you kick it round the quay for an appetite, if you're inclined," said one.

"It is not cowardly to be afraid to do wrong. I won't fight for the sake of a cap." And Wilson, as he spoke, perhaps thought of something his minister might have said. "We have a great Example to follow, you know," he added, "and it's our duty to follow it. No—I am not going to name that Great Name for you to laugh at, Brice. I must do what I think right; and if you all call me coward, I cannot help it."

A chorus of laughter greeted Wilson's speech, in which Brice's voice was loudest.

"Go home; we don't want a coward's company."

"Go home, coward!" And Wilson turned away.

He had not gone twenty yards when he turned, as did I, at the sound of a heavy splash.

"He's in!"

"He'll drown!—he can't swim!"

"Brice is drowning!" cried the boys at the edge. Some ran for help, while others began to throw their coats off, as if to jump after, but when they looked at the deep water running ten feet below, fast as a mill stream, they lost courage, and none





would venture. There was any amount of noise and shouting; and one threw a rope over that fell far short of the drifting boy.

“I’ll try,” said a voice near me; and Wilson threw his jacket on the ground, ran a stone’s throw along the sea wall, and plunged in gallantly, head foremost.

“He’ll save him!”

“He won’t—he’s not much of a swimmer.”

“They’ll both go!”

Wilson had outrun the tide before he sprang over, and the next instant he had stopped Brice, catching him by his hair.

“Run, and throw him the rope!” I said, and was obeyed; but the rope fell short and they drifted on.

“The coal barge! Strike out for it, Wilson,” shouted many voices.

“He sees it! He’s doing it!”

“Let him go, Wilson! Save yourself!”

But Wilson was not the boy to let go. He had now caught Brice’s jacket, and was striking out with all his remaining strength for the barge. Would he reach it? Would the boat put off from the ship reach him in time? Slowly and painfully he swam partly across the tide. I shut my eyes—I could not watch him. I held my breath to hear the word of life or death.

“They’re safe!” I heard at last, and looking up I saw Wilson holding on with one hand to the stern of the coal barge, and keeping up Brice’s head with the other. The next moment the boat reached them.

“Boys!” I said, when Wilson had walked quietly home—for he went quickly, more to shun our praise, I am sure, than to change his dripping clothes—“Boys! Try and don’t mistake a hero for a coward next time. Believe an old man when he tells you the truth, *that he who fears his Maker fears no man—no danger—not death itself!*”

*“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” —Matthew 10:28*

Answer the following questions concerning the story.

1. Did it take courage to knock off an old man's hat? Explain your answer.

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2. Did it take courage for Brice to throw Wilson's hat in the water? Explain your answer.

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3. Did it take courage for Wilson not to yield to the yells of the crowd to fight Brice? Explain your answer.

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4. What does the word "coward" mean? (Look it up in a dictionary.)

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5. The crowd called Wilson a coward and wanted him to do what he felt was wrong. What took more courage—doing what the crowd wanted, or doing what was right? Explain your answer.

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6. Whose example was Wilson striving to follow?

7. Could Wilson control what others were calling him?

8. The crowd or shouts of "coward"—are these ever reasons for doing the

wrong thing? Why not? \_\_\_\_\_

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9. Explain the old man's statement, "*that he who fears his Maker fears no man—no danger—not death itself!*" \_\_\_\_\_

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### The Fear of the Lord

To live in the fear of the Lord is not always to be afraid of Him, but to always know that He sees us and notes all our thoughts and all our actions. Indeed, if we do right, we need have no fear at all in the sense that we use the word fear.

*"Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing?"* said our Saviour, *"and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows."*

If we know that God thus watches over us so carefully, we ought surely to fear to do wrong, but we shall have in our hearts only love for Him Who gives us all our blessings, and shields us from harm. Even the little, weak sparrows are not too small to be noticed and cared for by Him. As we receive greater care and greater blessings than sparrows, we should never neglect to be grateful, and to do as God would have us to do. Then we shall fear Him, while we love Him.



## ***SCRIPTURE STUDY***

Copy the following verses.

*Luke 12:6,7*

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*What do these verses mean?*

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*How can these verses be applied to your life?*

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## ***DIAGNOSE THE PROBLEM***

Read the following example and answer the questions.

### To Play or Not to Play



Tom went running down the sidewalk to the park. It was a beautiful day, and he had an hour to play before it was time for dinner. He was hoping that there would be a game of baseball going on. There had been a regular group of guys playing on and off after school, and he was hoping that he would be in time to play a game with them. As he entered the park, he saw that there was a game started.

“Hey, Roger!” he called to the pitcher.

“Hey, Tom!” hollered Roger, “you want to play?”

“Sure,” replied Tom, “I have some time before dinner, so I thought I’d see if you all were playing.”

“Sure,” said Roger. “Pete, why don’t you let Tom hit after you, since you’re the last at bat?” Tom took his place behind Roger. The boys played hard. After a bit, Tom noticed the sun going down behind the trees.

“Tie game!” yelled Roger, “we have one more inning to play!” The two teams switched places.

“Come on, Tom!” yelled Ben. “We need you at bat!” Tom looked at his watch. It was getting late. He knew that if he stayed to play another inning, he would be late for dinner.

“Sorry, guys, I need to go home. It’s getting late, and I’m supposed to be home for dinner.”

“Awww, c’mon Tom. If you go home, we won’t have enough people on our team, and it’s a tie! With you at bat we could win this game—you hit the last home run!” said Pete. “So, you’ll be a little late for dinner. That’s okay!”

Tom knew that the guys really wanted him to stay and help them win the game, and he didn’t want to disappoint them. He also knew that his parents expected him home for dinner.





## ***SCRIPTURE STUDY***

Copy the following verse.

*Isaiah 41:6*

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*What does this verse mean?*

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*How can this verse be applied to your life?*

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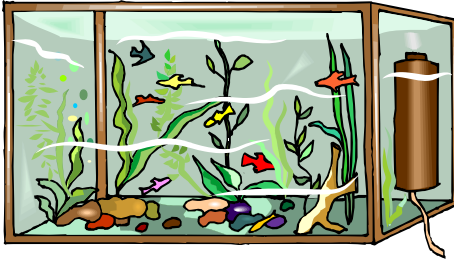
Dare to . . .

Dare to be honest, good, and sincere,  
Dare to be upright, and you never need fear.  
Dare to be brave in the cause of the right,  
Dare with the enemy ever to fight.  
Dare to be loving and patient each day,  
Dare speak the truth, whatever you say.  
Dare to be gentle and orderly too,  
Dare shun the evil, whatever you do.  
Dare to be cheerful, forgiving, and mild,  
Dare to be kind to each little child.  
Dare to be honest, and ever be true,  
Dare to do right, and you'll find your way through.

## ***DIAGNOSE THE PROBLEM***

Read the following example and answer the questions.

### Sarah's Courage



Sarah felt terrible. She knew that what she had done was wrong. She was really sorry for what she had done. Closing her eyes she softly prayed, “Dear Jesus, please forgive me for not obeying. I should have done what Mom said right away. Help me to do better. In Jesus name, Amen.”

Sarah felt a little bit better, but she knew that there was something else that she needed to do as well. She went to find her mom, and found her in the laundry room sorting clothes. Sarah took a deep breath, “Mom,” she said quietly, “I need to tell you something.”

Mom looked up, “Hi, Sarah,” she smiled. “What do you need?”

A tear rolled down Sarah’s cheek. Mom stooped to give her a hug, “What’s wrong, honey?”

Sarah sighed, “Remember when you asked me to feed the fish? I didn’t do it right away, and then I forgot. . .” Sarah paused, “Mom, they died!”

Mom looked sad as Sarah continued, “Mom, I asked Jesus to forgive me, but I think I’ll need to buy some more fish for you.”

Mom smiled, “I love you, sweetie. I’m sorry to hear that the fish died, Sarah, but I’m glad that you had the courage to come and tell me about it. I do hope that the next time you are asked to do something, you will obey right away.”

1. What did Sarah need to do?

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2. Why do think was it hard for Sarah to tell her Mom about what happened?

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3. Why did Sarah need courage to do the right thing?

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4. Why was her mom happy that Sarah had told her what happened?

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### ***SCRIPTURE STUDY***

Copy the following verse.  
*Psalm 27:1*

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*What does this verse mean?*

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*How can this verse be applied to your life?*

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## The Hero's Crown

“I'm sick to death of lessons,  
I'm tired of the struggle to learn,  
Give me a chance to win laurels,  
And a hero's crown to earn”—  
So spake the boy, with a flashing eye,  
As the humdrum days went slowly by.

“I want to fight desperate battles,  
I must have a foe to slay,  
I want to be brave and daring,  
I'm weary of foolish play”—  
So spake the boy with his soul afire,  
And the good God gave him his heart's desire.

Did he become a soldier brave?  
Ah, yes, but no sword he wore.  
He studied and played, and tried to obey,  
Just as he had done before.  
And he fought bravely, day by day,  
For he found he had many a foe to slay.

Idleness, falsehood, and discontent—  
He is warring against them all;  
He is fighting still, though he's bigger now,  
Stalwart and stout and tall  
And although he is quite unknown to fame,  
I am sure he deserves a hero's name.

## Who Is Really Courageous?

Boys are very apt to get wrong ideas about courage and cowardice; they often confound the two, calling that courage which is cowardice, and that cowardice which is courage. Two or three illustrations will make this plain to all our boy readers.

George came into the house one day, all dripping wet. His mother, as she saw him, exclaimed:

“Why, George, my son, how came you so wet?”

“Why, Mother, one of the boys said I ‘dare not jump into the creek,’ and I tell you, I am not to be dared.”

Now, was it courage that led George to do that? Some boys would say it was; and that he was a brave and courageous boy. But no, George was a coward; and that was a very cowardly act. He well knew that it was wrong for him to jump into the creek with his clothes on, but he was afraid the other boys would laugh at him, if he should stand and be dared.

Edward came strutting along up to James, and, putting his fist in his face, said, “Strike that if you dare!” just to see if he couldn’t get him into a quarrel. Now, which would show the most real courage, for James to give him a hit and have a fight, and both get hurt, or to say, as he did: “Edward, if you want a quarrel, you have come to the wrong boy. I never fight because it is wrong. You may call me a coward if you will, but I will show you that I have courage enough not to be tempted by your ridicule. I will not do what I know is wrong!” That was brave and courageous.

A good definition of courage is, “not to be afraid to do what is right, and to be afraid to do what is wrong.” The stories of Daniel and his three friends, and of Joseph, give us fine examples of those who possessed true courage, who were not afraid to do what was right, and who were afraid to do what was wrong.

## ***INSTRUCTIONS IN COURAGE***

*“Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD.” —Psalm 31:24*

*“Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.” —Psalm 27:14*

The word “courage” appears twenty times in the Bible. Sixteen of those times the word “courage” is preceded by the word “good.” So, what does “good” mean here? It is an adjective that describes courage. Good can mean many things, but a few of the meanings are: bountiful or plentiful, something to be relied on, a considerable amount, full, and more.

We can see from this that God wants us to have plenty of courage; we should be full of courage. That is our part—we are told TO BE of good courage. If we are, God will strengthen our heart. He will take away our fears and enable us to go forth and do right. We need to decide to do right, we need to persevere, we need to keep going forth despite the problems, or jeers of others, or the pressures placed upon us to get us to turn back, or to yield to temptation.

### **How can we have courage?**

**First**—we have to know whom we should fear. *“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” —Matthew 10:28.* Jesus said that we should not fear man, for all man can do to us is to kill us. Jesus said to fear Him which is able both to destroy the body and destroy the soul in hell.

So, let’s understand this more clearly: There are only two people to fear: God or man. That’s it. Simple, isn’t it?

Now, really, what can man do to us? He can call us some names, make fun of us, hit us, steal from us, treat us badly, imprison us, and take our lives. Then our earthly life is over, and we spend an eternity with Jesus and our heavenly Father in heaven, *“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”*

—1 Corinthians 2:9. How exciting! There are wondrous things prepared for us! For those who fear God and not man. For those who are redeemed by Him.

God knew that man would often be fearful that is why there are so many “fear nots” in His Word. Following are a few:

*“After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.” —Genesis 15:1*

*“Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you.” —Isaiah 35:4*

*“Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” —Luke 12:32*

God tells us to have courage—that is our part; but God promises to help us in those moments when we need courage, which is usually when we are afraid. And there are so many verses on being afraid! Following are a few:

*“The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?” —Psalm 27:1*

*“What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.” —Psalm 56:3*

*“In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.” —Psalm 56:11*

You see, when we understand Who our God is, and what He has done for us, and what He is going to do for us, we will no longer be afraid of man, and we will have the courage to do what is right in God’s sight.

Who is our God? He is the everlasting God, the almighty God, the Creator. He is a jealous God. He is a merciful God. He is Love. He knows all things. He sees the hidden things of our hearts. He knows our thoughts. He sees us all the time. He never sleeps. He is . . . There is no end to Who He is and what He can do. He is the ultimate, the best, the greatest. He has the power to cast people, us, into hell forever! Should we not fear Him? Should we not obey Him?

**Second**, how do we get courage? We decide to obey God. That's it! That's all. Simply DECIDE to obey God. Let nothing come between God and you. Give Him your *whole* heart, not some of it. Keep nothing back. Do not keep thoughts, desires, attitudes, or other things back from Him. Bring everything to Him for His approval. Courage is only a choice we make. Fear may keep us from making the correct choice, but we make the choice whom we will fear—God or man. You see, we do make a choice. We decide which fear is greatest, and then we follow it. We are not helpless. We decide.

**Third**, be willing to suffer the consequences or the outcome of the decision. Again, if we fear God and do right, others may or will laugh at us, scorn us, take advantage of us, harm us or despise us. They may call us names. They may not be friends with us. But really, how much can that hurt? Are we willing to give up an eternity with God, our loving Father, to be afraid of people here on earth? Wouldn't that be a rather poor choice?

Do we want to please our friends or please God? The devil may whisper that we really can do both, because God will understand. But is that true or is that another of the devil's lies? The devil is the father of lies according to the Bible. God says He is a jealous God. Exodus 34:14 says, "*For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.*"

You might say that you don't worship other gods, but what is another god? It can be many more things than stone idols. It can be anything we put in place of God or we put before God. When we put something before God, we are saying that that thing is more important to us than He is to us. When we put the fear of displeasing other people before doing right, we are making idols of those people. And God is a jealous God and does not like that! Computer games, books, activities, what we watch, and even certain friendships can be idols in our lives.

Do you know that even we can be an idol? We most certainly can. Anytime we put what we feel like doing before what God wants us to do, we are making ourselves more important than God.

When we decide to follow God, we most likely will suffer some consequences here on earth for our choices. We may decide not to read certain books, and some will call us narrow-minded, stupid people. We may decide to dress in a certain way, and people may label us as odd. We may decide not to participate in an activity and people may not understand. One day we may have to stand for our faith and go to jail for it. We don't know the future, but we know the God Who does! Wouldn't you rather know Him than anything else? Knowing Him is what gives us courage to do right. Won't you decide to get to know Him better?

*"Be ye kind one to another."* —Ephesians 4:32

*"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."* —Matthew 7:12

What do these verses have to do with courage? A great deal! Our Father in heaven wants us to be kind to each other. He also wants us to treat others like we would want to be treated. Now, we all experience fear or are afraid at some time. Our fears may be different from another person's. One might be afraid of water; one might be afraid snakes; one might be afraid of big dogs or storms. What we want to remember is that if we were the boy or girl feeling afraid, we would not want anyone to laugh at us, make fun of us, or shame us. A person's fears are very real to him.

We need to be kind and helpful to the person who is experiencing fear. We may not understand his fear, but we don't have to poke fun at him. Instead, we can be kind and understanding and help the boy or girl get through the scary moment. We can be helpful by being reassuring to the scared person. We can share a Bible verse with him, we can pray for and with him, and we can be strong and have courage in that situation. At another time, we might be the boy or girl needing the same kind of help!

## ***SEARCHING YOUR HEART***



Answer the following questions.

1. Are there times when you are afraid of other people?

What are those times? \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

2. Why are you afraid? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Do you give in to your fears? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. What would have happened if you did not give in? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Would the results of not giving in have been all that bad? Explain your answer.

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6. What will you do about this? \_\_\_\_\_

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## ***STORY ABOUT COURAGE—***

### **SUBDUED**

William Reynolds, an earnest and successful Sunday school worker, tells the following story, which he heard from the lips of the missionary himself.

The Rev. E. P. Scott, while laboring as a missionary in India, saw in the street one of the strangest looking heathen his eyes had ever lit upon. On inquiry, he found that he was a member of one of the inland tribes that lived away in the mountain districts, and which came down once a year to trade. Upon further questioning he found that the Gospel had never been preached to them, and that it was very dangerous to venture among them, because of their murderous propensities.

He was stirred with earnest desires to break unto them the Bread of Life. He went to his lodging place, fell on his knees, and pleaded for Divine direction. Arising from his knees he packed his valise, took his violin, with which he was accustomed to sing, and his staff, and started in the direction of the Macedonian cry.

As he bade his fellow missionaries farewell he said, "We shall never see you again. It is madness for you to go." But he said, "I must preach Jesus to them."

For two days he traveled without scarcely meeting a human being, until at last he found himself in the mountains and suddenly surrounded by a crowd of savages. Every spear was instantly pointed at his heart. He expected that every moment would be his last. Not knowing of any other resource he tried the power of singing the name of Jesus to them. Drawing forth his violin he began with closed eyes to sing and play—

*'All hail the power of Jesus' name!  
Let angels prostrate fall;  
Bring forth the royal diadem  
And crown Him Lord of all.'*

Being afraid to open his eyes he sang on till the third verse, and while singing these words,



*'Let every kindred, every tribe,  
On this terrestrial ball,  
To Him all the majesty ascribe  
And crown Him Lord of all.'*

He opened his eyes to see what they were going to do, when lo! the spears had dropped from their hands! They afterwards invited him to their homes. He spent a little more than two years among them. His labors were so richly rewarded that when he was compelled to leave them because of impaired health and return to his country, they followed him for thirty miles.

“Oh, missionary,” they said, “come back to us again! There are tribes that never heard the Gospel.”

He could not resist their entreaties. After visiting his home he went back again to continue his labors, till he sank into the grave among them. Who would face such dangers but a soldier of the Cross? Missionaries are often the bravest men on earth. Such courage blended with love of Jesus never fails to be used of God.

*“Thou, Whose almighty Word  
Chaos and darkness heard,  
And took their flight!  
Hear us, we humbly pray,  
And where the Gospel's day  
Sheds not its glorious ray  
Let there be light!”*

## ***DECISIONS TO MAKE***

Decisions are choices that we make. We are responsible for them. We can blame no one else but ourselves when we make wrong decisions. Our aim or goal should be to make good, godly decisions. Won't you decide now to—



1. Not expect yourself or others to never be afraid.
2. Whenever feelings of fear come, stop and pray immediately.
3. When you are afraid, ask yourself of what you are afraid. In other words, name your fears. Then pray about them.
4. Always put fear of God before fear of man (friends).
5. Always obey God first. Do right.



## **Another Kind of Fear—**

### Fear of the Dark

Although it is so very dark,  
And I am all alone,  
Mamma downstairs, and Papa away,  
And no one here to talk or play—  
Yet God, I know, to Thee the night  
Is bright and shining as the light.

And I have promised dear Mamma  
I will not cry or shout,  
But I would try and bear in mind  
All we have talked about—  
How that to God the darkest night  
Is bright and shining as the light.

And He can see His little child,  
And keep her safe from harm,  
And though it is to her so dark,  
He'll shield her with His arm;  
For to the God Who made the night  
It shines as brightly as the light.

And, so I will not be afraid,  
Or start at every noise that's made;  
But I will shut my eyes and sleep,  
Quite sure Thou wilt me safely keep,  
Because, O God, to Thee the night  
Is bright and shining as the light.

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## ***THINGS TO DO***

It is one thing to study a character trait, learn definitions, and ponder Scriptures. It is another thing to put those ideas into action and make them a part of your life. Following is a list of things which you can do to build the habit of courage in your life. Complete as many items as you can (no fewer than four) from the following list.

1.  Pray and ask the Lord to show you in what areas you are fearful or lack courage. Make a list of these and rethink how you might show more courage concerning them.
2.  Make your own list of Bible verses that encourage you to have courage and not be afraid.
3.  Conquer one big fear.
4.  Learn the song, "Dare to be a Daniel."
5.  Memorize four verses on courage, "fear not" or "do not be afraid." List reference.
  1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
  4. \_\_\_\_\_
6.  Write an essay about courage explaining the importance of it in the Christian life.

### ***Remember . . .***

#### **When you are feeling afraid and tempted to do wrong—**

- ✓ Stop and pray.
- ✓ Think about the consequences.
- ✓ Do right.

### ***Always . . .***

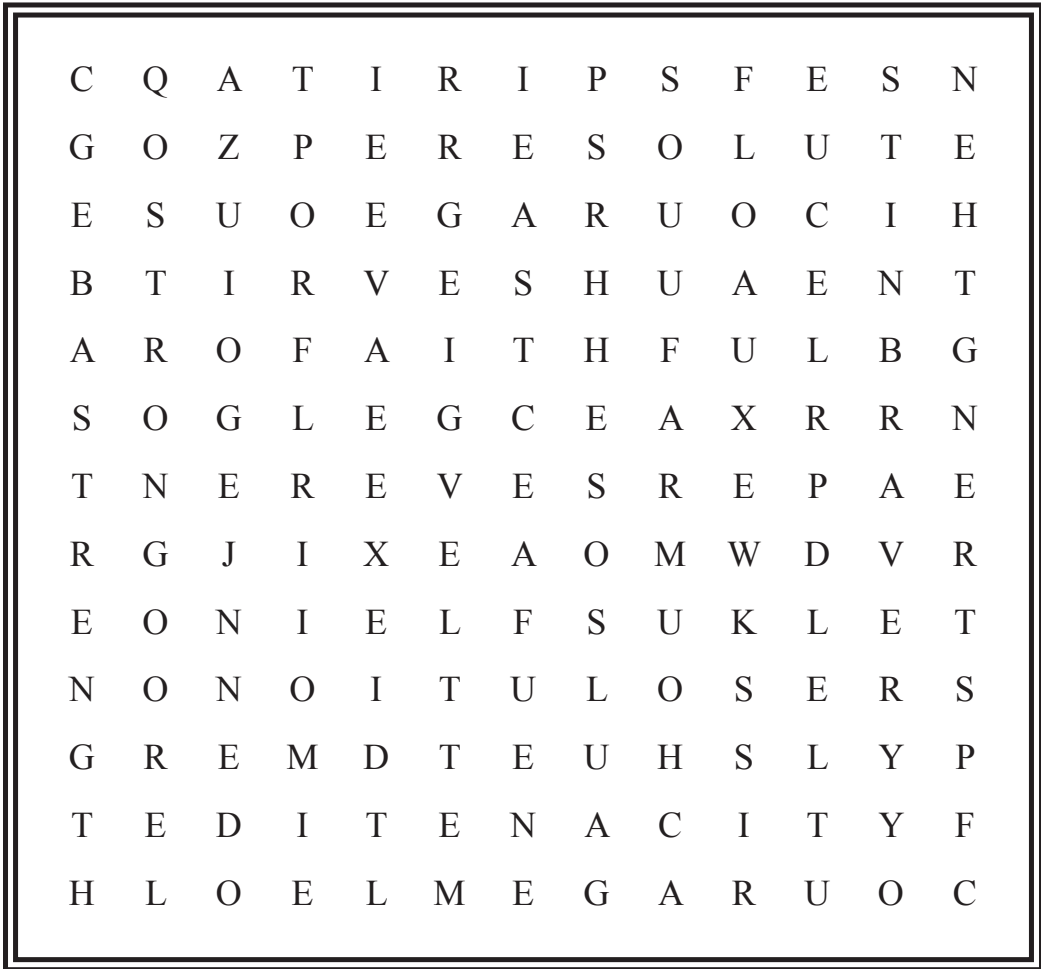
- ✓ Obey God.
- ✓ Never give in to temptation.
- ✓ Do right.

### ***Do say . . .***

- ✓ "I will fear God."
- ✓ "I will obey Him."
- ✓ "God comes first."

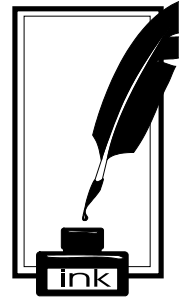
# Can you find these words in the puzzle?

bravery	courage	courageous
courageously	faithful	mettle
persevere	resolute	resolution
spirit	strength	strengthen
strong	tenacity	



## ***KEEPING A JOURNAL***

Many people say that it takes thirty days to create a habit, and that is just what we are trying to do—create the habit of courage! The next thirty pages will be set aside to record your progress in making the character trait “Courage” an integral part of *your* character. At the end of each day ask yourself the following questions, and write down the answers, and anything additional concerning your “courage” trait.



Following are a few *reminders* or *goals* to help you begin focusing on courage each day.

1. Take a sheet of paper and write the word “courage” in large letters and place it where you will see it the first thing in the morning when you awake.
2. Upon awakening and seeing the word “courage,” say a prayer for God to help you to be of good courage that day.
3. Purpose in your heart to try to keep your thoughts on God throughout the day. When you think of Him, it will be easier to have courage to do right.
4. Purpose in your heart to fear God and not man no matter what happens that day.
5. Take index cards or small sheets of paper, write the word “courage” on them, and place them in other places in the house where you will see them.
6. Place one of the cards in your Bible; place others in your schoolbooks or reading books.
7. At noon or lunch time, go to your room and kneel down and pray, and ask God to continue to help you have courage.
8. At dinner time, have another private prayer time with God, and ask for continued help in establishing the habit of courage.



Day 1      Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Did I display courage all day? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Was there anything that I was fearful about? What was it, and why did I not have courage?

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3. What or whom was I fearing instead of trusting God?

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4. How did I have courage today?

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5. What more could I have done to have courage today?

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Day 2      Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Did I display courage all day? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Was there anything that I was fearful about? What was it, and why did I not have courage?

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3. What or whom was I fearing instead of trusting God?

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4. How did I have courage today?

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5. What more could I have done to have courage today?

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Day 3      Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Did I display courage all day? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Was there anything that I was fearful about? What was it, and why did I not have courage?

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3. What or whom was I fearing instead of trusting God?

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4. How did I have courage today?

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5. What more could I have done to have courage today?

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Day 4      Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Did I display courage all day? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Was there anything that I was fearful about? What was it, and why did I not have courage?

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3. What or whom was I fearing instead of trusting God?

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4. How did I have courage today?

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5. What more could I have done to have courage today?

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Day 5      Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Did I display courage all day? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Was there anything that I was fearful about? What was it, and why did I not have courage?

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3. What or whom was I fearing instead of trusting God?

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4. How did I have courage today?

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5. What more could I have done to have courage today?

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Day 6      Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Did I display courage all day? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Was there anything that I was fearful about? What was it, and why did I not have courage?

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3. What or whom was I fearing instead of trusting God?

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4. How did I have courage today?

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5. What more could I have done to have courage today?

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Day 7      Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Did I display courage all day? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Was there anything that I was fearful about? What was it, and why did I not have courage?

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3. What or whom was I fearing instead of trusting God?

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4. How did I have courage today?

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5. What more could I have done to have courage today?

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Day 8      Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Did I display courage all day? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Was there anything that I was fearful about? What was it, and why did I not have courage?

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3. What or whom was I fearing instead of trusting God?

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4. How did I have courage today?

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5. What more could I have done to have courage today?

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Day 9      Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Did I display courage all day? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Was there anything that I was fearful about? What was it, and why did I not have courage?

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3. What or whom was I fearing instead of trusting God?

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4. How did I have courage today?

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5. What more could I have done to have courage today?

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Day 10      Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Did I display courage all day? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Was there anything that I was fearful about? What was it, and why did I not have courage?

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3. What or whom was I fearing instead of trusting God?

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4. How did I have courage today?

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5. What more could I have done to have courage today?

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Day 11    Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Did I display courage all day? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Was there anything that I was fearful about? What was it, and why did I not have courage?

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3. What or whom was I fearing instead of trusting God?

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4. How did I have courage today?

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5. What more could I have done to have courage today?

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Day 12      Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Did I display courage all day? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Was there anything that I was fearful about? What was it, and why did I not have courage?

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3. What or whom was I fearing instead of trusting God?

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4. How did I have courage today?

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5. What more could I have done to have courage today?

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Day 13      Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Did I display courage all day? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Was there anything that I was fearful about? What was it, and why did I not have courage?

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3. What or whom was I fearing instead of trusting God?

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4. How did I have courage today?

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5. What more could I have done to have courage today?

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Day 14      Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Did I display courage all day? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Was there anything that I was fearful about? What was it, and why did I not have courage?

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3. What or whom was I fearing instead of trusting God?

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4. How did I have courage today?

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5. What more could I have done to have courage today?

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Day 15      Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Did I display courage all day? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Was there anything that I was fearful about? What was it, and why did I not have courage?

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3. What or whom was I fearing instead of trusting God?

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4. How did I have courage today?

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5. What more could I have done to have courage today?

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Day 16      Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Did I display courage all day? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Was there anything that I was fearful about? What was it, and why did I not have courage?

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3. What or whom was I fearing instead of trusting God?

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4. How did I have courage today?

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5. What more could I have done to have courage today?

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Day 17      Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Did I display courage all day? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Was there anything that I was fearful about? What was it, and why did I not have courage?

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3. What or whom was I fearing instead of trusting God?

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4. How did I have courage today?

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5. What more could I have done to have courage today?

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Day 18      Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Did I display courage all day? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Was there anything that I was fearful about? What was it, and why did I not have courage?

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3. What or whom was I fearing instead of trusting God?

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4. How did I have courage today?

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5. What more could I have done to have courage today?

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Day 19      Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Did I display courage all day? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Was there anything that I was fearful about? What was it, and why did I not have courage?

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3. What or whom was I fearing instead of trusting God?

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4. How did I have courage today?

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5. What more could I have done to have courage today?

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Day 20      Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Did I display courage all day? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Was there anything that I was fearful about? What was it, and why did I not have courage?

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3. What or whom was I fearing instead of trusting God?

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4. How did I have courage today?

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5. What more could I have done to have courage today?

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Day 21      Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Did I display courage all day? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Was there anything that I was fearful about? What was it, and why did I not have courage?

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3. What or whom was I fearing instead of trusting God?

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4. How did I have courage today?

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5. What more could I have done to have courage today?

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Day 22      Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Did I display courage all day? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Was there anything that I was fearful about? What was it, and why did I not have courage?

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3. What or whom was I fearing instead of trusting God?

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4. How did I have courage today?

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5. What more could I have done to have courage today?

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Day 23      Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Did I display courage all day? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Was there anything that I was fearful about? What was it, and why did I not have courage?

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3. What or whom was I fearing instead of trusting God?

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4. How did I have courage today?

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5. What more could I have done to have courage today?

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Day 24      Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Did I display courage all day? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Was there anything that I was fearful about? What was it, and why did I not have courage?

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3. What or whom was I fearing instead of trusting God?

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4. How did I have courage today?

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5. What more could I have done to have courage today?

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Day 25      Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Did I display courage all day? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Was there anything that I was fearful about? What was it, and why did I not have courage?

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3. What or whom was I fearing instead of trusting God?

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4. How did I have courage today?

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5. What more could I have done to have courage today?

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Day 26      Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Did I display courage all day? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Was there anything that I was fearful about? What was it, and why did I not have courage?

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3. What or whom was I fearing instead of trusting God?

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4. How did I have courage today?

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5. What more could I have done to have courage today?

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Day 27      Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Did I display courage all day? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Was there anything that I was fearful about? What was it, and why did I not have courage?

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3. What or whom was I fearing instead of trusting God?

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4. How did I have courage today?

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5. What more could I have done to have courage today?

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Day 28      Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Did I display courage all day? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Was there anything that I was fearful about? What was it, and why did I not have courage?

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3. What or whom was I fearing instead of trusting God?

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4. How did I have courage today?

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5. What more could I have done to have courage today?

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Day 29      Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Did I display courage all day? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Was there anything that I was fearful about? What was it, and why did I not have courage?

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3. What or whom was I fearing instead of trusting God?

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4. How did I have courage today?

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5. What more could I have done to have courage today?

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Day 30      Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Did I display courage all day? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Was there anything that I was fearful about? What was it, and why did I not have courage?

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3. What or whom was I fearing instead of trusting God?

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4. How did I have courage today?

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5. What more could I have done to have courage today?

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