

Christian Characteristics

Virtue

Introduction

2 Pet 1:5-10

1. No single “characteristic” will make a Christian.
2. There are “7” Christian characteristics mentioned. This represents completeness.
3. Virtue is placed in the forefront of these characteristics.
 - A. **VIRTUE defined:** *"Moral excellence; to do what one has to do as if from inclination - likened to courage which is the quality of being fearless".*
 - 1) **In a nutshell: “Standing up for what is right regardless of what others think or what will happen to us.”**

Ralph Waldo Emerson;

Whatever you do, you need courage. Whatever course you decide upon, there is always someone to tell you that you are wrong. There are always difficulties arising that tempt you to believe your critics are right. To map out a course of action and follow it to an end requires some of the same courage that a soldier needs. Peace has its victories, but it takes brave men and women to win them.

Courage Ordered

1. In the Old Testament:

A. Upon Joshua who succeeded Moses.

Joshua 1:6-9

B. Upon Israel in general.

Joshua 23:1-6

2. In the New Testament:

A. Upon the disciples by Christ.

Matt 10:28 And **do not fear those** who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

B. Also ordered by Paul.

1 Cor 16:13 Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong.

Phil 1:27-28 Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, **and not in any way terrified by your adversaries**, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God.

Courage Is Needed

1. Whether in the majority or in the minority, we must DO what is right!

A. Remember, the majority are sometimes wrong.

Matt 7:13-14 "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. "Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it."

B. Our true strength is shown with our trust in God.

Phil 4:13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

1) God let the Israelites know He was on their side.

LEV 26:8 And five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight: and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword.

C. There are several Bible examples that we can draw from that show courage, even when in the minority:

1) Joshua and Caleb against ten spies.

-- **Even after seeing the strong people, giants, walled cities - they knew that they had God on their side - THEY HAD VIRTUE/COURAGE! (Num 13:30)**

-- **The majority (10) tried to discourage the others. It took courage to stand against the 10. (Num 13:31-33; Num 14:6-9)**

2) Gideon's army of 300 men (Jud 7:2-12).

- **God wanted to show them what could be done when they trusted in Him.**
- **22,000 were afraid and left - 10,000 left**
- **When brought down to some water God said that those that lapped the water, as a dog laps, putting their hand to their mouth, he would keep.**
- **Those that got down on their knees to drink water he let go.**
 - **9,700 got down on their knees and were dismissed and only 300 men remained to fight the huge army.**

3) Daniel thrown to the lions because he prayed to God (Dan 6:1-23)**4) Paul once stood alone.
2 Tim 4:14-18****5) Apostles at different times.**

Acts 4:18-20 And they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. **"For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."**

Acts 5:28-29 "Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!" But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: **"We ought to obey God rather than men."**

We Are Virtuous When We

1. Are able to endure temptation.

A. Temptation endured is for our own good - whether one or several!

James 1:12 Blessed is the man who **endures temptation**; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

1 Pet 1:6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by **various trials**,

2. Have the COURAGE to say "NO!"

A. Joseph was an example of this: Gen 39:7-9

- 1) Often times we would be much better off if we would learn to say NO and avoid situations that will get us into trouble.**

3. Have the courage to reprove those who sin.

A. It is easy to tell a friend about another person's sin.

- 1) But we are to admonish or rebuke those who sin. This takes great courage to confront one and address the problem directly.**

Titus 1:13 This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they **may be sound in the faith**,

B. Examples of courage of this kind:

- 1) **Nathan in rebuking David.**
2 Samuel 12:1-7
- 2) **Peter in rebuking Ananias & Sapphira. (Acts 5:1-5)**
- 3) **Peter in rebuking Simon. (Acts 8:20-23)**

4. Are able to preach and teach the truth, ready to endure any persecution.

A. It is easy to preach or tell others about Christ when there is no danger or threat to us.

Adrian Rogers tells about the man who bragged that he had cut off the tail of a man-eating lion with his pocket knife. Asked why he hadn't cut off the lion's head, the man replied: "Someone had already done that."

- 1) **But when danger arises - it must not turn us back. We must "be ready to stand for what we believe in at all cost."**
- 2) **Examples of courage of this kind:**
 - a) **Stephen before the Jews (Acts 7)**
 - b) **Paul could not be moved.**

Acts 20:22-24 "And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, "except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. "But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

The Results of Virtue

- 1. It may get us into trouble in this world, But it will prove our sincerity to others.**

Acts 4:13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.

- 2. It will mean EVERYTHING to us after our life here is over (Rev 2:10)!**

W.T. Sherman;

I would define true courage to be a perfect sensibility of the measure of danger, and a mental willingness to endure it.

Conclusion

- 1. Brethren and friends, the proper faith in God will give us Virtue (Courage).**

Prov 14:26 In the fear of the LORD there is **strong confidence**, and His children will have a place of refuge.

Eph 3:10-12 to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom **we have boldness** and access **with confidence** through faith in Him.

- 2. Virtue says, we truly can DO ALL THINGS through Christ who strengthens us!**

