

Let Us Pray for Boldness

“And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness”
(Acts 4:29-31).

When the apostles and leaders of the New Testament church came face-to-face with life threatening trouble, they did not run, hide, or stop preaching. They went to God in prayer and asked for boldness to speak the Word. God blessed their ministries, and boldness became a major theme throughout Acts. They had a burning desire to boldly proclaim God’s Word (Acts 2:14; 3:11-12; 4:8, 13; 4:29-33; 7:54; 9:20-22; 13:46; 14:3; 14:21-22; 19:8).

Paul prayed he might be able to speak the gospel boldly.

“And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak” (Ephesians 6:19-20).

The Opposite of Boldness—Fear

John Ortberg in *If You Want to Walk on Water, You’ve Got to Get out of the Boat* claims fear is the number one reason people are tempted to avoid what God asks them to do. It is a big obstacle in trusting and obeying God. Ortberg believes that fear will sink us faster than anything else. He suggests that fear whispers to us that God is not big and strong enough to take care of the situation at hand.

One area where fear surfaces its ugly head is in evangelism. The two stories that follow illustrate this point.

“Sir, do you brush your teeth!”

On a plane a missionary sat down beside a little girl who had Down’s syndrome. After a few moments, the little girl looked at the missionary and asked, “Mister, do you brush your teeth?”

Somewhat surprised, the missionary answered, “Well, Yes, I brush my teeth.”

She then said, “It’s good thing. If you didn’t, your teeth could rot and fall out.”

After a couple of minutes of peace, the little girl continued, “Mister, do you smoke?”

“Well, no, I don’t smoke.”

“It’s good thing, because if you did, you could die of cancer.”

The next question came sooner than the missionary had hoped. “Mister, do you know Jesus?”

The missionary proudly responded, “Yes, I know Jesus!”

“It’s a good thing, because if you didn’t, you could die and go to hell.”

Another man came and set down beside the missionary and the little girl.

“Ask him, ask him!” the little girl said.

Reluctantly, the missionary asked, “Sir, the little girl wants me to ask you something. Do you brush your teeth?”

The man somewhat taken aback answered, “Yes, I brush my teeth.”

“It’s good thing. If you didn’t, your teeth could rot and fall out.”

“Ask him, ask him,” the little girl prompted with insistence.

“Sir, the little girl wants to know—do you smoke?”

The man answered, “No, I don’t smoke!”

“It’s good thing, because if you did, you could die of cancer.”

“Ask him, Ask him!” she insisted.

“Shhh! That is personal!” said the fearful missionary.

“Oh, come on. Don’t be afraid. Ask him, ask him!”

“Sir, the little girl wants to know—do you know Jesus?”

“No, I don’t know Jesus. But I’ve been having serious problems for some time now, and I sure would like for someone to introduce me to Jesus.”

“Lord, is this a sign?”

Norman Cates shared a story of a man who prayed each morning, “Lord, if you want me to witness to someone today, please give me a sign and show me who it is.”

One day he was sitting on a bus when a huge man sat beside him. The shy, fearful Christian anxiously waited for his stop so he could get off the bus. Suddenly, the man beside him burst into tears and cried out, “I need to be saved. I’m a lost sinner and I need Jesus. Won’t somebody help me to be saved?”

The believer bowed his head and prayed, “Lord, is this a sign?”

This humorous story hits on a true point. We often are fearful of witnessing for Christ. Feelings of inadequacy (I am not able); fear of failure and not being accepted, grip our hearts and make us incapable of speaking for the Lord. Charles Stanley in *Success God’s Way* says, “Fear is the uneasy feeling that we are inadequate.”

Fear is one of the biggest enemies of evangelism and doing something for God. This fear does not come from God.

“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7).

“The majority of Christians believe they cannot be successful in sharing their faith.”
(The Barna Group)

Satan tries to use fear to paralyze us and rob us of our strength. The possibility of rejection makes us fearful in witnessing. Ananias in Acts 9 is a prime example of someone who was fearful when told to witness.

Fear can be conquered and even overcome by:

- 📖 Prayer. Commit your fear to God and ask for His help to boldly proclaim the Word. Ask God to increase your confidence to witness.
- 📖 Preparation. Preparing for witnessing and possible situations minimizes fear. This includes studying the Word.
- 📖 Practice. We gain confidence to witness and speak through practice (by doing it).
- 📖 Passion. Fear needs to be replaced with boldness and passion. Anthony Mangun explains that passion is the God-given ability to feel so strongly about something that it causes the person to move toward the object with great desire. It is the fuel that ignites the fire of our desire. It is the burden that compels us to action. The human soul on fire for God is a powerful witness.

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Romans 1:16).

John Ortberg asks, “What would you guess is the most common command in Scripture?” He answers, “The single command in Scripture that occurs more often than any other—God’s most frequently repeated instruction—is formulated in two words: fear not.”

There are more than 365 verses in the Word of God connected with not fearing. This indicates fear plays a destructive role in the lives of people. God will help us get and maintain victory over fear. Let us pray for boldness!

“For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me” (Hebrews 13:5-6).

Study Questions

1. What is one of the biggest enemies of evangelism? _____

2. What single command in Scripture appears more often than any other? _____

3. What makes us fearful when it comes to witnessing or evangelism? _____

4. According to Anthony Mangun, who is a powerful witness? _____

5. What is passion? _____

6. How does Charles Stanley define “fear”? _____

7. What are four ways fear can be conquered and overcome?

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

