

Solution for Life



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Dan and I were discussing the theme of this newsletter (courage) as 2019 was coming to an end, and we asked ourselves, "How do we have courage when faced with situations that are larger than we are?" Dan mentioned to me that it's through confidence in Christ and His power to overcome and carry us through whatever we face. At the same time we were thinking this through, our pastor preached a message and made this statement, "I don't know HOW, but I know WHO." I find myself repeating this over and over when I need courage to have confidence in Christ in the situations overwhelming me. As you read the messages in this newsletter, we pray you will experience courage and confidence to trust Jesus and experience His overwhelming presence in your lives.

*In Jesus' love,
Jessie*

Courage | by Daniel S. Westlund

Countless movies, books, seminars, and sermons have covered this subject. The need to exhibit courage is found in every area of our lives, with so many hurdles and fears to overcome daily. Even as you read this article you may be facing a situation that requires courage. I, personally, see courage as strength and confidence in the face of obstacles and opposition to act with determination or resolve with wisdom. I add "with wisdom," for too often someone may take an action that appears to be courageous without giving much thought to the consequences of what he is saying or doing.

In life there are two paths of advice about courage we can follow. The first is based on human wisdom, the teachings and philosophies of man. The Bible refers to this wisdom that men use to define courage and life itself,

as "...the wisdom of this age, or of the rulers of this age who are coming to nothing... words taught by human wisdom," (I Co. 2:6,13) not words by the Spirit of God. What these individuals experience is real. The emotions, the determination, the results. History is filled with examples of people daily showing courage who do not know God.

The second path we can follow on courage is the Word of God. In the Bible, courage to overcome all fears and obstacles is based on our trust in God. David said to Solomon his son, "Be strong and courageous, and do the work. Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you until all the work of the service of the temple of the Lord is finished." (I Chronicles 28:20) The apostle Paul said,

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13)

It was the summer of 1977 and I was on a flight to Arkansas to be the speaker at a summer conference. I was sitting next to a man who was an agnostic and was trying to explain to him his need for Christ. He was very strong in his opinion that he had no need for Christ. I spoke to him about death and life eternal. I explained to him, as I looked out the window at the jet engine, that even if that engine caught fire right now, I was not afraid of death, for if it was time to go home, I would be in heaven forever. To my utter surprise, at that very moment, the engine exploded in flames and the man I was next to turned white like a ghost in fear. I tried to assure him everything would be ok, for the work God had for me was not yet finished.

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CONTACT US AT:

P.O. Box 3510
Carmel, Indiana
46082-3510
Phone: 317-289-5896
email: sfl@solutionforlife.org

We made an emergency landing in the middle of Kansas at a very small airport. He never spoke to me again. I made it safely to the conference and back home to my wife and our two small sons. I learned at a very young age that I can trust the Lord in all circumstances of life.

The key to courage is to fully surrender to God's perfect plan in our lives. Paul made the bold statement of courage, "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain." (Philippians 1:21) How does a person have so much courage that they don't even fear death? Christ gives that courage Himself. Paul goes on to tell us the secret about life and how we are to live it in Galatians 2:20: "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

When Jesus was arrested, all the disciples were afraid and fled, Peter disowned Christ three times, and the disciples went into hiding behind locked doors out of fear of the Jewish leaders who had crucified Christ. Do we run and hide when we feel threatened? Yes. Aren't we like Christ's disciples? When Christ arose from the grave and met the women who had come to the tomb, He greeted them and told them, "...Do not be afraid." (Matthew 28:9-10) Later, He told his disciples "...And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:20) Christ Himself is the one we can trust, because God has said, "never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." As we surrender to Jesus and trust Him, we will say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me? Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." (Hebrews 13: 5-6, 8)

Where do we find the courage to live life facing the fears and obstacles that come our way? In Christ, who, over and over said, "Do not be afraid." "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my right hand. For I am the Lord your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, 'Do not fear; I will help you.'" (Isaiah 41:10, 13)

Can we depend on Christ to give us the strength and confidence (courage) we need daily? Yes!

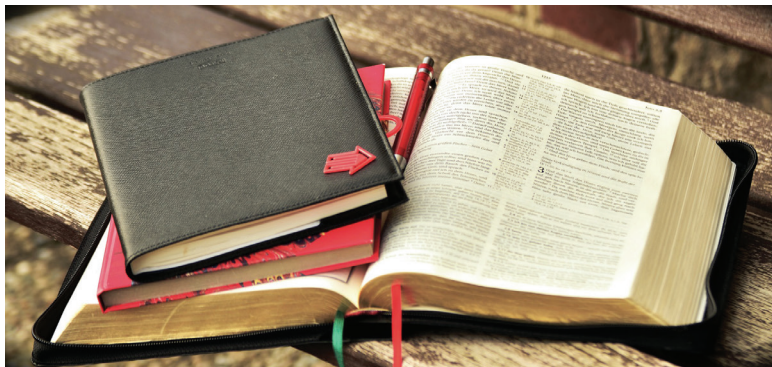
However, we must come to a place where we fully surrender our life to Christ and ask Him to fill us with the Holy Spirit. We must learn how to live and walk in the Spirit, overcoming the world, knowing that it is Christ Himself who is our true life, confidence, strength, and courage in all circumstances.

Solution for growth

Strong and Courageous | by Stephen Westlund

"This is my command – be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." (Joshua 1:9 NLT)

Sometimes when we read commands like this one, to be strong and courageous, we try to be good little Christians and jump straight into executing the command. When we do this, we will have some degree of success; but ultimately, we are created with very human limitations, and we fail. Our strength is limited, and our courage is limited, so how can God command us to be strong and courageous? First, He is God, and He can do whatever He wants, but He doesn't give us this command expecting us to muster up our strength and courage. He first gives us the source of the strength and courage He expects us to live in. In verses 7 and 8, he instructs Joshua



twice (and us through Joshua) to look to and pattern our lives after the Word of God. God promises Joshua, when you do this, "you will succeed in all you do." If you knew that you would succeed in everything you do, wouldn't this make you very strong and courageous? All that is required is that we study, meditate, and obey the word of God in every aspect of our life.

Now if you are anything like me, you may be thinking, "It's not easy to pattern every aspect of my life based on the word of God. That is too much

to ask!" But God has us covered here, too. He tells Joshua (and us through Joshua), "For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." First, He says, "pattern your life after My Word." Then, He says, "As you go about your life, I will give you myself to be strength and courage in and through you wherever you go."

There is a beautiful, divine mystery at work here. We are commanded to be something we aren't by obeying God's Word and resting in Him alone. When we obey His Word and rest in Him wherever we go, He makes us strong and courageous. So, He gives us the command and gives the strategy and power to obey the command. Our God alone has the power and wisdom to complete such a work in each of us. Pattern your life based on His Word, rest in Him, and be strong and courageous.

Solution for women

Take Courage | by Kristen Alewine

“Have I not commanded 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 1:9

I wish I could tell you great stories of personal courage - stories about how I've stepped out in faith, done really scary things and seen God come through for me. But the truth is, I've spent most of my life making a beeline for the safest and easiest paths. If I had any suspicion that something wouldn't come easily to me or that there was a chance I could fail, I was out. Especially if it was going to mean failure in front of other people.

At some point in the last few years I've identified this fear in my life and realized it's not the way God asks us

to live. He tells us to be strong and courageous, right? So, I thought I'd give it a shot. I assumed that as I attempted things that I didn't feel I had the capacity, knowledge, or strength for, my faith would grow and I'd be less scared. Ha! Wrong. At least about

So now, when I'm scared, I take courage, knowing it's in human weakness that God does some of His best work.

the” being less scared” part. Instead, it's made me even MORE aware of my weakness. And, really, maybe that's the point. In the past when I've read the passages about being strong

and courageous it felt like a burden – like I needed to muster up some emotional high that would make me feel invincible and ready to conquer the world. But I've come to realize that God doesn't ask us to base our strength and courage on ourselves and our own capabilities. He's calling us to depend on His strength and His wisdom to be able to do courageous things. 2 Corinthians 12:9 “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”

So now, when I'm scared, I take courage, knowing it's in human weakness that God does some of His best work. (And if someone could remind me of that next time I'm panicking, that would be great.)

Solution for caring

Caring Generation to Generation | by Jessie A. Westlund

Calls and requests for assistance come into Solution for Life every week. We are thankful for every call that gives us an opportunity to reach into people's lives with the love of Christ. These calls take many forms and come from people spanning many generations. “For the LORD is good; and his truth endures to all generations.” (Psalm 100:5)

I love watching God's love reach to all generations. At Christmastime, one of my high school aged granddaughters was overwhelmed to learn that some youth do not have Christmas like she has in her home. She asked her mother if she could forfeit one of her gifts and the money go to someone with a need.

Due to this kindness, a young woman received a generous gift. Another granddaughter went to a youth retreat and was challenged to use her gifts to reach out in kindness to another. Today she works with women in her church to make quilts for people who need a gift to keep them warm and to sense someone cares for them. Lastly, in our family many have learning challenges in the form of dyslexia. One of our grandchildren is extremely bright but struggles to read. A gifted woman who specializes in teaching children with dyslexia learned about the need and offered to use her gifts to support our grandchild. These are just a few examples of caring generation

to generation. Our vision for 2020 is to expand our focus by assisting people in avenues where we carry out love and caring from generation to generation. Each of the stories I just shared demonstrates one generation caring for another. As we commit to caring and using our God-given gifts to assist others, God may use those gifts to change our families, schools, communities and even the world. The challenge is to take the time to express God's everlasting mercies to others and be part of giving hope to the next generation.

Solution for the future

Watch & Pray | by Daniel S. Westlund

In prayer I was asking the Lord what I should write about in this section for the winter newsletter. In the quietness of my heart the Holy Spirit just said, "Change." I asked again and the same word came to my heart, "Change." What does this mean? It can be applied personally, to make sure I am ready for all that is about to take place. That I am truly alert to what is happening, spending more time in prayer and the Word to hear what God is saying.

It can also be applied to the Church. In Revelation 2-3 we see the seven churches, which give us a picture of the Church even today: those that are faithful, those that are persecuted, those that are lukewarm. To each the same message is given," ... hear what

the Spirit says to the churches." And to each church is given a warning or a promise.

It can also apply to the nations, "If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed, and if that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned. And if at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be built up and planted and if it does evil in my sight and does not obey me, then I will reconsider the good I had intended to do for it." (Jeremiah 18:7-10)

I believe change is coming. How? I do not know. Keep your eyes on Israel

and the peace plan, the locust plague spreading across the Middle East and Africa, and the Coronavirus that appears to be spreading much faster than we are being told.

"Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man." (Luke 21:36)

Bulletin Board

New Website

Over the last six months, a team of people led by Kathie Babcock has developed the new Solution for Life website and logo.

Join us at www.solutionforlife.org and take a look! We would love to hear from you and receive your feedback on our website. We look forward to using this site to connect and expand our outreach as we encourage people with the message that Jesus is the Solution for Life. He will sustain us and lead us. He is the hope for everyone who wants to accept Him and His plan for their lives.



Looking ahead in 2020:

- Solution for Women is planning a spring retreat called "Your Story Matters" on April 25, 2020. You will find more information and registration on the Solution for Life site under "Events."
- Bible Prophecy and History: Dan Westlund is doing a new seminar, "Bible Prophecy and History." The series answers questions around what history and current events reveal about the return of Christ. Presently, this is being shared in a small group over a number of weeks. The course is available in a 4-hour workshop format. Workshops will be scheduled this year. More information on dates and registration will be on the website in March. In addition, if you would like to schedule this series you can contact us at sfl@solutionforlife.org.

Message from Dan and Jessie

Our world is changing rapidly, but Jesus is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. Over 50 years ago, Gerald Welbourn, Jessie's dad, said, "Things are moving so fast. How will we keep up?" Here we are 50 years later, still sharing the love of Christ and His plan for the world. To God, the changes we face are nothing. The methods of ministry have changed but Christ has not. Thank you for your prayers, gifts, and kindness that support this ministry. As you feel led, please continue to pray and give your gifts that allow us to respond to needs presented to us.

Blessings,
Dan and Jessie