



Family Values

Virtue Realities

Boldness

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Discipleship is not for the timid or the faint-hearted. It requires a willingness to follow where the Spirit leads you, courage to stand up for what you believe, especially when it's against the norm, and confidence in the face of adversity and uncertainty. All of these are characteristics of boldness. Without this quality Christian living would be rather bland, somewhat passive and lacking in commitment and passion. With it we are energized and have depth and personality. From this perspective, discipleship is both challenging and exciting.

Boldness results in action that overcomes fear. When Moses announces to the Children of Israel that he will not accompany them into the promised land, he encourages them to be *"strong and bold"* and not be afraid of the nations they will face *"because it is the Lord your God who goes with you; he will not fail you or forsake you."* (Deut. 31:6) The writer of Proverbs asserts that the wicked tend to run even without being pursued, while *"the righteous are as bold as a lion."* (Prov. 28:1) They stand firm because they have nothing to fear.

Boldness is also reflected in straightforward, no-nonsense speech. Jesus openly predicts his suffering, death and resurrection, only to be rebuked by Peter. (Mark 8:32) Although the rulers and elders of Jerusalem were impressed with the boldness of Peter and John, they took steps to silence them. In the face of these threats, Peter and John asked God to give them the courage *"to speak your word with all boldness."* (Acts 4:29) The result was that *"they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness."* (Acts 4:31)

Paul emphasizes that through Christ Jesus our Lord *"we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him."* (Eph. 3:12) The writer to the Hebrews encourages the reader to approach the throne of grace of the perfect high priest (Jesus)

"with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." (Heb. 4:16) The writer of 1 John insists that since perfect love, which comes from God, casts out fear, we in turn *"may have boldness on the day of judgment."* (1 John 4:17) Not only are we called to speak the word with boldness, but God also gives us the strength and courage to follow through.

Luther is reported to have coined the phrase *"pecca fortiter"* which in English means *"sin boldly."* Some scholars suggest that because of Luther's confidence in justification by faith alone, he believed that no matter what we did God freely forgives us. The entire phrase, however, is: *"Sin boldly—but even more boldly believe and rejoice in Christ."* Luther recognized that as long as we live in this world, we will "continually miss the mark." At no point will we be perfect. As such, we need to take consolation in God's grace and not be terrified when we make mistakes. Confession and absolution are daily occurrences for the Christian embedded in a process that begins at baptism. It involves living out the means of grace with boldness.

The following are ways to practice boldness:

1. **Remember your baptism.** Daily renew your baptismal vows and live each day with mild abandon.
2. **Stand up for your beliefs.** Don't hesitate to let your values be known, especially if you are being asked to compromise them.
3. **Speak the word of God with boldness.** Ask for God's Spirit to guide you.
4. **Face the unknown with confidence.** Remember that God *"will not fail you or forsake you."*
5. **Carry out your call to discipleship with passion and enthusiasm.**

Affirmation: Today I will proceed with boldness.

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