



# Family Values

## Virtue Realities

### Confidence

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Confidence. Too much of it sets one up for a fall and not enough of it becomes an obstacle to success. We can all point to people whose false confidence led to their destruction, whether it be politicians, corporate executives or even spiritual leaders. They are critical and judgmental of others. Such people tend to inflate their own importance and over time delude themselves into believing that they are invincible. The greater the deception, the harder the fall.

In the opposite corner are the people who lack confidence. They have low self-esteem and are comfortable taking a back seat. They believe that they do not have much to offer and are quick to defer to others. As a result they tend to be underachievers and frequently are underemployed. The put-downs and criticisms they received while growing up become internal voices that dictate their current behaviors. They are plagued by uncertainties and doubts in their own abilities and are more tuned into weaknesses than strengths. The people on this end of the spectrum are sitting ducks for the overly confident, who make them their "fall guys." They are waiting targets for blame.

The story in the Bible that pits super confidence against healthy confidence is the story of David and Goliath. (1 Samuel 17) The giant champion of the Philistines named Goliath issues a challenge to the Israelites: *"Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me. If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants; but if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us."* He adds, *"Today I defy the ranks of Israel."* In response the Israelites were *"dismayed and greatly afraid."*

David, upon hearing the taunts of Goliath, asks: *"For who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?"* He volunteers to fight the Philistine, but King Saul questions his ability, *"for you are just a boy, and he has been a warrior from his youth."* David counters that in the course of protecting his sheep, he successfully killed lions and bears. The other factor that gives David courage is his conviction that *"the Lord will save me from the hand of this Philistine."* He balances his abilities with his trust in the Lord. The king accepts David's offer and suits him up in his armor. This is not David's style. He

removes the armor and proceeds to do it his way. The little guy wins and the giant loses his head, which had become "too big" to begin with.

The Psalmist, which may very well be David, summarizes this stance: *"It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to put confidence in mortals."* (Psalm 118:8) Like David, we need to have confidence in our abilities, recognizing that they are gifts of a loving God. It is equally important that we respect the gifts of others. At the same time as Christians we put our trust in the Lord. We proclaim with the writer to the Hebrews, citing Psalm 118:6, *"So we can say with confidence, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?'"* (Hebrews 13:6)

The following are ways to demonstrate confidence:

1. **Daily thank God for your gifts.** Recognize that abilities come from God and deserve to be appreciated.
2. **Dedicate your gifts to service.** Trust in God to guide and direct you through the Spirit. Make God's will your way.
3. **Appreciate the talents of others.** Give other people credit for their contributions.
4. **Build confidence in your children.** Reinforce their strengths and avoid harsh criticisms and judgments. Be realistic in your expectations.
5. **Balance confidence with reality.** Maintain perspective. Do not adopt an inflated or deflated view of yourself.

**Affirmation: I have a lot going for me!**

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