

COURAGE



When travelling through the outback, we stopped at an abandoned Afghan campsite. After decades of non-use there was still evidence such as a broken down goat enclosure, the lid off a can, glass bottle stoppers. Curiosity prompted me to lift the lid and a tiny lizard reared its head in defiance at me. Several others came to look at this courageous tiny critter. I could have snuffed out its life with my fingers, yet it stared into my face, its mouth open wide, daring me to attack. I lowered the lid and left the little creature alone to live another day. It was the personification of courage.

Very few people would think of themselves as a David pitted against a Goliath, yet when their back is to the wall, they turn into a David, saving lives, sometime at the expense of their own.

A number of years ago my husband Bruce was called at 2 am to deal with a drunken man brandishing a gun and threatening to shoot anyone, including himself, who dared to try to take it from him.

Did Bruce feel like a David? No! Inside, fear made him feel like a jelly bag. But someone had to face the man and try to save his and his loved ones lives.

Wondering how the man would react, Bruce took slow steps, one at a time, toward the man seated on a bed in a bedroom. Finally sitting down beside him, putting his arm around his shoulders, he took possession of the gun. Was what Bruce did madness or an act of courage?

So what is courage? Is it a feeling of confidence, or courage, or an emotion that pushes us into acting without thinking? Is courage an inbuilt trait ... a response of self-preservation?

Some people are trained to face danger as in warfare, fire fighting and ambulance attendants. We expect these people to be brave. Yet when questioned these people deny being courageous. They claim to have saved their mate because he was just that – their mate, and that they were scared stiff.



Training certainly holds a person steady in a time of crisis but even ordinary, untrained people become courageous in a time of emergency.

What about Bruce, what was his motivation? Firstly, his response was governed by his acceptance of his call by God to serve his fellow man, and secondly by his desire to prevent tragedy. Bruce went fuelled by the hope in Christ that this unhappy man could be delivered from his bondage.

Having met Christ in his teens, Bruce was now, after years of experiencing God's faithfulness in all types of situations, "completely sure that God was well able to do anything he promised." So even though he was scared stiff, he responded to the 2 am call because he believed that God was able to keep him and do anything he asked.

When Bruce arrived at the home of the drunk, he couldn't just barge in and demand the gun be dropped. No, it was soothing words, then a step by a step to cross the room and sit beside the man. The roots of courage are sown in our past experiences and the history we have with God.

Courage is like a muscle, the more we dare to use it by taking risks not just in the 'big' moments to save lives, but also in the 'small' ones like speaking to the neighbour, inviting someone to church or home to a meal - it can be doing something that we have never done before.

If we dare to take a risk we are flexing the muscle of courage. By so doing, we grow as a Believer and as a person. If our courage muscle is not stretched we remain weeping violets. Should we continue to be afraid to say boo to a goose, fear will hold us back. Without courage we are not living.

So take one step at a time and flex your muscle of courage, move forward as mature people, people who have overcome their great fears.

Through the Biblical writings of Joshua, God urges us to, 'Be strong! Be courageous! Do not be afraid ... For the Lord your God will be with you. He will neither fail you nor forsake you.' (LB)

Gwen Leane, Port Augusta