

Seeking God's Plan When the Plan is Missed The Denials of Peter – When the Plan is Missed because of Cowardice

Introduction

1. True/False – One of the essential characteristics of the Christian Life is courage.

Joshua - Joshua 1:7 - *Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go.*

Joab - 2 Samuel 10:12 - *Be strong, and let us show ourselves courageous for the sake of our people and for the cities of our God; and may the Lord do what is good in His sight.*

David - 1 Chronicles 28:20 - *Then David said to his son Solomon, "Be strong and courageous, and act; do not fear nor be dismayed, for the Lord God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you nor forsake you until all the work for the service of the house of the Lord is finished.*

Azariah - 2 Chronicles 15:7 - *But you, be strong and do not lose courage, for there is reward for your work.*

Psalmist - Psalm 27:14 - *Wait for the Lord; be strong and let your heart take courage; yes, wait for the Lord.*

Isaiah - Isaiah 35:4 - *Say to those with anxious heart, "Take courage, fear not. Behold, your God will come with vengeance; the recompense of God will come, but He will save you."*

Jesus during His earthly ministry - Matthew 9:2 - *And they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic, "Take courage, son; your sins are forgiven."*

Jesus after the resurrection - Acts 23:11 - *But on the night immediately following, the Lord stood at his side and said, "Take courage; for as you have solemnly witnessed to My cause at Jerusalem, so you must witness at Rome also."*

Believers in the church - 2 Corinthians 5:6-8 - *Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord— for we walk by faith, not by sight— we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.*

2. Are you a courageous person? Can you think of specific examples from this past week where you acted courageously? Can you think of specific examples where you could have been courageous but chose not to?
3. If a person is not biblically courageous, what might they be?
- a. Un-biblically fearful
2 Timothy 1:7 - *For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.*
 - b. Un-biblically self-confident
Proverbs 16:18 - *Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.*

3 areas of the Christian Life that Especially Require Courage:

I. It Takes Courage to Accept Confrontation

A. Jesus' first warning in the Upper Room

Luke 22:31-34 - *And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren." But he said to Him, "Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death." Then He said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me."*

John 13:36-38 - *Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, where are You going?" Jesus answered him, "Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward." Peter said to Him, "Lord, why can I not follow You now? I will lay down my life for Your sake." Jesus answered him, "Will you lay down your life for My sake? Most assuredly, I say to you, the rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times."*

B. Jesus' second warning on the way to the Garden of Gethsemane

Matthew 26:31-33 - *Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: 'I will strike the Shepherd, And the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee." Peter answered and said to Him, "Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble."*

Matthew 26:34-35 - *Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." Peter said to Him, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And so said all the disciples.*

C. Don't confuse prideful bravado with biblical courage

D. One of the most challenging aspects of life is to listen to others, accept confrontation, repent and change

Proverbs 12:15 - *The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but he who heeds counsel is wise.*

Proverbs 18:2 - *A fool has no delight in understanding, but in expressing his own heart.*

Proverbs 28:26 - *He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, but whoever walks wisely will be delivered.*

Proverbs 9:9 - *Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.*

II. It Takes Courage to Admit Your Need of Prayer

A. Christ's example of submission to, and dependence on the Father

Matthew 26:36-39 - *Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, "Sit here while I go and pray over there." And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me." He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."*

Matthew 26:42 - *Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done."*

Matthew 26:44 - *So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.*

John 5:30 - *I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.*

B. The disciples' inability to see their greatest need

Matthew 26:40-41 - *Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "What! Could you not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."*

Matthew 26:43 - *And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy.*

Matthew 26:45 - *Then He came to His disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting?..."*

Isaiah 31:1 - *Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help and rely on horses, and trust in chariots because they are many and in horsemen because they are very strong, but they do not look to the Holy One of Israel, nor seek the Lord!*

C. Sometimes the most courageous place a person can be is on his/her knees

1. Because even a small temptation can trip up a person who is unprepared

2. Because often one wrong choice paves the way to another

Matthew 26:70 - *he denied it with an oath.*

Matthew 26:74 - *Then he began to curse and swear, "I do not know the man!"*

Luke 22:61 - *The Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him, "Before a rooster crows today, you will deny Me three times."*

looked - emblepo – a fixed look, almost a stare.

Matthew 26:75 - *And Peter remembered the word which Jesus had said, "Before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.*

III. It Requires Courage to Stand for Christ

Romans 1:16 - *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*

A. You never know when an opportunity will come your way

B. You never know when the next temptation will come your way

C. You never know when the next trial will come your way