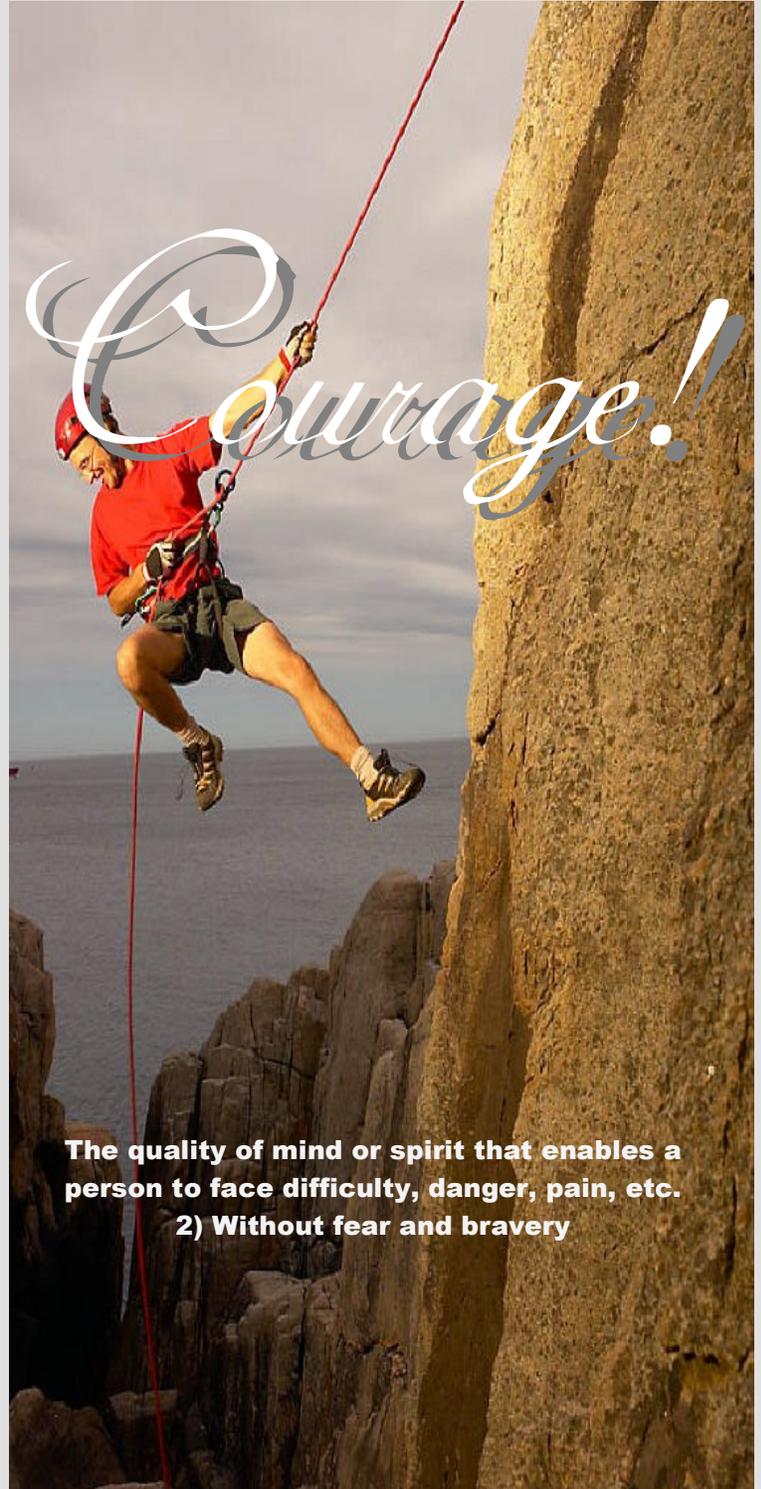


# THE ENCOURAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

I heard the owner of Destiny House Publishing say, and I paraphrase, a writer does not have to go look for a subject; the subject will find them. Since the inception of the Encouragement Newsletter, I have found this statement to be very true and the topic of this newsletter is no different. In April 2014, I kept hearing the word **COURAGE**. It was ringing in my ear so much that I knew it would be the title of a newsletter that I would publish in 2014. I did not realize so much would transpire in my life that would require a level of courage I had never experienced necessary to stay in sync with the plan of God for my life. These life events opened my eyes and I clearly understood that being different, walking the road of the “non-politically” and doing anything outside of the ordinary demands courage.

**COURAGE** is essential for doing the unfathomable, unthinkable and uncommon. It takes courage to step outside of traditions and expectations of people. It takes courage to pursue dreams, goals and obey God’s direction.

Whenever God is going to use someone to do great things (*He defines great. Not an individual or the latest trend*), He always tells them to **be courageous** or **be of good courage**. (*Deuteronomy 31:6–7*) He speaks these words because the path to greatness requires courage to fulfill His assignment. What is Courage? Dictionary.com defines Courage as 1) the quality of mind or spiritual that enables a person to face difficulty, danger, pain, etc. and 2) without fear and bravery. As we move out of the old into the new, there will be a fight against the many antonyms of courage that include words like fainted hearted and cowardice. But, at the top of the list is fear. The **total** opposite of courage. I sincerely believe the main fight we will encounter is against fear. Fears come from within and without. The mental fight against courage is a very big battle because stepping into unknown territory takes one out of comfort zones of the familiar into unfamiliarity and uncharted waters. The mental battle include questions like, “What if this fails?” and “What will others think?” all descend on the mind like a plague. Although there is a strong desire to have friends and family on board to affirm



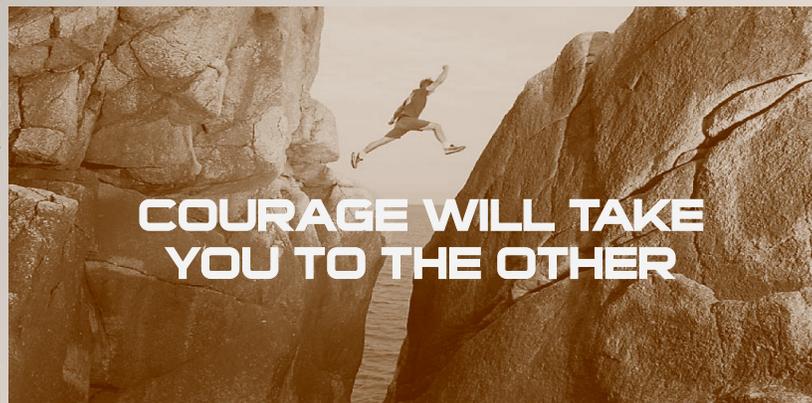
**The quality of mind or spirit that enables a person to face difficulty, danger, pain, etc.**  
**2) Without fear and bravery**

and confirm the new place, that may not happen. Why? Because God is the one calling you and I to a walk of obedience to Him; no matter how it looks to others, God is not looking to win a popularity contest or their approval of the courageous move He has commanded. God has a very interesting way of bringing His chosen people into His plan; however, the choice is ours. We can either be too fearful to make the move and reap the negative consequences. Or, move out in faith to His word and reap all of the benefits. Let me clarify something, so no reader will

not think I am endorsing rebellion. I do not endorse any rebellion; I endorse obedience to God. I believe there is safety in counsel according to Proverbs 12:15; 15:28 ADN 19:20. I also believe that saints should surround themselves with godly men and women who have tried and true experiences making courageous moves and the accompanying wisdom to share how to go down an unbeaten path. Sometimes counsel will say, "Wait until a certain time"; "Count the cost."; "Be sure you have the resources"; "Put things in order to prepare yourself for transition"; and the list goes on. Good counsel will eliminate some rocky roads; however, at the end of the day, you still have to make the move and be courageous in it. Do not let fear stop you. Muster up everything that is in you and OBEY.

**W**hen meditating on a scriptural context for this newsletter, Joshua was the first person that came to my mind. Deuteronomy 34:8 provides insight into what was going on with the children of Israel and its new leader, Joshua. They were in a season of mourning after the death of Moses and transition. Having experienced the death of a spiritual leader I faithfully served for over 20 years, I can imagine the mourning and grief Joshua experienced. I know it took a lot of strength to get himself together to take on the commission after such a great loss.

In Joshua 1:1-2, God seems to have a sense of humor as he states the obvious to Joshua saying, "Moses my servant is dead." In Joshua 1:6-7, we read how God affirmed Joshua, rehearsed the words of Moses, and gave some conditions for success (i.e., meditate on the word) In the text God assured Joshua he would be with Him, said for him to obey and "be courageous" three times. He was emphatic about being courageous. God had to speak words of courage to Joshua because fear was lurking around the corner, God had to give Joshua confidence and put his emotions in check. In essence, God was saying, Moses is no longer here, the baton is in your



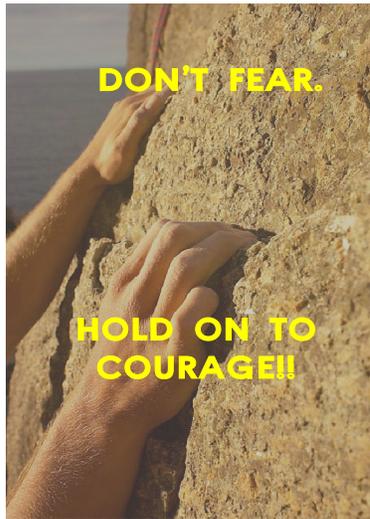
**COURAGE WILL TAKE  
YOU TO THE OTHER**

hand, and it is time to get up and do the work required to conquer the enemy in the promised land— "Do what you have been trained to do". Now I want to zoom in on the last statement because it is major to our ability to have courage. Because Joshua had been trained "to do", it was much easier to draw on the courage necessary to slay the giants that came against his courage.

What did Joshua see Moses do? Joshua had eye witness accounts of Moses' strengths like leading the children of Israel out of Egypt (*Exodus 14:21-22*) and weaknesses like striking the rock (*Numbers 20:6-11*). He was there when Moses encountered God on many occasions (*Exodus 33:11*) and observed "how" Moses led the people of God from Egypt into the wilderness (or desert) to worship (*Exodus 8:1; 9:1 and 13*) In the wilderness, laws were given and a new way of living mapped out for the people of God. In fact, as a side note, the place of worship is where God writes His laws in our heart and show us a new way of living for Him. Watching Moses, his mentor, go through challenges built Joshua's confidence. Joshua was a faithful servant or minister to Moses. (*Exodus 24:13*) He did not run away in the tough times of Moses' leadership and this qualified him to take on the daunting task of taking an entire new generation of people from the wilderness into the promised land. (*Deuteronomy 31:14, 23 & 34:9*) Find a Moses and be a Joshua. Do not despise the days of training, development, and process. This is key to having the courage to stand or take on new tasks.

**J**oshua faced many obstacles as he obeyed the command of God to lead the people into Canaan. The challenges of Joshua are really the same for us today. You and I may not need courage to lead over a million people out of the wilderness into the promised land, but we need courage to obey God at many points of our journey and we need the Lord to say like He said to Joshua "Be of Good Courage. Do not fear". The challenge is the war within the soul. To do or not to do, that is the question. When I speak

of the soul, I am speaking of the emotions and feelings of fear, anxiety, worry, concerns, insecurity, excitement, and apprehensions. If the soul is not handled properly and adequately, we will not be able to move forward. As the challenges to courage come, it is important to understand they are designed to provoke one of two responses –1) Make us run away from destiny or 2) Push us into the greatness of purpose.



you also carried out the plan, then you know what it feels like to step into uncertainty and break away from the norm.

To the onlookers, courage may look strange. In many cases, it may even look and feel strange to the pursuer; but, as the pursuer, you and I must continue and overcome the obstacles that resist the COURAGE to do what we know we must do to fulfill purpose.

**W**ith every step forward you are being prepared to conquer and to take on the challenges that require COURAGE. You too have been prepared more than you may realize. The fear you and I fight to move further into the plan of God is there only to push us toward COURAGE.

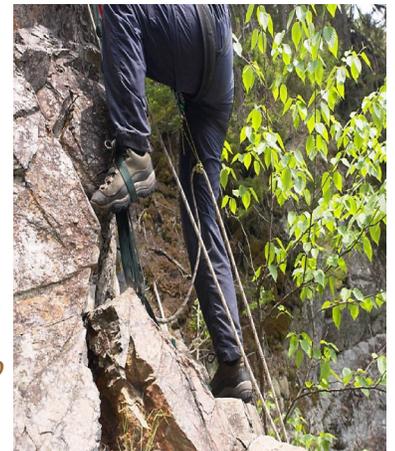
Now the question I have for you is, “What is it that you know you are supposed to do that you have not done because you are missing the courage to step out? Take a moment and write down what you know the Lord has told you to do. Because you know you have not obeyed, you must first repent. Then ask God for the courage, wisdom, understanding and knowledge to do what He has spoken. You will experience some emotional upheaval and voices of doubt as you step out.

**DO NOT FEAR. BE STRONG AND OF GOOD COURAGE!**

**E**ven as believers there are times we are tossed to and fro with many issues of life. It can be difficult to clearly see what to do and what not to do because of voices. I have discovered that when it comes to obedience to God vs. what others think, you really need COURAGE. I have discovered that God has an agenda and so does the enemy along with other people. For years I have heard many sermons “Obey God! Say Yes!!”, songs about “obeying God”, exhortations to “Obey God”. I have even been the one doing the singing and exhorting. However, recently I quickly discovered that singing and speaking “Obey God!” are very easy to do. Putting one foot in front of the other and walking it out is another issue altogether. When we have to walk these words out, we are faced with “doing” the word and not just “hearing” as we see in James 1:22. I learned that it truly takes COURAGE “to do” the word, obey God and walk through rejection from those you least expect. The necessity and taking hold of courage was no longer what I read in the Bible, a book, an article or a blog. Nor was it someone's testimony I had heard. It was a reality I had to live and I am still living. Over the last few months, I learned first hand that you will be shunned, scorned, misunderstood, and talked about when stepping out into the plan of God. But, COURAGE is the sustainer. “What have you ever accomplished that needed COURAGE to complete?”. Name the task, project, goal, pursuit or command of God to “GO!”. If you can not only name it, but

## Climb Higher

*The church of the Lord Jesus Christ is in a time of quick transformation and call to maturity. We serve a great God that deserves our best. He is challenging us to climb higher and loose ourselves from the mundane, status quo and same old cycles of life as we have known or seen. It is a time that requires COUR-*



*AGE. For the church, it will mean a total shift from what you have been used to. The Sunday morning rituals must change to save a generation of people young and old running too and fro starving for the realness of God. People truly have a strong desire to know God more and traditions, showmanship and celebrity status less Yes it takes Courage to be real, but a great God creates Courageously great people to do great things for Him. We all have been born into the Kingdom of God to make a difference in this world and that difference means fulfilling His purpose. Not our own. Be Courageous and Climb Higher!*