

When Men Take Courage

Written by Tim Watts

Courage is defined as having the ability to conquer fear or despair. It speaks of bravery and valor. In 2 Chronicles 15 we observe what aided King Asa to take courage in the reformation of Judah. We further learn the mind-set that is associated with men who determine to stand for what is right. Verse 8 of 2 Chronicles 15 conveys that Asa "heard these words and the prophecy of Obed the prophet." Notice he listened to sound counsel. When men take courage they surround themselves with those who they know will be honest and forthright. He was encouraged to "be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak; for your work shall be rewarded." It is much easier to follow the path of least resistance but Asa was interested in reformation. When men take courage they have the ability to honestly observe the state of affairs. Wise counsel had helped to embolden this king to do what needed to be done. Further departure from the true God was not an option. So with wise counsel before him the Bible says "he took courage." He was emboldened to "have some backbone." What then was his first priority? He "put away the abominable idols out of all the land of Judah and Benjamin" (2 Chron. 15:8). Evil was no longer welcome. When men take courage they use the "sword of the spirit, which is the word of God" to cut away sin's grip upon the hearts of men. Spiritual weakness gives sin a forum and downplays the adverse influence of error. Spiritual courage, on the other hand, (driven by a genuine love for men's souls), proceeds to eliminate that which places men in opposition to God. Thus, Asa set about to put away the evil. We are not led to believe there was a "honeymoon" of sorts to see if the idols could stay and every-one just work together.

Once the "abominable idols" were put away, we find this brave king "renewed (rebuilt) the altar of the Lord" (2 Chron. 15:8). When men take courage, they will see a need to establish a place of worship. It will be regarded as a common gathering place where believers come together to send heavenward a spiritual sacrifice. The church suffers when Christian men and women have little or no respect for the local congregation. Every member has a part to play and each one should be willing to give of themselves (1 Cor. 12:25). Faithful congregations will continue to exist when men take courage and have a genuine interest in the local church.

With the evil idols put away and the altar of the Lord rebuilt, Asa set about next to gather all Judah and Benjamin together to offer unto the Lord. When men take courage, worship becomes a priority in their lives. It was quite an exhibition on this occasion as 700 oxen and 7000 sheep were offered in sacrifice to God. Today, even if we attend a congregation which has three services a week, we may be assembled for worship a maximum of 4 or 5 hours total for the week. We should not only bring ourselves to the worship services, we should bring a heart that mirrors that of these worshippers of 2 Chronicles 15. They sought the Lord "with their whole desire." What was the result you may ask: "he was found of them: and the Lord gave them rest round about" (2 Chron. 15:15). That "rest" equaled a "settling down" -Ah! Stability in an unstable world!

What a blessing can be enjoyed "when men take courage." Congregations who are led by men who have courage cannot only survive, but thrive. In homes where parents possess this character trait, children will be more likely to grow up and be "conquerors" for Jesus Christ. The example of this king of long ago speaks to us all -take courage friend!

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