

COURAGE FOR TODAY



365 Daily Devotions for Women

Ann White

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THE COURAGE TO Acknowledge God

*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters.
And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.*

GENESIS 1:1–2

Father, I am surrounded by the evidence of your power, creativity, and intentionality. Remind me to stop and take notice of your creation and help me to honor you by sharing your greatness with others.

Are you in awe of God's greatness? Do his magnificent works inspire you to be courageous? In Genesis chapter 1, we read the account of God's creation. Each verse is detailed, specific, and validated by modern science. This chapter establishes God's sovereignty and reveals his power and creativity. God's intentionality can be seen throughout the complexity of earth's design. The lights he created and perfectly placed permit life on earth to exist. If the sun were farther away, we would freeze; if it were closer, we would burn.

The precise placement, gravitational pull, and orbit of the moon are accredited with primary control over our oceans' tides, which, in turn, significantly impact our weather. The sun, moon, and stars also identify our seasons—exactly as God's Word proclaims!

COURAGE FOR TODAY

Consider the verse below and describe how your surroundings reveal God's power, creativity, and intentionality. Then explain how God's greatness inspires you to courageously honor him today.

They know the truth about God because he has made it obvious to them. For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.

ROMANS 1:19–20

THE COURAGE TO Be God's Witness

God sent a man, John the Baptist, to tell about the light so that everyone might believe because of his testimony.

JOHN 1:6-7

Father, because I am a believer in Jesus Christ, your light resides within me. Give me the desire and the courage to be a faithful witness as I share your light and love with others.

Are you negatively influenced by the news and information you see daily? We live in a world that often deems opinions to be fact and regularly considers fact to be subjective. Reflect on John chapter 1, where God beautifully identifies and describes Jesus, his beloved Son and the Savior of the world. God had been silent for four hundred years when he sent Jesus to earth. Some believed Jesus was the Messiah, but others did not.

In John chapter 1 we learn that God sent John the Baptist to give witness to Jesus and to reveal his divine power and glory. When the priests and temple assistants asked John about his own identity, he humbled himself and stated that he was not the Messiah. "I am a voice shouting in the wilderness...not even worthy to be his slave and untie the straps of his sandal" (vv. 23-27). John sought no glory for himself. Instead, as God's witness, he stated all he observed and faithfully testified of the "Chosen One of God" (v. 34).

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Like John the Baptist, how often do you share God's good news with others? Meditate on the verse below and list at least two ways you will courageously share Christ with others today.

I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes—the Jew first and also the Gentile.

ROMANS 1:16

THE COURAGE TO Pray Faithfully

Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in front of the entire community of Israel. He lifted his hands toward heaven, and he prayed "O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you in all of heaven above or on the earth below. You keep your covenant and show unfailing love to all who walk before you in wholehearted devotion."

1 KINGS 8:22–23

Father, thank you for allowing me to have a personal relationship with you. As I come before you in prayer, help me remember to lift up the many needs of others too.

How often do you pray? Communication with God is like talking to a loved one, a confidant, a provider, and a protector—all in one. Consider King Solomon's prayer in 1 Kings chapter 8. When the people of Israel had completed God's temple, King Solomon assembled the leaders to celebrate and dedicate their house of worship to almighty God.

We read in these verses about how the leaders of Israel brought the ark of the covenant into the temple. When they had placed it in the inner sanctuary, God's glory filled the temple. Then Solomon offered a prayer of praise and dedication. Notice how he honored God and made specific requests for God to hear the people's prayers, including those of foreigners.

COURAGE FOR TODAY

How much time do you spend in prayer? Read the passage below and write a courageous prayer that honors God, confesses your needs, and lifts up the needs of others.

Are any of you suffering hardships? You should pray. Are any of you happy? You should sing praises. Are any of you sick? You should call for the elders of the church to come and pray over you, anointing you with oil in the name of the Lord.

JAMES 5:13–14

THE COURAGE TO Take Courage

Jesus spoke to them at once. "

Don't be afraid," he said.

"Take courage. I am here!"

MATTHEW 14:27

Father, at times, I courageously step out in faith only to fall prey to my own negativity and doubt. Remind me that, with you, I can accomplish anything you call me to do.

Are you able to keep your eyes on Jesus when discouragement and fear arise? Let the story of Peter's encounter with Jesus in Matthew chapter 14 encourage you to let God's power and presence see you through. After feeding five thousand followers, Jesus sent his disciples ahead in a boat to the opposite side of the Sea of Galilee. In the middle of the night, while crossing the sea, a strong wind arose and threatened to sink their boat. So Jesus walked across the water to encourage his friends, yet seeing him frightened them even more.

In response, Jesus urged them to "take courage," for he was with them. But Peter wanted proof. So he asked his Savior to call him to walk on water, too, and Jesus did. When Peter first stepped out of the boat, he walked in great faith, but when he gave in to doubt and negativity, he immediately began to sink.

COURAGE FOR TODAY

Like Peter, do you sometimes struggle with doubt and discouragement? Let King David's encouraging words below inspire you to lean into the Lord today and "take courage," no matter what situation or circumstances you find yourself in.

Wait patiently for the LORD.

Be brave and courageous.

Yes, wait patiently for the LORD.

PSALM 27:14

THE COURAGE TO Embrace Security

Those who live in the shelter of the Most High will find rest in the shadow of the Almighty. This I declare about the LORD: He alone is my refuge, my place of safety; he is my God, and I trust him.

PSALM 91:1–2

Father, you are my place of comfort, care, and refuge. Help me to rely on you daily and find courage in your promise of security.

Do you feel emotionally and physically secure? Our feelings of security directly affect our stress levels, which, in turn, can affect our attitudes, abilities, and peace of mind. Draw encouragement from Psalm 91, one of the most beautiful hymns about security in life. Throughout this prayer, the psalmist vacillates between inviting readers to embrace God's protection and describing the types of protection God provides.

In Psalm 91, verses 1–2 and 9–10, the psalmist invites us to trust in God as a safe place to take refuge. In verses 3–8 and 11–16, he describes the types of security God provides. God can rescue us from attacks by the wicked and threats of deadly diseases. And he places his angels around us to keep us from stumbling or going the wrong way. When we love God and courageously embrace his security, he responds, rescues, satisfies, and saves us.

COURAGE FOR TODAY

Describe areas in your life that tempt you to feel insecure. Then read the following words of wisdom from the book of Job and vow to draw courage today from the hope you find in embracing God's security.

Having hope will give you courage.

You will be protected and will rest in safety.

You will lie down unafraid, and many will look to you for help.

JOB 11:18–19

THE COURAGE TO Seize Opportunities

"I know all the things you do, and I have opened a door for you that no one can close. You have little strength, yet you obeyed my word and did not deny me."

REVELATION 3:8

Father, you provide countless opportunities in life for me to serve you, accomplish your will, care for others, and share my faith. Give me the wisdom to recognize when you've opened or closed certain doors so I can avoid many pitfalls and instead pursue your perfect plans.

Are you truly seizing your God-given opportunities? Let Jesus' message in Revelation chapter 3 inspire you to look for and embrace the assignments God places before you. While he didn't have any constructive criticism for the church of Philadelphia, Jesus took the opportunity to praise the congregation for their obedience and perseverance.

Because the Christians at Philadelphia stood firm in their faith when they were tested, the Lord promised he would protect them from the greater oppression that was to come. Jesus explained that the doors he opens can never be shut, and the ones he closes can never be opened. If believers hold on to their commitment and faithfulness to the Lord, they will be victorious, and no one will ever take away their heavenly crown.

COURAGE FOR TODAY

How courageous are you when it comes to walking through doors of opportunity that the Lord has opened? Meditate on the inspiring verse below and describe the steps you will take today to courageously seize your God-given opportunities.

*"I am about to do something new. See, I have already begun!
Do you not see it? I will make a pathway through the wilderness.
I will create rivers in the dry wasteland."*

ISAIAH 43:19

THE COURAGE TO Recognize God's Voice

He said to Samuel, "Go and lie down again, and if someone calls again, say, 'Speak, LORD, your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went back to bed. And the LORD came and called as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel replied, "Speak, your servant is listening."

1 SAMUEL 3:9-10

Father, I am grateful for your presence in my life. Give me wisdom to recognize your voice and courage to obey your calling.

How often do you sit quietly and listen for God's voice? Consider the young prophet's encounter with God in 1 Samuel chapter 3. For years, Hannah longed for a child, and in time, God answered her prayers. Because God gave her a son, Hannah vowed to give the child back to the Lord. Once Samuel was weaned, his mother gave him to Eli, the priest.

Samuel grew in God's favor and served the Lord faithfully. One night, when Samuel was sleeping, God called to him three times, but Samuel did not recognize God's voice. Then Eli realized it was the Lord calling Samuel, and he instructed Samuel to listen carefully, recognize God's voice, and answer him appropriately.

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Do you recognize God speaking to you through his Word and his Spirit? Let Samuel's experience and the encouraging verse below motivate you to listen carefully to God's calling and courageously take action today.

"Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends."

REVELATION 3:20