

Spiritual Practices for Thriving Life

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Inspire Boldy

Are there inspiring, *bold* examples of Jesus's power in your own life? Describe one.

How would you give a *bold testimony* of Jesus's power to someone in your community who does not believe Jesus is relevant to their life?

In what circumstances are you ready to *boldly* share your *testimony* with others? How might you prepare for one more?

1 Samuel 17:32-37 – ³²David said to Saul, “Let no one’s heart fail because of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine...³⁴Your servant used to keep sheep for his father; and whenever a lion or a bear came, and took a lamb from the flock, ³⁵I went after it and struck it down, rescuing the lamb from its mouth; and if it turned against me, I would catch it by the jaw, strike it down, and kill it. ³⁶Your servant has killed both lions and bears; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, since he has defied the armies of the living God...³⁷The Lord, who saved me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, will save me from the hand of this Philistine.”

1) Bold Life...

Life is intimidating, disorienting, and isolating. For many, everything we say and do is made to feel crucial while at the same time there are no absolutes. As a result, many fear acting unless going with the crowd. We can trace many societal dysfunctions to this. The Bible shows how the life of Truth offers a different, healthy path. One that infuses Christians with *boldness*.

◆ **Jump:** Each of us face seemingly insurmountable challenges in life. Many of these can be delayed or avoided. We might think, *if I ignore this, it will just go away*. Unfortunately, most do not. We are stuck on our life’s journey, waiting for...something. Saul’s army was stuck this way for forty days as the Philistine champion taunted them (1 Sam 17:16). David, “a man after [God’s] own heart (13:14),” sees the path through this stalled situation. He *boldly* says to his king, “Let no one’s

heart fail because of him; your servant will go down and fight with this Philistine (17:32).” Abundant life requires *boldness*. In a world in which this quality is scarce, how do we obtain it?

♦ **Been there, done that:** Much *boldness* comes from experience. Those who have conquered a challenge before have confidence knowing what it takes and how it can go. Often, our wild fears are grounded as we discover the real difficulty, real consequences, our own True abilities. This is the case for David, who tells of his experience protecting sheep: “whenever a lion or a bear came, and took a lamb from the flock, I went after it and struck it down (v34-35).” He knew it did not always go as planned, reporting “if it turned against me, I would catch it by the jaw, strike it down, and kill it (v35).” He obtained his *boldness* through small victories along the way. Does this suggest all *boldness* is confidence from experience?

II) Humble Heart...

Two problems emerge from the idea that *boldness* comes by experience. Before the first experience, one has no *boldness*. Once one is *bold* from experience, it is easy to think that applies to greater degrees of difficulty, more talented opponents, or chance events gone wrong. In other words, *boldness* becomes *arrogance*, and *arrogance* “will bring humiliation (Proverbs 29:23).” Today’s text reveals how we avoid these problems, and the True source of *boldness*.

♦ **Steppingstones:** Often, one experience is translatable to another. Challenges within a single domain – mechanics, science, art, athletics – offer enough insights into what something else in the same domain might require. *I have rebuilt a motorcycle engine, I think I could tackle a pickup truck’s.* We gain confidence with a general skillset that can be broadly applied. David takes this approach, telling Saul “Your servant has killed both lions and bears; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them (1 Sam 17:36).” This leads us to the second problem of experiential *boldness*: This Philistine is said to be nearly ten feet tall, wearing armor weighing 150 pounds. Is David *arrogant* to compare him to a mountain lion?

♦ **Life lessons:** Perhaps there is a clear and obvious reason former experience translates to something seemingly more daunting. *Not only have I rebuilt a motorcycle engine, I have the specifications documents for this particular truck engine and a friend who has done it before to help me.* In the massive challenges of life, even those sorts of resources are not a reliable source of *boldness*. David relies on two related sources for his *boldness*. First, he knows victory is God’s will

because “this uncircumcised Philistine...has defied the armies of the living God (v36).” Second, David has been seeing the world through the perspective of one expecting the presence of God. He does not take credit for defeating the lion and bear. Rather, he says, “The Lord, who saved me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, will save me from the hand of this Philistine (v37).” David is *bold* because his experience is not so much of a given challenge, it is of God’s might pervading his life. David is *bold* in *testimony* of God’s faithfulness. This is the healthy, *bold* path of Christian Truth.

III) Inspiring Testimony...

The results of David’s *boldness* are famous. The king let him battle on behalf of Israel. David was victorious. All Israel celebrated and honored David, gaining their own sense of *boldness* through seeing God’s might in him. His *bold testimony* inspired others to seek God with great expectations. This is the first method we will use in creating the inspiring atmosphere to draw others to Jesus.

♦ **Live boldly:** Many are frustrated, angry, imprisoned by their timidity and fear. They know there is more to life. They pervert the emotional response to fearful paralysis. Our *bold testimony* is an inspiration to these who are desperate to find the power they know to be True. We do not know who will respond favorably, so we might fear the consequences of such *boldness*. David might have wondered if the king would reject, even punish him. But we are instructed “God did not give us a spirit of cowardice...Do not be ashamed, then, of the testimony about our Lord...but join with me in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God (2 Tim 1:7-8).” Those who will be inspired need this message, and we should be proud of the evidence of Jesus’s power in our lives.

♦ **Edit boldly:** Others might be tempted to think such power is not available to them. Our *bold testimony* ought to clearly reveal the source of *boldness*. “And this is the *boldness* we have in him, that if we ask anything **according to his will**, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have obtained the requests made of him (1 John 5:14-15).” Our *bold testimony* should be relatable. We should also help others review their lives to see the evidence of God in their lives. The result will be that “most of the brothers and sisters, having been made confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, dare to speak the word with greater *boldness* and without fear (Phil 1:14).” *Boldness* is contagious!