

LIVING A LIFE THAT MATTERS WITH COURAGE

(Living a life that matters does indeed take courage)

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I. THE DEFINITION

To begin the study of courage I started with a definition from Websters Dictionary. It said "to be bold, brave, heroic, fearless." Then I went to Strongs to go back to the root word in the Hebrew. There I found "withstand, be constant, wax strong, fortify, make hard, become mighty, prevail, be alert, steadfastly minded, quick understanding, spiritual, breath." In the Greek root word I found "bold, boldness, be of good cheer, comfort, heart the center of feelings and intellect."

See handout on courage & sub heading of "Root Words of Courage from Strongs."

I went to the scriptures and found that, in the scriptures, courage was most often used in a time of war, or in connection with some kind of warfare. I prepared for this class before Sept.11 and had no way to know what a fitting topic this would be, but of course the Lord did. He certainly had a hand in the choosing of this topic. War time is a time for courage, individually and as a nation, but the truth is that we are always at war. The physical war with the terrorists may have started with the terrible attack on Sept. 11, but the spiritual war that we are all involved in, as followers of Christ, started long ago. It had its beginnings in heaven and continues upon the earth unto this day. There is no greater terrorist than Satan.

II. THE WAR

We find the record of this warfare recorded in Revelations the 12th chapter.

Rev.12:17 "Therefore, the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

This is a declaration of war upon all those who follow Christ. As followers of Christ we are all soldiers in the army of God and enemies of Satan. When I was a youth in church, we had a good sister who led the singing for Junior Church. Every Sunday she had us singing "Onward Christian Soldiers." What a wonderful song this is, for it truly expresses the very cause of Jesus and the spiritual war that all of us face as His followers. I liked the song, as a child, but did not appreciate its true meaning until many years later.

The scriptures warn us of this warfare that we are engaged in, as followers of Jesus Christ. In Eph.6:12 "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

II Cor. 10:3-4 “. . . though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh; (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;)"

In my 20's I found out the truth of this spiritual warfare. Satan is very intelligent, and he knows how to take advantage of our weaknesses, and trials. In a time of trouble he moves right in and tries to use it to his advantage.

III. TESTIMONY ON SPIRITUAL WARFARE

I want to share a testimony here that might help you understand more clearly what I am talking about. It was a time of trouble. We were married only 7 years, and had 3 small children when Hal's father was diagnosed with a terminal degenerative brain disease; and his mother, who was overcome by the news, spiraled into a nervous break down. We found ourselves, at the age of 27, taking care of our parents. Our marriage already had problems and this new trial put us over the edge. It brought total destruction to an already weak marriage. We had terrible fights and said horrible things to each other. By the time we went to marriage counseling it seemed hopeless. Years later our marriage counselor told us that when we first came to him, he did not think our marriage could be saved. I testify to you that it was only by the grace of God, that it was saved. That is a whole story in itself and can be found in my book *Miracle of the Tulips* by my pen name Ruth Ann. Although it is out of print at this time, there is a copy in the Independence Public Library.

What I am leading into is an experience we had while putting our marriage back together. We were working very hard on our marriage. Things were going better and the horrible fighting and bitter words had ceased. I was very encouraged and so was Hal. It looked like we might actually make the marriage work. We had been on a witnessing weekend with our church congregation and had an extremely good experience. The following week all the girls were sick with colds and ear infections. This is often how Satan works. If you have a experience that brings you closer to Christ, he moves in quickly to discourage you with the trials of life. It was a little discouraging to have all the children ill, but we had been through so much, that this seemed rather minor to us. We were just happy that our marriage was improving.

One Wednesday evening, after supper, Hal suggested, "Why don't you go to prayer meeting; after all you have been home with sick kids, and it will do you good to get out." I quickly agreed, and off to prayer meeting I went. It was a good service and a sweet spirit was present. Upon my return home I had just entered the house when Hal made some hateful remarks and I immediately thought of some equally hateful things to say in return. I was instantly full of anger, hate, and bitterness. It was such a strong feeling, coming upon me so quickly, that it shocked me. I did not say the hateful things that came to my mind. Instead I wondered why we had regressed into this horrible state. What had happened to make us this way? We had been getting along so good. I certainly did not want us to go back to the way we had been before. I ignored Hal's remarks and quietly went into the kitchen to do the supper dishes I'd left in the sink when I had rushed off to prayer meeting.

While I was doing the dishes, Hal came into the kitchen to get a snack of cookies and milk before going off to work. He worked nights at this time. There was a spirit of contention and anger surrounding us. You could just feel it all around us in the kitchen.

It upset me, so I started to sing a hymn from a song sheet I'd hung in the kitchen, over my sink. I was still battling with some discouragement and I had discovered that singing hymns always made me feel better. This night I chose "How Great Thou Art" from the song sheet. As I sang, a sweet spirit came into the kitchen, and I was moved to tears by its very sweetness. I turned to look at my husband and he was also in tears. I said "do you feel it too?" and he said "yes, let's pray together," and we knelt and prayed.

While we were praying, it was given to both of us to know that the spirit I had felt when I walked in the door that night was Satan. He had sought to destroy our home, and the fights, anger, hate, selfishness, and bitterness that had almost destroyed our marriage, were from him. He was back trying to create that type of atmosphere once again. Indeed, Satan was enraged by our good progress. He thought he had destroyed our marriage and here we were putting it back together. He had come that night to try to unravel what God had done for us. What a revelation that was to us, it caused us to recognize Satan's power and the way he had been making war against us. You see, we had been in spiritual warfare, and did not even know it. Now we recognized it for what it was and we could fight against it. The very hymn I sang that night was warfare, for Satan could not stand to stay in our home when a hymn of praise was sung. Nor could he tarry there when we were on our knees praying together. This experience has stood us in good stead through the years. We have been married now for 37 happy years. Yes we have had our share of heated discussions, but because of the experience we had that night; we learned to recognize when the evil spirit enters in and seeks to take advantage. We both know when that happens, it is time to pray.

IV. SPIRITUAL WARFARE

It has not always been easy to pray in the midst of anger. Indeed it takes a certain steadfastness of mind to set that anger aside and get down on your knees together and pray. Yes, it takes boldness to even suggest such action to your also angry mate. Let me assure you that praying when you are angry is spiritual warfare. I have to admit that more often than not it has been my husband who would say, "let's stop this and pray." Boy, there have been times I wanted to say, "no, you just want me to pray so I won't be angry at you." It's true that we have never been able to stay truly angry with each other after praying together. We may still disagree, but the anger seems to leave, and then we are always more able to work things out. There is a scripture in Psalms 51:10 that says ". . . renew a right spirit within me." I learned to pray this short prayer in times of frustration, disappointment, or contention etc. It has never failed me. Every time I have stopped and prayed this short prayer, my outlook has improved. The frustration eases, in the place of disappointment or discouragement, I find hope, and anger seems to dissipate. It is Spiritual warfare to pray, and to pray when you least feel like it, takes great courage.

Half of the battle is already won if you learn to recognize Satan and his warfare. The experience we had so long ago, there in the kitchen, has been of great value to my husband and me. It showed us that we were in war, and we needed to learn to fight with spiritual weapons of prayer, hymns, fasting, study of God's words etc. etc. We learned that if you don't know there is a war, you are already losing the battle. Never forget my dear sisters that you are in war and a soldier of the cross. One of our main weapons of

warfare is prayer. In Eph. 6:10-18 we are told to put on all the armor of God. Then in verse 18 after all the armor is on, it tells us that we can then go forth to battle by "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." In other words, we battle with prayer. How is your daily battle going? How is your prayer life? If you are losing battles, you need to increase the amount of time you spend in prayer.

III Nephi 8:47-53 "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye must watch and pray always, lest ye be tempted by the devil, and ye are led away captive by him . . . Behold, verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye must watch and pray always, lest ye enter into temptation; For Satan desireth to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; therefore ye must always pray unto the Father in my name. . ."

I Peter 5:8 "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour"

Luke 22:31 ". . .Simon. . .Satan hath desired you that he may sift the children of the kingdom as wheat."

Yes, Satan does desire to sift us, and devour us. We must be constantly alert and on guard against him. The word courage goes back to the root word "to be alert." It also goes back to "be strong and of good courage." To be strong and of good courage one must stay alert. See handout "Scriptures for Courage." In Deut. 31 we see Moses sending Joshua off to conquer the promised land with the admonition to be strong and of good courage. See hand out on courage and sub heading "Courage in Times of War or Difficulty."

V. BE ALERT, OBEDIENT, AND DETERMINED

In the 24th and 26th chapters of Alma we find the story of the "Sons of Mosiah"—they were certainly of good courage as they went forth into battle. It tells us in Alma 26:31 that they were fixed with a determination to conquer the enemy. Determination is a part of courage. The root word says to be steadfastly minded. I remember when Hal and I were in our time of trouble, with so many marital problems, once I became aware that it was a spiritual battle, I decided I would not let Satan win. I was determined to win the war. Like the "Son's of Mosiah" there was a determination to conquer the enemy. We need this kind of determination in our every day life. We need to become determined that we will win the war, and nothing will come between us and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and his great cause.

In Alma 24:76-77 "And they were all young men, and they were exceeding valiant for courage. . . Yea they were men of truth and soberness, for they had been taught to keep the commandments of God, and to walk uprightly before him." This word soberness goes back to being alert. These young men were well studied and they were aware of the commandments of God and obeyed them. They were spiritually alert. Satan could not deceive them because they knew their scriptures.

We are called to be alert in this our day and time. I Thess. 5:1-8 "But of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in the darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all children of the light, and the children of the day, we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night, and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation."

See handout on Courage look for sub heading " Courage to be Obedient"

VI. WOMEN OF COURAGE

Let us now examine some women in the scriptures who had courage. Ruth was a woman of courage. She faced a desperate situation. Her husband and all the men in his family died. Ruth, her sister-in-law and her mother-in-law, Naomi, were left without means of support. The sister-in-law returned to her own people, but Ruth stayed with Naomi. This decision was more than just a decision to stay with Naomi, but also a decision to follow Naomi's God. The God of Abraham and Issac and Jacob, the one and only True God, would be her God also. It took courage to choose this pathway in the midst of such a calamity. It would have been easier to return to her own mother and father and their pagan gods, but Ruth was of a steadfast mind, she had courage. Ruth 1:15-18 "And she [Naomi] said, Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods; return thou after thy sister-in-law. And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God;. . . When she [Naomi] saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her." Yes, Ruth was a woman of great courage. She chose the Lord God of Israel over the pagan gods of her homeland and family. She set out into a new land with no assurance that she would have the substance necessary to even sustain life. Yet she was steadfastly minded, she had courage.

Where did such courage come from? We find a clue in Ruth 2:12. Boaz speaking says, "The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust." Her courage sprang out of her faith in the Lord God of Israel. Ruth knew that she could trust in the God of Israel and that she would dwell safely under His almighty wing. Ruth was the Great Grandmother of David. I believe we see her faith reflected in the Psalms that David wrote. Surely he was thinking of Great Grandma Ruth and her story of courage born out of faith when he wrote the words in Psalms 57:1 "Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me, for my soul trusteth in thee; yes, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast." Like Ruth we need to stay steadfast in our decision to follow Christ, and no matter what calamities overcome us, we will continue forward knowing that we will find protection under the shelter of God's wing.

Like Ruth, we need to be such women of faith, that all the attributes encompassed in the word "courage" will flow from us. Let's look again at the root words for courage. Do you have these attributes? Are you steadfast, alert, strong, constant, bold, do you have a quick understanding of spiritual matters, are you of good cheer even in difficult times? Yes, we need to build up our Faith in Christ because courage and the attributes of courage flow out of faith. Col.1:10-11,23 "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God [which means our Faith increases]; Strengthened with all might [which means we have great courage], according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness.....continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel. . ."

Mary, the mother of Jesus, was another woman of great courage. When the angel came to her and declared God's plan, Mary answered with a yes. This yes placed her in a very dangerous position. She could have been stoned to death, if Joseph had accused her publicly of committing adultery. Even with Joseph's support she was most likely talked about in the small town of Nazereth. People would have assumed that she was with child before she and Joseph were married. Mary said yes to the plan and work of the Lord, at great personal sacrifice. It took courage for Mary to say Luke 1:38 ". . .Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. . ."

VII. COURAGE TO DO THE WORK OF THE LORD

We need to realize that Satan does not want us to be like Joshua, or the Sons of Mosiah, or Ruth, or Mary. He does not want us to be steadfastly minded, especially in a time of trouble. He does not want us to be sober, vigilant and alert. He does not want us to have courage in any form. He wants us to be distracted. He wants us to focus on anything but God, and God's wonderful plan and purpose. He does not want us to pray or to read the word of God.

It is easy to be deceived when you are not in the word of God. Alma 17:76-84 tells us that the word of God is our Liahona, our light, that which guides and directs our pathway. Go read Alma and you will see how important it is to be reading the words of our God. It is important that we make time in our daily lives to study the words of our God. Eph. 5:15-16 "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil." My sisters, are we redeeming our time properly? They say the average person watches 3 hours of T.V. every day. How much time do we spend in scripture study? You see if Satan can keep us distracted and deceived, then when trials come upon us we are easily disappointed; thus we can go into a downward spiral of discouragement, depression, and despair.

In that state we can lose the desire to function properly, and can find it hard to move forward in our duty to our family and our God.

Satan uses discouragement as a tool against us. It is probably one of his best used tools. Discouragement makes us want to just give up and quit. It can make us inactive and unable to function. If allowed to go its course, it can take us into depression and despair. The last 4 years have been very difficult years for my family. We have been assaulted on

every side. Trial after trial has come upon us. Some of the trials have broken our hearts, and grieved our very souls. There came a point, in the midst of these trials, when I thought, "I can't continue to teach classes." How can I tell others of God's goodness when I am so discouraged myself?" I was scheduled to go teach at a youth camp, and there were women's retreats and other appointments on my calendar. The thought came to me that I should just call all these people, and tell them I could not come and teach. It was at this point that I realized that I was in spiritual warfare. Satan did not want me to teach classes. I became determined to not let Satan win. I turned to God in prayer and asked him to strengthen me and give me courage. I went to His words and read uplifting scriptures of hope and encouragement. I sang hymns in the night, when I could not sleep. Also during the day when I started to feel downcast, I would sing hymns. I came across a book that helped me a great deal. It is called *Streams In The Desert*—an updated edition in today's language, by L. B. Cowman. It has wonderful courage building devotionals in it. A friend gave me a book called *Eliza*" by Chuck Swindoll, I also found this book to be helpful.

Even though I still struggled with discouragement, I continued to go forth to teach classes, and to serve the Lord. In every instance, the minute I stood to teach, the Spirit of the Lord would be with me. I truly felt that I dwelt under the shadow of His wing while I was ministering for Him. Of course, I was under His wing all of the time, but I felt it strongly when I was giving ministry for Him.

The Lord has blessed our family so much. In every trial I can testify that we have been blessed abundantly. I can say, it has not been easy, but through the trials God has walked with us, and upheld us, and yes, at times he has even carried us. Last spring I was spoken to in a prayer service and told that "the Lord was pleased because I had the courage to continue in the work of His Kingdom, even when my heart was breaking and I did not feel like I could continue." My sisters, the trials of life do get heavy sometimes, but like Ruth we must remember under whose wing we dwell. We must not give up. We must remain active in the work of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

God will always bless you when you move out to serve him. Every difficult task that comes across your path, and takes the most effort, and creates a great struggle within you, brings a blessing. To give up and not do it, means you will miss out on the blessing. Deut. 1:36 ". . . and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon. . . because he hath wholly followed the Lord." Let us be of steadfast mind in our service to our God, and not let the trials of this life discourage us, and cause us to become inactive in his great work. Heb. 12:1,2,12-13 "Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross. . . Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet. . ."

I might add here that if you are experiencing severe depression, go talk to your doctor. There are chemical and hormonal imbalances that sometimes occur in our bodies and

cause depression. We need to check out these things during times of depression. It is not always just a spiritual battle, although Satan does take advantage of these things when they occur. It does not mean we are weak when we need to take medicine to make right the natural balance in our bodies. Indeed God has provided much of the medical knowledge and medicines that are available to us today. We have it so much better than our mothers and grandmothers. They did not have access to the hormones and other drugs that can help keep our bodies and systems in balance. It is important in times of great stress, discouragement and depression to do all we can both medically, and spiritually. The two can work hand in hand to bring about a full recovery and allow us to go forth and serve the Lord with full energy of mind and body.

One other thought in this area service. It is important to take good care of yourself, physically, emotionally and spiritually. Take a little time for yourself—time to rest for a moment, read a book, take a bubble bath, or whatever it is you enjoy doing. To serve God and others does not mean that we work ourselves into a state of total exhaustion. God expects us to have balanced lives. We do need times of rest and relaxation. Even the Christ drew apart from the busy crowds and rested.

You do not have to say yes to every thing you are asked to do. There are times it is wise to say no. The key is to pray about the opportunities for service that come to you. When Linda Wilson called and asked me to serve on the women's council, I told her no. She asked me to pray about it. I really did not want to serve on the council, but when she asked me to pray, I knew that I needed to do that. Shame on me, for I should have prayed, before I told her no. Anyway, I did make it a matter of prayer, for several weeks, and during that time the knowledge grew within me that I should say yes. We should always pray about opportunities for service. We need to remember that God often gives us tasks that require us to go beyond our comfort zones. If we are led to accept them, we can move out in faith, with the assurance that God will give us what we need to carry them out. Be courageous, do not be afraid to move beyond your comfort zone in service to God.

See Handout on courage then under sub heading of "Courage to do the work of the Lord."

VIII. COURAGE TO BE CHEERFUL IN TIMES OF ADVERSITY

My sisters we must not let depression or despair over come us in times of trial. We must follow Ruth's example. If anyone had reason to be in despair it was Ruth, but we do not see any despair in her remarks or her actions. She did not quit but went forth with cheerfulness. In the scriptures we find no record of her complaining or sinking into despair. Naomi on the other hand does complain. In Ruth 1:13 she declares ". . . the hand of the Lord is gone out against me." In her behalf, I must say that Naomi had suffered a terrible calamity. She not only lost her husband but both of her sons. It was a terrible calamity for both Ruth and Naomi, but we hear no complaint from Ruth. David wrote in Psalms 63:7 "Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice." Surely David was recalling here the cheerful courage expressed by his Great Grandmother Ruth, in her time of trial. I know that many times I have been

more like Naomi. There have been times when I thought that surely the hand of the Lord must be against me. I have, at times, complained to my God. God is so good! I must testify that just as God helped Naomi in her time of trial, he has done the same for me. Even in my times of complaining He had blessed me and taken me under His Wing and given me comfort and help. I strive to be more like Ruth, but I tend to be a Naomi.

IX. COURAGE TO BELIEVE ALL THINGS WILL WORK FOR OUR GOOD, AND BE OF GOOD CHEER

In John 16:33 the Savior said ". . .In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have over come the world." That phrase "BE OF GOOD CHEER " goes back to the root word of courage. In times of trials, sorrow, grief, disappointment, discouragement and depression we must remember that God is Sovereign. He knows the beginning from the end. Romans 8:28 "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose." God does not cause difficulties and trials to come into our lives. They come because of the fallen state of man and the fallen state of the world we live in. However, God does allow them, and use them for good in our lives. God can take the worst things that happen to us and turn them into something good and even something beautiful. The greatest disappointments in life are really God's appointments for us. Courage is taking God at His word and believing that no matter what has happened; He will use it for good in our lives and it will become a beautiful blessing.

I want to share another testimony. When we were going through our time of trouble early in our marriage (the time I have already spoken about when we were taking care of Hal's parents), I was administered to and in that administration I was spoken to under the influence of the Spirit. I was told that "one day I would be thankful for all my trials." There was such a powerful spirit there that I could not deny it must be true. Yet I could not imagine such a thing. I thought "well, Lord, if you say so it must be true, but I bet I'm 90 years old and not of sound mind by the time it does happen." I did not see how I could ever be thankful for all the terrible trials we were going through. It did take some time, but let me assure you, the day did come when I was thankful for all the trials. We came out of them changed for the better, with a strong marriage, and a new deeper love of God, and many rich testimonies of his love and goodness. For all these reasons we were indeed thankful for the trials.

Then I felt led to write *Miracle of the Tulips* and people would call me and say "your testimony saved my marriage." In my heart I would have to say, "Thank you, Jesus, thank you for this testimony that you gave me and the opportunity to share it. Thank you for the wonderful testimony that you have the power to heal brokenness. Thank you for all the trials that made this testimony possible." God took every one of those trials and turned them to our good, and also used them to assist others who were in need of encouragement. Like David I could say, Psalms 18:1-3,30 "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation; and my high tower. I will call upon the Lord, for he is worthy to be praised; so shall I be saved from mine enemies.

O God, thy ways are perfect; the word of the Lord is tried; he is a buckler to all those who trust in him."

You see, when God gets ready to use us, he often allows trials to come upon us so that we might be refined and made more like him. Jewels of great value have the most cuts and the severest polishing. The most precious metals are refined in the hottest fires. During times of refining, we must have faith and courage. The faith and courage to believe that we are not alone, and that we, like Ruth, dwell under His almighty wing, even if it doesn't seem like it. We also need to trust that He will take every trial and turn it into a blessing. He can turn the worst things that happen to us, into something beautiful. Luke 1:37 "For with God nothing can be impossible."

X. COURAGE TO WAIT ON THE LORD'S TIMING, AND REMAIN CHEERFUL

Yes, in time God will turn all our trials into blessings. We must give our trials to Him, and submit our will to His will, and wait patiently for Him to turn them into blessings. In the mean time, as it states in Hebrews, we must "run with patience the race that is set before us." We must be of good courage. We must be cheerful. Our cheerfulness will be a testimony and a blessing to those around us.

I want to say one more thing about waiting on the Lord. In the longest darkest hours of your life you can trust the Lord to be working on your behalf. Exodus 14:10,13,14,21 "And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes. . .and they were sore afraid. . .and Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show to you. . .The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace..... and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night. . ." It must have been a long night of waiting for the children of Israel. In the darkness of that long night, God was working, but they could not see the miracle taking place. In the morning when they awoke, the sea was parted. It is that way for us also. When it is the darkest, God is accomplishing a great work in your life. You may not see any evidence that he is at work, until the morning, when the trial is over; but believe that he is at work, even when you do not see it. II Cor.5:7 "We walk by faith not by sight." Yes, believe that God is at work on your behalf even when you see no sign of it. Believe that all things will work for your good. Wait patiently for your sea to part. Wait with a cheerful heart full of hope & courage. Psalms 5:11-12 "But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice, let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them; let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee. For thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favor wilt thou compass him, as with a shield."

See handout on Courage and sub heading of "Courage to wait on the Lords Timing."

I want to share another testimony here about being cheerful and keeping one's sense of humor even in times of trials. In the year 2000 my husband, who is a consultant and does system analyst work, was between jobs. This went on for a number of months. His consulting company paid him bench time for several months, but we never knew from month to month if they would continue to pay him. Finally he found work in Chicago. He

started his new job and we were both so very happy that at last he had steady work. It had been such a great trial to not know, from week to week, if we would have a pay check.

He went to Chicago to start the new job and immediately became very ill. He had to fly home and tests were run, followed by a procedure on his stomach and esophagus. He lost a great deal of weight and remained in ill health. I finally quit my job and went to Chicago to be with him, and help restore him to good health. Shortly after I arrived, he was dismissed at the new job. The day they dismissed him, they shut off the long distance on our phone in the apartment, and took back the company car. We had no car in Chicago. They scheduled us a flight home and said a car would pick us up the next day to take us to the airport. The problem was that we had purchased extra bedding and pillows, a little electric grill, some extra towels, a clothes hamper, and other items to make the little company apartment more livable. There was no way we could get the extra stuff in our 3 suitcases. It was absolutely amazing how much stuff we had accumulated in such a short time. It would have been poor stewardship to leave these new items behind.

We decided that if we could get them boxed up, we could send them through, as extra baggage, at the air port with our suitcases. We tried to find some boxes to pack them in, but we had no car to go hunt down boxes. We walked to the local 7-11 but they had no boxes bigger than a candy box. We walked to the nearest shopping mall, but no one had any boxes. They had all been crushed for the day.

We then decided that the best answer might be to just call one of our children to come and get us, but the long distance was shut off on our phone. We could not find a calling card. The local 7-11 had one at the cost of \$ 50.00, and the shopping mall had none. We hated to spend \$ 50.00 on a calling card. We did not have a calling card for our phone service in Missouri, as we had just changed services there, and did not yet have the newly issued calling card. We ended up calling our children collect. They were truly upset that we were in such difficulty, and our daughter and son-in-law, from Iowa, started the drive to Chicago to get us.

We spent the evening packing. We put all our clothes in the suit cases and organized the extra accumulation of goods into clothes baskets and piles ready to be loaded into the car. Then we cleaned the apartment and exhausted climbed into bed. What a terrible day it had been, but laying in bed I started to laugh. It just hit me as funny that we had called our children collect and they were coming to rescue us. My husband asked me what on earth could I find to laugh about. I said "do you realize that we are actually getting even with our children. How many times have we had to go to their rescue as teenagers and young adults in college. We are finally paying them back." I laughed even more and snuggled up against him in the dark. He said "Your laughter comforts me, for if you can laugh at such a time, then I know things are really not too bad."

They were not too bad at all, for as always, we were dwelling under the wing of the most high God. Our children did show up early the next morning to rescue us. We returned home and Hal's old consulting company had just had a position open up in his area, and

two days later he started in the new position, with his old company. We ended up making more money in 2000 than in the previous year. It all worked for our good. We had received many testimonies of God's goodness and I had learned that my laughter was a comfort to my husband.

Indeed we need to see the humor in life, even in times of trials there are things that can make us laugh. Pro. 15:13 says "A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance. . ." and Pro.17:22 says "A merry heart doeth good like medicine; but a broken spirit drieth the bones." There have certainly been times when I had, as it were, dry bones, instead of a merry heart and cheerful countenance. They say the average person laughs 17 times a day. I know there have been times I certainly did not laugh at all during a day. I am trying to work on this, for as Christians and followers of Christ we should go about our daily activities with cheerful countenances. This is one of the attributes of Christian courage. James tells us in, James1:2-4 ". . .count it all joy when you fall into many afflictions. . ."

I Thess. 5:16-18 "Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." We can have the courage to rejoice even in our afflictions when we believe in God. Yes, in this world we can "BE OF GOOD CHEER" for the Savior has overcome this world and we have nothing to fear. If we really believe, then why should we be down cast? So let us be of cheerful countenances.

XI. LET US ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER

Last, but not least, on this subject of courage we are told to encourage one another. Isaiah 35:4 "Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not; behold your God will come.....he will come and save you." In Mosiah 9:39-40 Alma says " And now, as ye are desirous to come into the fold of God, and to be called his people, and are willing to bear one another's burdens, that they may be light; Yea, and are willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea and comfort those that stand in need of comfort. . ." The word comfort goes back to the root word of courage. When we comfort others, we do give them courage.

I want to share one last testimony here in regards to giving others courage and comfort. When our daughter Sharmin was 13 she was diagnosed with a large inoperable brain tumor. The Lord was so good to us. She received a mighty blessing in that on the third cat scan the tumor had shrunk and moved close to surface of her brain. It became operable. Yet she still had to go through brain surgery.

During this terrible trial our church family stood with us. They prayed with us and wept with us, and encouraged us and assisted us in many different ways. There was the woman who came to our home and cleaned it; then she put up uplifting scriptures, she had written on index cards, all over the house. Then there were the many different women who came every day to check on our middle daughter, who was at home, ill with pneumonia. We were so thankful for the family that came and took our dog to the vet. Yes, our dog was also sick. You see when it rains at our house it pours. Then there were the daily meals

brought into Sandy as she recovered from the pneumonia. I honestly don't know what we would have done without all these good people who helped us.

We were also blessed at the hospital. We had so many visitors and such great support. The nurses said, "Who are all these people who come to see your daughter and you? We have never seen anyone have such a support group as your family has." Sharmin herself said "I did not know so many people loved me." I could fill several pages just listing all the kind deeds and actions on our behalf at this time. Our church family truly shared our burden and in doing so gave us the comfort and courage we needed to endure this difficult crises. We are told to encourage one another. Let us give courage to others by all that we do and say. It is our duty as the people of God to bear one another's burdens and encourage each other.

See handout on courage & sub heading "To Encourage One Another"

XII. MORE EXAMPLES OF COURAGEOUS WOMEN

There are many good examples of courageous women in the scriptures and in church history. Esther was a woman of great courage. Indeed she was told Esther 4:14 ". . .who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" It was her day to have courage and to make a difference. This is now our day to be women of courage. It is our time, to make a difference in our day and age.

Emma Smith was another woman of courage. We all know the story of her walk across the frozen Mississippi with her small children clinging to her skirts, and the many other trials that she endured. Her mother-in-law, Lucy Mack Smith, wrote of her "I have never seen a woman in my life who could endure every species of fatigue and hardship, from month to month, and from year to year, with the unflinching courage, zeal, and patience, which she has ever done." In one particular time of personal discouragement I read the book "The Elect Lady" which is about Emma Smith. It lifted my spirits, and I gained courage by reading about her trial, and the way in which she continued onward even in the darkest hour. She was a woman of great courage. She has set a beautiful example for all of us to follow. If you have not read this book, I encourage you to read it. It will give you a lesson in courage.

My own Great Great Grandmother set a example for me. She lived in Missouri during the time the mobs came through to drive our the early saints. They were killing saints and burning their homes. Her husband was away from the homestead. She was alone with the children when the mob came. She confronted them with strength and courage. She asked them to carry out her iron cook stove and food supplies before they burned her home. You know what? They did it. I am sure the Spirit of the Lord was with her. Why else would these men, who had killed, and burned, and plundered suddenly carry our a woman's cook stove and food supplies. They also waited patiently while she carried out blankets and clothing etc.; then they burned the house down. Her husband found her camped out under a tree, cooking supper on her cook stove, when he returned home. Surely she did dwell under the wing of the almighty that day. The Lord must have supplied her with great courage that day. He will supply us also when we have need.

On my mother's side of the family, the story is told how my Great Grandmother and her husband, who lived in California, traveled by horse and wagon to church on Sundays. It would take the whole day to make the round trip. After church they would usually stop by the ocean and have a picnic lunch. During one trip, they were caught in a forest fire on their way home. The fire was all around them. They made it to a small stream where they wet down blankets and covered the children with them. My Great Grandfather decided to blindfold the horses so they would not be so afraid. Then he drove the horses, and my great grandmother stood in the back of the wagon with a wet blanket, beating the fire off of the children and the wagon. Through the flames they went. They came out on the other side covered in soot and ashes, but everyone was okay. What courage. We complain today at any little inconvenience. They went through a forest fire, while in the process of providing their children the opportunity to go to church with those of like mind. Sometimes we think it is too hard to get up on Sunday morning and take our children a few blocks to church. Where is our courage and determination? We need to become a people of steadfast mind, determined to do God's work and to raise our children up unto the Lord.

We need to prepare ourselves and our families for the coming of the Lord. Like wise virgins we need to have the oil of the Holy Spirit in our lamps. Our lamps need to be trimmed and burning. It is from faith in God and from the ministering of the Holy Spirit, that courage can flow into our hearts and minds—courage that will cause us to move out in faith, and to be of a steadfast and determined mind.

XIII. COURAGE FOR OUR DAY AND TIME

We live in a day and time that has been spoken of by many holy men of God down through the ages. We live in the last days, when Christ will return. What we witnessed on Sept 11 is just the beginning of the many terrible things which will yet come upon this earth. The day in which we live is a day that will require of us great faith and great courage. III Nephi 9:101-106 was given for our day and time. It tells us that if we do not repent that our cities will be cut off and our chariots (modern transportation) destroyed etc.etc. In the events of Sept. 11, I found this prophesy, given by Jesus, to have great meaning. There is one sentence in it that, seemed to me, was fulfilled on Sept. 11. It says "Thy graven images I will also cut off, and thy standing images out of the midst of thee; and thou shalt no more worship the works of thy hands." All week long after Sept.11 the news media spoke of the twin towers as the images or symbols of America. They called them standing images, the symbols of the greatness of America and the mighty works of our modern nation. I was reading in my Book of Mormon that week and the words of Christ as found in III Nephi 9:103 just seemed to jump off the page. The thought came to me "Is this not the works of your nation's hands, these two standing images, that were so quickly and terribly cut off from the midst of you? Doesn't what you have witnessed this week fit the description of what you are now reading?" Because of this experience, I believe that part of the prophesy given in III Nephi 9 was fulfilled on Sept 11. How the rest of it will be fulfilled, and how quickly it will be fulfilled, depends on the people of America. If we repent as a people, we will yet be spared awhile longer. I do feel strongly that we live in a day and age that calls for great courage.

We may yet see many things that will bring fear to our hearts. When these things transpire, if we are not in tune with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and walking close to him, we will not be able to endure. Yes, great and terrible things are before us, but we do not need to fear. We can follow in the foot steps of the women of courage who have gone before us. Women like Ruth, Esther, Mary, and Emma, to name a few. We must have the type of courage that flows from a deep faith in our God, under whose wing we can find refuge.

Just as soldiers train and prepare themselves for battle, we must prepare ourselves. We must become mighty in faith and courage. Like the sons of Mosiah we must be alert and obedient to the commandments of God. Like Mary we must have the courage to do the work of the Lord even if it requires a personal sacrifice. Like Ruth we must go forward with cheerfulness, even in times of calamity. Like her we must always remember under whose wing we dwell. Like Esther we must be willing to stand up, in our day and time, and make a difference. Like Emma we must have unflinching zeal, patience and courage.

To train, as a soldier of Christ, we must develop a strong prayer life. Start by scheduling a time for daily prayer. Work up to spending a hour a day in prayer. Then go through the day communicating with your Lord and Savior, letting your heart be drawn out in prayer unto Him, as you go about your daily activities. Study of His word should also be a top priority in your daily life. If you do not know His word, you will be overcome by the enemy. Eph. 6 :17 says that one way we prepare for battle is with "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

We can not battle effectively if we are not reading the words of God. Each day set aside some time for study. Listen to scripture tapes in your car on the way to work, or while you do house work, or exercise etc. etc. You may have to get creative to find time for your personal prayer and study time, but if you want to do it you will find a way. Learn hymns, sing them, and listen to them. Fast along with your study and prayer. All these things will help train you to become courageous soldier of Jesus Christ.

We are called into battle. The time has come to set aside things of lesser value, and to be of a steadfast mind, in our preparation and service to our God. It is a time for courage. Like Paul, at the end, may we be able to say, II Tim.4:7-8 " I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day. . ."

We can move forward with cheerfulness and courage if we remember the words from Psalms 91:1-4 "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress; my God; in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust; his truth shall be thy shield and buckler."

SCRIPTURES FOR COURAGE

Courage in Times of War or Difficulty

Num 13:20 And what the land is, whether it be fat or lean, whether there be wood therein, or not. And be of good courage, and bring of the fruit of the land. Now the time was the time of the first ripe grapes.

Deu 31:6 Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them; for the Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

Deu 31:7 And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and of a good courage; for thou must go with this people unto the land which the Lord hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it.

Deu 31:8 And the Lord, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee; fear not, neither be dismayed.

I Chronicles 19:13-14

Alma 29:1, 4-5

Alma 24:74 Now behold, there were two thousand of those young men who entered into this covenant, and took their weapons of war to defend their country.

Alma 24:76 And they were all young men, and they were exceeding valiant for courage, and also for strength and activity; but behold, this was not all: they were men who were true at all times in whatsoever thing they were entrusted;

Alma 24:77 Yea, they were men of truth and soberness, for they had been taught to keep the commandments of God, and to walk uprightly before him.

Alma 26:131 Therefore we did pour out our souls in prayer to God, that he would strengthen us and deliver us out of the hands of our enemies; yea, and also give us strength, that we might retain our cities, and our lands, and our possessions, for the support of our people.

Alma 26:132 Yea, and it came to pass that the Lord our God did visit us with assurances, that he would deliver us; yea, insomuch that he did speak peace to our souls, and did grant unto us great faith, and did cause us that we should hope for our deliverance in him;

Alma 26:133 And we did take courage with our small force which we had received, and were fixed with a determination to conquer our enemies, and to maintain our lands, and our possessions, and our wives, and our children, and the cause of our liberty.

II Chronicles 32:7

Proverbs 3:25-26

Psa 118:5 I called upon the Lord in distress; the Lord answered me, and set me in a large place.

Psa 118:6 The Lord is on my side; I will not fear; what can man do unto me?

Psa 118:8 It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man.

Psa 118:9 It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes.

Psa 118:14 The Lord is my strength and song, and is become my salvation.

Courage to do the Work of the Lord

1 Chr 22:13 Then shalt thou prosper, if thou takest heed to fulfill the statutes and judgments which the Lord charged Moses with concerning Israel; be strong, and of good courage; dread not, nor be dismayed.

1 Chr 22:18 Is not the Lord your God with you? and hath he not given you rest on every side? for he hath given the inhabitants of the land into mine hand; and the land is subdued before the Lord, and before his people.

1 Chr 22:19 Now set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God; arise therefore, and build ye the sanctuary of the Lord God, to bring the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and the holy vessels of God, into the house that is to be built to the name of the Lord.

1 Chr 28:20 And David said David to Solomon his son, Be strong and of good courage, and do it; fear not, nor be dismayed, for the Lord God, even my God, will be with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the Lord.

2 Chr 15:7 Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak; for your work shall be rewarded.

2 Chr 15:8 And when Asa heard these words, and the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he took courage, and put away the abominable idols out of all the land of Judah and Benjamin, and out of the cities which he had taken from mount Ephraim, and renewed the altar of the Lord, that was before the porch of the Lord.

Alma 12:20 And it came to pass that the hearts of the sons of Mosiah, and also those who were with them, took courage to go forth unto the Lamanites, to declare unto them the word of God.

Alma 12:21 And it came to pass when they had arrived in the borders of the land of the Lamanites, that they separated themselves, and departed one from another, trusting in the Lord, that they should meet again at the close of their harvest: for they supposed that great was the work which they had undertaken.

Ezra 10:4 Arise; for this matter belongeth unto thee; we also will be with thee; be of good courage, and do it.

Courage to be Obedient

Heb 13:6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

Josh 23:6 Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left;

[Sec 81:3a] And again, I say unto you, I give unto you a new commandment, that you may understand my will concerning you, or in other words, I give unto you directions how you may act before me, that it may turn to you for your salvation.

[Sec 81:3b] I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say, but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise.

[Sec 81:6c] Peace be with you; my blessings continue with you, for even yet the kingdom is yours, and shall be for ever if you fall not from your **steadfastness**. Even so. Amen.

[Sec 83:9a] Verily, verily I say unto you, who now have my words, which is my voice,
[Sec 83:9b] Blessed are ye inasmuch as you receive these things; for I will forgive you of your sins with this commandment, that you remain **steadfast** in your minds in solemnity, and the spirit of prayer, in bearing testimony to all the world of those things which are communicated unto you.

Courage to Wait on the Lord's Timing

Isa 40:28 Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.

Isa 40:29 He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.

Isa 40:30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall;

Isa 40:31 But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

Psa 27:14 Thou didst say unto me, Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thy heart; wait, I say, on the Lord.

Psa 31:24 Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord.

To Encourage One Another

Isa 35:3 Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees.

Isa 35:4 Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not; behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you.

Isa 41:6 They helped everyone his neighbor; and everyone said to his brother, Be of good courage.

Isa 41:7 So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, and he that smootheth with the hammer him that smote the anvil, saying, It is ready for the soldering; and he fastened it with nails, that it should not be moved.

Isa 41:10 Fear thou not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

Mark 10:49 And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they called the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort; arise, he calleth thee.

Mark 6:53 And immediately he talked with them, and said unto them, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.

Rom 15:4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and **comfort** of the scriptures might have hope.

Mos 9:39 And now, as ye are desirous to come into the fold of God, and to be called his people, and are willing to bear one another's burdens, that they may be light;

Mos 9:40 Yea, and are willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times, and in all things, and in all places that ye may be in, even until death, that ye may be redeemed of God, and be numbered with those of the first resurrection, that ye may have eternal life:

Root Words of Courage from Strongs

withstand, make hard, become mighty, be constant, prevail, wax strong, strengthen, fortify, be alert, steadfastly minded, comfort, be of good cheer, bold, boldness, boldly, quick understanding, spiritual, breath,
Heart the center of feelings and intellect