

Battle Cat Courage

Speak Up With Boldness

Growing up watching TV in the 80's, my friends and I imagined we, like scrawny Prince Adam, could thrust our sword in the air, shout "I have the power!" and transform into He-Man. But He-Man had a sidekick, Cringer, who needed a transformation of his own. His green and orange feline friend was scared of his own shadow until He-Man turned him into the fearless Battle Cat with a bolt from his sword. And, if you've ever felt frightened like Cringer — maybe you, too, need a bolt of courage from above.

We're modeling our integrity after Jesus' integrity as we continue our [Cross Training](#) journey. Integrity comes when we receive the whole truth, live with purity, develop our character, and speak courageously. So how does Christ transform us from cowardly to courageous in this dark world?

What You Need to Know

If someone saves a child from a burning building, we rightly call them a hero. But the hero might ask, "what other choice did I have? I couldn't walk by and ignore the situation!" What looks like courage on the outside often feels like a necessity on the inside. The Lord's people often describe that same feeling of responsibility to speak, even when it's uncomfortable. *"For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!"* says Paul (1 Cor. 9:16). Jeremiah felt the same, saying: *"If I say, 'I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name,' there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot"* (Jer. 20:9). In the same way, *"knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others"* as *"the love of Christ controls us"* (2 Cor. 5:11, 14). As a watchman on a city wall, if we don't warn of danger, that's on us (Ezek. 3:17-21). Who are we if we don't love people enough to speak up?

What's the measure of a true friend? Why does the Bible declare *"faithful ... the wounds of a friend"* (Prov. 27:6)? Because you can count on your real friends to tell you what you need to hear, not just what you want to hear. We can get this all twisted and cut people off for speaking uncomfortable words. At times we might have to say with Paul, *"Have I then become your enemy by telling you the truth?"* (Gal. 4:16). Biblical love doesn't seek a friend's short-term happiness at all costs. *"Love ... does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth"* (1 Cor. 13:4, 6). We can't control a person's response, but we try to believe the best (1 Cor. 13:7) and know that our service to God is never meaningless (1 Cor. 15:58).

God's people have a history of boldness in the face of uncomfortable and even dangerous circumstances (cf. Heb. 11:36-12:3; Acts 4:29). From Stephen's convicting sermon (Acts 7) to Esther's royal requests (Est. 5 & 7); from Barnabas advocating for Saul (Acts 9:27) to Paul opposing Peter (Gal. 2:11ff); from Joshua's "choose this day" (Josh. 24:15) to Nathan's *"you are the man!"* (2 Sam. 12:7). May we join the long line of courageous saints who stepped up and spoke up.

What You Need to Do

Think before you speak (Prov. 16:23). Know your heart — are you responding from bitter anger or genuine concern? We can mistake *courageous* speaking for "*rash*" speaking (cf. Eccl. 5:2), "*loud*" speaking (Prov. 27:14), or "*harsh*" speaking (Prov. 15:1). We can't go around looking for conflict, but we won't pretend there's peace without God either (Jer. 6:14). By "*speaking the truth in love*" (Eph. 4:15), we seek to build people up, not tear them down. When we tame our tongue (James 3:7-10), we can direct it to offer wise, purposeful words (Col. 4:5-6). Every time we say anything in Christ's name, we soberly speak "*as one who speaks oracles of God*" (1 Peter 4:11), taking care in what we say and how we say it.

Read the room, considering the impact that your words will have. Maybe it's best to speak up publicly (Gal. 2:11), or perhaps it's better to address it privately (Acts 18:26). Consider how you would want someone to approach you in a difficult conversation (Matt. 7:12), and make sure it fits the occasion (Eph. 4:29).

Once you've prepared yourself, speak up! Though it'd be easier to stay quiet, "*if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted*" (Gal. 6:1).

Through the Week

- **Read** — Matt. 10:26-40; Acts 4:13-31; Col. 4:2-6; Jer. 1:6-19; Ezek. 3:17-21
- **Reflect** — Ask yourself, "*What makes me shrink back from confrontational conversations?*"
- **Request** — Pray, "*God, give me a spirit of power, love, and self-control*" (cf. 2 Tim. 1:7).
- **Respond** — Initiate contact with someone today to offer encouragement, pointing to Christ.
- **Reach Out** — Ask someone, "*What impact have the courageous words of others made on your life?*"