

Voices: Courageous Christians in an age of comfort and complaint

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Courage is hard to come by.

If there is a path marked courage and a path marked least resistance, most of us take the path of least resistance every single time. We often choose comfort over courage. We have an epidemic of doing what is easy, expedient and efficient.

Christians and their leaders who choose the path of comfort diverge down a path that leads away from the great people of the Christian faith many claim to emulate.

In our digitally connected world, selective outrage masquerades as courage but actually is a far cry from thoughtful, bold, courageous and sincere action. Rants, soap boxes and snark concerning the latest spat in the culture war do not make one courageous. Mere complaining that might draw a reaction from one's own echo chamber or a few opponents does not make one courageous.

Pastor and author Will Willimon said, "Courage is not the absence of fear but rather having a reason for doing the right thing in spite of our fear—fearing, revering and honoring something more than safety."

Complaining from the sideline is easy; working for change within a system is grueling.

A call for courageous Christians for today

Our world could use a few courageous Christians, people who see the challenge in the world and roll up their sleeves to face the challenge instead of doing what is politically easy, expedient or efficient.

Courageous Christians understand the presence of God goes with them no matter how challenging the situation is they are facing. Courageous Christians are determined to do the right thing for the right reason with the right attitude no matter the cost. Courageous Christians are willing to bleed and die on hills that matter to their Savior—not merely to keep walking over the hills that need our care and concern. Courageous Christians value the way of Jesus more than their own safety, including the safety of their family, their job or their reputation.

Courageous Christians emulate Jesus

The Christian life is a call to emulate Jesus, which often puts the Christian on the wrong side of popular opinion—and even the opinion of the Christian sub-culture. If we are doing what God has called us to do, victory won't come easy. Victory will require courage.

Theodore Roosevelt said about courage: “It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the

triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.”

If we are to fail, let us fail while daring greatly and not because we dared nothing.

Dr. Maya Angelou said, “Courage is the most important of all of the values because without courage, you can’t practice any of the other...you can’t be truthful, you can’t be gracious, you can’t be anything without courage.”

Pastor Andy Stanley said, “Without courage, we will simply accumulate a collection of good ideas and regrets.”

In these conflicted times, what kind of Christian will you be: comfortable, complaining or courageous?

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