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RAHAB: COURAGEOUS FAITH



Who comes to mind when you think of courage?

QUESTION #1

THE POINT

The power of God that leads us to fear Him also leads us to trust Him.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

Courage comes in many shapes and sizes. We readily think of the soldiers who volunteer to go into harm's way. But courage can also be far less obvious—even hidden.

Every summer as we celebrate America's independence, we think of the over ninety-six thousand who fought for the cause of freedom during the Revolutionary War—and some twenty-five thousand who never came home. Another brave group fought too—Washington's spies—but they had to keep their courageous acts to themselves.¹

The cause of American independence was carried out with the help of ordinary people who kept up appearances as farmers, merchants, and homemakers. Yet nothing was ordinary about what they did in secret. An unlikely group dubbed the Culper Ring, their courage and brave actions were key to Washington's military success.²

The Bible also tells us of spies and one woman who courageously aided these spies. Rahab was a prostitute and an unlikely hero, but her courage was fueled by the same faith you and I can apply when facing opposition.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Joshua 2:1-7

¹ And Joshua the son of Nun sent two men secretly from Shittim as spies, saying, “Go, view the land, especially Jericho.” And they went and came into the house of a prostitute whose name was Rahab and lodged there. ² And it was told to the king of Jericho, “Behold, men of Israel have come here tonight to search out the land.” ³ Then the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, “Bring out the men who have come to you, who entered your house, for they have come to search out all the land.” ⁴ But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. And she said, “True, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from.” ⁵ And when the gate was about to be closed at dark, the men went out. I do not know where the men went. Pursue them quickly, for you will overtake them.” ⁶ But she had brought them up to the roof and hid them with the stalks of flax that she had laid in order on the roof. ⁷ So the men pursued after them on the way to the Jordan as far as the fords. And the gate was shut as soon as the pursuers had gone out.

I grew up with parents who gave me two warnings: (1) nothing good happens after midnight; and (2) always be careful of where and with whom I hung out. I had a healthy fear of my parents that drove me to obey them, as well as a fear of those who might harm me. But Joshua 2 points to a different type of fear: a fear of God that fueled the courage of the spies and of their accomplice, a prostitute named Rahab.

The spies had legitimate concerns as they scouted Jericho. The city was a part of the Amorite kingdom, a kingdom whose destiny was determined as far back as Genesis 15:16 when God told Abram that his descendants would return to the land now possessed by the Amorites. Their fate was confirmed in Deuteronomy 20:17 when the Israelites were commanded to wipe out the Amorites because their sin would influence their own culture.

What are your initial observations about Rahab?

QUESTION #2

The spies knew they faced a formidable enemy, yet they also knew this was a no-fail mission. The Israelites had already lost forty years due to their own lack of faith. But now that the time had come to cross over the Jordan River into the promised land, the two spies sought refuge in the home of a prostitute—their first encounter with an inhabitant of the promised land.

Rahab's home was prime real estate, situated near the wall or within the wall, so she was prosperous. She would have welcomed the spies without question because she knew how to play the game of confidentiality. It's also possible she welcomed the spies because they didn't take advantage of her, but showed her respect and value—something she probably didn't receive often.

Have you ever befriended a Rahab? Do you see people beyond their sin and see them as image-bearers of God? For me, it happened when I met Barbara. A victim of rape, Barbara ended up in prostitution, drug addiction, and ultimately, prison. Through a prison ministry, another woman met Barbara in her brokenness and led her to a personal relationship with Christ. The day I met Barbara was the beginning of a friendship. Her story of redemption and recovery continues to remind me salvation is available to anyone.

Joshua 2:8-11

⁸ Before the men lay down, she came up to them on the roof ⁹ and said to the men, "I know that the LORD has given you the land, and that the fear of you has fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you. ¹⁰ For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you devoted to destruction. ¹¹ And as soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no spirit left in any man because of you, for the LORD your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath."

Knowing who God is can be the first step toward recognizing how He acts in our lives. We begin to trust God more as we experience His work in our lives. Rahab made several statements that revealed she had a pretty good idea of who God is and what He is capable of.

How can fear of God lead to trust in God?

QUESTION #3

- ▶ **God had given the land to the Israelites.** The actual mission hadn't yet occurred, yet Rahab knew the Israelites would conquer Jericho.
- ▶ **Jericho was in a panic.** Rahab sensed the fear and had heard how all the people were panicking throughout the city. It was no secret the Israelites were camped outside the walls of Jericho.
- ▶ **God's protection of His people was well known.** God's reputation had reached the ears of those in Jericho. The people of Jericho may have trusted in their fortified wall, but they also knew how God had empowered the Israelites to defeat the Egyptians and two Amorite kings.
- ▶ **God is God over all.** This was Rahab's confession. She knew who God is, and she was ready to follow Him. God had already been working in the heart of Rahab, and she wasn't following God out of fear but with courageous faith.

God's providence was never more apparent than when my husband and I left one state and moved to another to pursue a new ministry assignment. We had confidence because we knew God's script for our lives is better than anything we could write on our own.

Joshua 2:12-14

¹² "Now then, please swear to me by the LORD that, as I have dealt kindly with you, you also will deal kindly with my father's house, and give me a sure sign ¹³ that you will save alive my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death." ¹⁴ And the men said to her, "Our life for yours even to death! If you do not tell this business of ours, then when the LORD gives us the land we will deal kindly and faithfully with you."



Rahab’s trust and faithfulness in the midst of this calamity would have lasting implications far beyond her earthly life. The walls of Jericho would come down, but her life and the lives of her family would be spared. The faith of Rahab reminds us of some key truths about our own faith:

- ▶ **God was at work.** Joshua and the army didn’t spare Rahab’s life and her house—God did. While the spies promised their protection and honored their promise, ultimately the Lord saved and preserved Rahab and her family.
- ▶ **Belief leads to faith, which leads to action.** Rahab believed. Because of this faith, her works and actions followed. Our faith is the same. We not only place our faith in God by what we believe, but our faith is made alive through the way we act each day and by our actions toward others.
- ▶ **Trust in God affects future generations.** Rahab became the wife of Salmon, who fathered Boaz in the Book of Ruth. That means she was the great-grandmother of David. Ultimately, Rahab’s trust and faithfulness allowed her to be listed in the genealogy of Jesus (Matt. 1:5-6), and she is listed among Scripture’s heroes of faith in Hebrews 11:31.
- ▶ **Walking in faith is a daily process.** We are to turn daily from our past and trust God with our future. Rahab left her past lifestyle and aligned herself with the people of God. With God, our lives are not about our past, but about who we are becoming in Christ.

Rahab’s cunning bravery wasn’t fueled by her fear of men, but a courageous fear of the God of Israel. Just as God wanted the Israelites to conquer the wall of Jericho, He wants to break down the walls that keep us from walking in courageous faith.

What experiences have served as the foundation for your trust in God?

QUESTION #4

What has God done in the life of our group that can be a testimony to others?

QUESTION #5

FEAR AND TRUST

Use the following scales to indicate where you feel you are now in regard to fear of God and trust in God (1 is not characteristic of you and 10 describes you completely).

I have a healthy respect of God's majesty and power.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I have a healthy fear of God.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I am confident of who God is and what He can do.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I trust God has a good plan for my life.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I trust God's daily leadership in my life.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

"The only God-ordained fear is the fear of God, and if we fear Him, we don't have to fear anyone or anything else."

— MARK BATTERSON

LIVE IT OUT

Courageous fear of God results in faithful actions for Him. How can you move forward in your faith with courage? Choose one of the following applications:

- ▶ **Express thanks.** Pray and thank God for His faithfulness and His promises. Remember that your past does not determine your future.
- ▶ **Tackle the wall.** Is there a “wall” in your life that you need God to tear down? Trust Him to do so. Journal your fears and write out Scriptures that remind you of God’s faithfulness.
- ▶ **Leave a legacy.** Ask God to guide you in leaving the right kind of spiritual legacy to those who follow you. It begins with sharing your faith in Christ. Seek opportunities to talk and pray with someone who needs to trust in Christ.

Just as soldiers must take a courageous stand for what they believe in, we are often called upon to exhibit courageous faith in the Lord. With God’s help, we can be victorious.

My thoughts



¹ “American Revolution by the Numbers,” <https://cdn.history.com/sites/2/2015/01/infographic-american-revolution-by-the-numbers.png>.

² “The Culper Spy Ring,” *History*, August 21, 2018, <https://www.history.com/topics/american-revolution/culper-spy-ring>.