

Courageous Love

Welcome to the first week in our 6-week series on 'Courageous Living'. Throughout the Scriptures and throughout history we see ordinary men, women and children who respond to the power and presence of the Lord God Almighty by courageously living out their faith in some amazing ways. Our prayer for you this series, is that you might come to realise the power of the presence of God in your life and so be freed to courageously pursue all He has called you to.

Spend time in prayer together as we start this study series together.

Courageous Living

Joshua 1⁹ *"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."*

1 Corinthians 16¹³⁻¹⁴ *"Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. Do everything in love."*

We all have an idea about what constitutes courage – how would you define what biblical courage is? What is its purpose/what does it result in? Where does it come from?

When you think of your life and your desire to fully live out your faith in Christ, how important an attribute do you think courage is in doing so?

Is there something you are holding back from in living out your faith because of a lack of courage?

Courageous Love – *pretty important*

How did you feel God speak to you through the sermon on Sunday?

Turn to and read together 1 John 3:11-24

What makes you uncomfortable in this passage of Scripture? What gives you encouragement?

In what ways is the message to love one another, the message we have heard 'from the beginning' (v11)?

What in this passage teaches that love for one another is to be a non-negotiable in the life of a believer? How are we to respond to the commands of God (v23 compare with John 15:9-14)? In what way does loving one another prove/give evidence of a truly transformed life (v14-15, 17, 23-24 compare with 1 John 4:7-8, 17, 19-21)?

Courageous love – *definition and type of love*

The proper definition and standard of this love we are to have for one another has been set by God himself – see 1 John 3:16, 1 John 4:9-10, John 13:33-34, John 15:9-13. In light of these verses, how do you define what love is? What characteristics does this sort of love display?

Can you give an example of a time where you have seen or received such courageous love?

1 John 3:17-18 makes it clear that words are simply not enough when it comes to showing the kind of love God commands. What are some examples of how we can love *'with actions and in truth'*?

The challenging teaching of the Scriptures is not only the high standard of what love should look like, but also to whom we are to direct it! See James 2:8-9, Matthew 5:43-48, Luke 10:25-37. Who are some of the people you find difficult to love in your life? What kind of impact and witness would it have if you took up Jesus' challenge from the parable of the Good Samaritan to *'go and do likewise'*?

Courageous Love – *bringing it home*

Why does loving as God calls us to require courage? What are some of the fears that hold you back from loving the way God calls us to (or loving who God calls us to)?

As we have been reading and discussing courageous love, are there people or situations that God has laid on your heart where you need to courageously display more love? How can this group help support and hold you accountable to these promptings of the Holy Spirit?