

Rock Solid Men

Courage: The Clint Eastwood Effect

Edited Transcript

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Good morning, guys! It is great to be with you. I am so excited to be with you this morning because we have a great session this morning as we continue in our series on being a Rock Solid Man, Rock Solid Man. And today, we're talking about courage.

So let's give a shout out to some guys. First of all we're going to give Dean Radford and the Men of Armor, from Morganton, North Carolina. This is a new group of guys meeting on Mondays at 6:30 in the evening. And they meet in various locations, but they all use the Bible study. So that's a great group of guys up in North Carolina.

And then John Williams is our area director in Palm Coast. And John is a warrior, he's been through some health issues and has come out on the other side of that and has just kept persevering in his reaching of churches in Palm Coast. He's been engaged in an annual men's event there that this last year I think they had over 500 guys come from all different churches that he's really been instrumental in working with a bunch of leaders up there to make happen. And John says, "I'm passionate about reaching men, because when I was a young man, God used other men investing in my life to disciple me and model what a godly man, husband, and father looked like. I would not be who or where I am today without their life on life discipleship and men's small groups."

So let's give Dean and Men of Armor and John Williams a hand. Way to go, guys, thanks for all you're doing.

All right, so we're continuing in our series on Rock Solid Men and we're using 1 Corinthians 16:13-14 as our two verses as our guide for this because in these two verses, at the very end or towards the very end of 1 Corinthians, you might remember the letter, if you're familiar with 1 Corinthians, it is not a love letter. 1 Corinthians is a letter from Paul to the church and this is a church that he's spent years in Corinth getting going. He was a church planter and he got this church going and then he left and it all went to pot. And they started doing all crazy stuff, suing each other, and sleeping with, you know, incest, and rich, poor things, and racial stuff. Just all this crazy stuff happening in the church. Hopefully that makes you feel a little better about the church today, like it's always been like this.

And he's like, "Guys, what are you doing?" And he's reminding them of the Gospel, he's reminding them of the truth of the Gospel. And then at the end, as he's just about to go into his sort of personal greeting stuff, this is the last statement he makes. He says to the church, "Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong. And do everything in love."

And so, as we're walking through these attributes of biblical manhood, we're talking about vigilance, standing firm in the faith, today we're going to talk about courage, and then we'll talk about strength and love, and then we'll wrap it up in the sixth session.

But be men of courage, this is the phrase that we're looking at today and it's very interesting because if you look at it in the ESV, this is the NIV version, if you look at the ESV, it translates this phrase, "be men of courage," a different way. It says, "Act like men." Isn't that interesting? That Paul would say that courage, being a man of courage, you could also say, "Just be a man. Act like a man." This is the definition of manhood according to Paul and according to scripture, courage is a very important part of this.

And the other thing I want you to notice is that these attributes are building on each other. Paul starts with be on your guard, be vigilant, be aware, situational awareness, right? And then top of that he says, "Stand firm." So you're aware of what's coming at you and what the opportunities are, now you need to stand firm. How do you stand firm? Well, you got to know the Bible. You've got to stand firm on something, right? And so, Jesus said you stand firm on the rock, and the rock is the word of God, not on the sand. You guys know the song, right? "On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand." That's what he's talking about, Jesus is the word, and the word is the solid foundation. You have to know your Bible, really, to be able to know Christ and stand firm.

Then the next step then is once you're standing firm, well, you better have courage. If you're going to stand firm, you better have courage. And so that's what we're going to talk about today, is being a man of courage.

THE CLINT EASTWOOD EFFECT

I called this the Clint Eastwood effect, I'll get to that in a second. But let's sort of run through our outline. Does everybody have their book? You need your Rock Solid Man workbook. If you don't have your workbook, raise your hand and we've got ... Did you ever get one? Okay, so if you never got one, raise your hand and we'll bring you a book. If you had one and you forgot it, just raise a finger and we have a handout of the pages and you don't need the whole because you've already got one. And remember, the first book's free, the second book? Fifty bucks, that's right.

So, this is our outline. Turn to page eight in your book, session three on courage. We're going to start with our key passage and sort of our really talking about what courage is. Then we're going to give you a rock solid tool that will help you have courage. The tool we're going to talk about today is worship. Then we're going to give you a challenge of sort of how to put that into play. Then we'll have our table time and we'll talk about it. And then finally, just a reminder that every week there is an activity idea in here. Over here too, Jeff. That every week there's an activity and that's an encouragement for you to be in community with your table outside of Friday morning and go do something together. Have some fun and do an activity together outside of this regular meeting time. All right?

Let's talk about courage. And I called this the Clint Eastwood effect, how many of you like westerns? I love westerns. I know some of you are like John Wayne, they haven't made a western since John Wayne. But I like the modern ones. My favorite western, actually, is Open Range. How many of you have seen Open Range? Robert Duvall and Kevin Costner. And my favorite part of that movie is, this has nothing to do with courage, my favorite part of that movie is towards the end, the big gun fight's about to happen, and Kevin Costner has worked for Robert Duvall for like years and years, and he says, "Boss, I reckon if we're going to die, I ought to know your name." And I'm like, that is manhood right there. I could go golfing with you every Friday morning for a year and I could call you Buddy every morning and you would never think anything strange. And when my wife asks me what your name was, I'd go, "I don't know. He's got a four handicap, but I don't know his name."

I just love that, it's a great picture of manhood. But, you know, Clint Eastwood movies are sort of to me the penultimate of westerns. He plays kind of two kinds of heroes, Clint Eastwood does. And if you look at these westerns, you might think of him always as the hero, but he really kind of plays two kinds of heroes. He plays one kind of hero where he kind of comes in and he's the brooding, damaged guy who is sort of out for vengeance, right? And he's a good guy, he's on the good side, at least in the movie. But everybody stays out of his way. And the scenes of those usually has him walking around the town, all the townspeople are hiding and he just shoots all the bad guys, one after another. In like great ways, too. Like through a door, ricochet off the sign. All that stuff. But he's a loner. In a sense, he's really not inspiring because you don't want to be like him. Because what happens after he kills everybody? He goes off into the sunset. Came in alone, leaves alone. With more on his conscience than he had before.

But the other kind of hero that he plays is what I would call the inspirational hero. Where he comes into a town and he doesn't just take care of the problem, he inspires the town to take care of themselves, and he leads. And so, he inspires in the townspeople courage. And it's like the shopkeeper was cowering behind the counter at the beginning of the movie when the bad guys came into town. And then at the end, the shopkeeper's on the front steps of the store with a shotgun, going, "Bring it on!" But it's the same guy, why? Because this hero inspired him, gave him something to have faith in. Gave him a picture of what they were trying to accomplish together, a purpose. And that inspired great courage in the shopkeeper.

COWARD, COURAGE, RECKLESS

I think there's parallels for what we would think of as courage, as well. Where does that kind of courage come from? What does courage even look like? We're going to use this thing that we call the courage continuum. I want you to imagine, on one side of the courage continuum is being a coward, running from trouble, hiding, apathetic maybe, not even caring. But you're just a coward, you won't engage, you avoid confrontation. And in a marriage, this is devastating. A cowardly husband is just a devastating thing. A cowardly dad is a devastating thing.

So what does it look like? It looks like a man who is maybe a powerhouse at work, but at home he's a limp rag. He doesn't step into confrontation. He doesn't pick up and kill the snake that's talking to his wife, Genesis 3. He just stands there and watches. He doesn't take care of his finances, so that if something happens to him, his wife's left destitute. He doesn't discipline his kids. He just lets them do what they want. And so this is the guy whose kids end up doing stuff they're not supposed to do, because nobody ever gave them boundaries. This guy, at church, just sort of goes to hangout, maybe have some friends there. He doesn't really engage, he doesn't try to grow spiritually, he's just a limp rag. He's just a coward.

Now on the other side of this, you've got what I would call the reckless guy. This is the Red Bull guy. This is the ride a bike off the Arc de Triomphe in Paris guy on national TV. This is the paragliding guy with the dog in the backpack and the GoPro on his helmet. This is the extreme guy. Now this guy at his extreme can also be pretty aggressive, can be very difficult to deal with. He's always got a better idea than you, he's always telling you what you should be doing. He's got his wife under his thumb, he's got his kids under his thumb.

The coward creates a wife and kids that are so independent and they're sort of adrift in the world. But the reckless, aggressive guy, he creates rebellion. And people don't like him very much. And sometimes

this guy looks very successful because everybody basically just gets so sick of him, they get out of his way and he just takes things over.

In the middle is what I would call legitimate courage. This is a man who takes calculated risks. This is a man who is not a loner, he's not apathetic, and he's not aggressive and overbearing. True courage is very winsome. You've known courageous men. Maybe it's a guy who came through a health crisis and you watched that guy come through a health crisis and you're like, "Man, I couldn't have done that as well as you." John Williams, our shout out, he came through a health crisis in a way, such a godly man who came through a health crisis with such courage and such hope and such perseverance. It's just winsome. That's what courage looks like. It's like somebody that you want to be like.

THE DAWN WALL

We've got this continuum that we're trying to negotiate. So let me give you a rock climbing metaphor, because you all know I like to rock climb. So how many of you have seen the movie, Free Solo? And how many of you have seen this movie called The Dawn Wall. Yeah, go see this one, or get this one on streaming services. The Dawn Wall is a much more compelling story than Free Solo. Free Solo, well, pardon me, but draw your testicles into your gut. All right? You're watching this guy climb El Capitan with no ropes. Nothing! 3500 feet. The camera work is unbelievable. And there are stories of people watching Free Solo in the movie theater having to get up and walk out because it made them ill, because the stress of this guy climbing El Capitan with no ropes is just unbelievable.

That is extreme, I would say that that's reckless. Yeah. And hopefully it will never be done again. I'm going to kill the story for you, Alex Honnold is the guy's name, he makes it. They did not make a movie and have a guy die. Yeah. "Great job! Aww, the end."

Dawn Wall is an incredibly compelling story for a couple of reasons. One, it's the story of Tommy Caldwell and Kevin Jorgeson climbing another route in Yosemite that had never been free climbed. Now, free climbing is different than free soloing. Free climbing, you have a rope on. If you notice, that's Tommy Caldwell right there. And if you look in the picture, you can sort of see a line coming down below his foot. That's a rope that's going up through protections on to his harness. And he's got another guy, Kevin Jorgeson, who is belaying him. And they're lead climbing, it's an amazing sport. What happens is, now you think if you go to a climbing gym, you've got a guy on the ground, a rope goes to the guy on the wall, right? Well, once you're more than about a hundred feet off the ground, there ain't ropes that long anymore. So what they do is they anchor themselves in as they go. So one guy climbs up and the guy that's anchored in belays him and then when they get to the end, this guy anchors in and he belays the other guy coming up to him.

So the bottom guy's feeding rope as the top guy climbs. And then the top guy's pulling rope in as the bottom guy climbs up to him. And then he goes past him and then goes up. So they are leap frogging each other, okay? But they climbed this route that had never been climbed before. And every time you pass each other, that's called a pitch. And I can't remember the number of pitches, but it was dozens of pitches that they had to climb and they had to actually sleep on the wall. They had these things called a porta-ledge that you anchor, it's like a platform that you anchor to the wall. You've got to see this movie, it's amazing.

Here's where courage comes in, Tommy Caldwell is one of the best climbers in the world. Kevin Jorgeson is not. So this route was initially when Tommy said, "I would like to climb this route and I would like to

free climb it." So not using any, not like putting something in the wall and then using that to pull up, only going up on your own power, using only the rock for hands and feet. That's free climbing with protection. So Kevin Jorgeson, who was a good rock climber, don't get me wrong, a very good climber, but not Tommy Caldwell level, says, "Hey, Tommy, I'll train with you. I'll help you train for it." And then they ended up doing it together and it was in the news if you follow this stuff, it was in the news.

They got to this one section, it was sort of the hardest section of the climb. And believe it or not, it's what they call a traverse, it wasn't up, it was sideways. And there was this move at the end of the traverse that it took Tommy eight or nine tries, I think, to get it. It took Kevin a week. And he kept trying it over and over and over and over again. And finally Kevin said, "Let's just go on. I just won't do this traverse." And Tommy knew that if Kevin didn't do that traverse, he wouldn't get credit for free climbing the whole route, because there's a part of it that he never actually completed successfully.

And so, Tommy would not go on without him. He said, "No, man, we're not moving on until you finish this traverse." And so, Kevin just kept trying and trying and trying, and he finally got it. It's an amazing moment in the film.

So think about courage in this, first of all, these guys are climbing hundreds, thousands of feet in the air. They're taking a very calculated risk though, because what do they know happens if they fall? The other guy catches them. They know that somebody's holding the other end of that rope. And because somebody's holding the other end of that rope, a guy who may be didn't have quite the skill level that you would think would be necessary to complete this difficult climb, he was able to complete it, every single pitch, because he had a guy telling him, "You can do it." He had somebody holding on to the rope so he could take the risk, and he had this incredible goal, this incredible purpose to be the first two guys that had ever free climbed this incredible route up this couple of thousand foot rock face. And so, the courage of both of these guys just compelled them to not give in.

So, what does this look like in the Bible? Well, if you have a Bible, turn to Joshua 1 and let me set the scenario here. Joshua 1, Moses has just died. Now you all remember the story of the Exodus, the Israelites leave Egypt and they go through the wilderness. They are not an easy group of people to lead. Every time something goes wrong, they keep saying, "Slavery was better than this." But Moses perseveres, and he has a protégé. Moses has a protégé that he develops, and his name is Joshua. Joshua has been Moses' sort of second in command for a long time. He's very courageous, remember he and Caleb went with the other ten spies into the land of Canaan. The other ten spies came out and said, "They'll kill us, let's not go in." And Joshua and Caleb said, "The land is amazing, it's going to be great when we kill all those Canaanites and take their land from them." Different perspective.

And so, Joshua becomes then the leader of the people after the death of Moses. Now imagine if you're Joshua. You've been watching this for years and years and years. You've seen all the trouble Moses had. You've watched Moses make these incredible leadership decisions and keep the people going, keep the people together, keep the people following the pillar of fire at night and the pillar of cloud in the day. They've created the tabernacle, all the Levitical laws have been put in place as these people are wandering around Sinai Desert.

And you're just on the cusp of going in and this visionary leader, this founder of your journey gets taken away. And now it's on Joshua. And Joshua goes, "Yes! The old man's out of the way, it's my turn now. I'm going to be in charge." I don't think that was his reaction. I think his reaction was, "Oh, no! Moses is dead." And so, into that moment God speaks.

So Joshua 1, "After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' assistant: 'Moses my servant is dead, now therefore arise go over this Jordan,' that's enter the Promised Land. "You and all this people into the land I am giving to them, to the people of Israel." Listen to this promise, "Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon, I have given to you just as I promised to Moses. From the wilderness in this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, to the Great Sea, toward the going down of the sun shall be your territory. No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you."

Verse six, "Be strong and courageous, for you, Joshua, shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous, do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

And the rest of this book is the story of the Israelites sweeping into the Promised Land and taking it, under the leadership of the new guy. Joshua's leadership is just, Joshua is an amazing book if you read between the lines on leadership. And if you look, even in the beginning, how he inspires the confidence of his people they answered Joshua, go down to verse 16, "They answered Joshua, 'All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go, just as we obeyed Moses in all things, so we will obey you. Only may the Lord your God be with you as he was with Moses. Whoever rebels against your commandment and disobeys your words, whatever you command him, shall be put to death. Only be strong and courageous.'"

Joshua inspires this in the men. Why? Because courage is winsome. When a man sees courage in another man, he wants to follow that, he wants to be a part of that because it's a picture of the way that God wired us. He made us to be noble, he made us to be courageous. And a man fully alive, a man who is being everything that God made him to be is going to be a courageous man.

THE BIG IDEA

How? How is he going to be courageous? What ties all of this together? So here's the Big Idea, that courage equals faith times purpose. Courage equals faith times purpose. So what do I mean by that? What I mean is the focus of your faith and the power of your purpose determines the amount of your courage. Right? So if you are putting your faith in something strong, if you're putting your faith, if you're Kevin Jorgeson and you're putting your faith in Tommy Caldwell, that he's going to hold the other end of that rope, you can keep trying and keep trying and keep trying, knowing that every time you fail, he's going to catch you. Tommy Caldwell, in this case, is not going to forsake him because he wants him to be successful and so he puts his faith in Tommy that he's going to catch. He puts his faith in Tommy to give him instruction. He gets inspired by Tommy and eventually he's successful because he's focused on a guy who's going to help him be successful.

Along with that, he's got this incredible purpose, he wants to climb this huge cliff, every single pitch of it, only using his hands and feet on the rock. He wants to be with Tommy, the first guy to do that. There's power in a big purpose, in a compelling purpose. Joshua, he could be courageous because the focus of

his faith was God. The almighty God, Lord of the universe, who had led the people through the desert, who had saved the people from the Egyptians. He had grown up under the leadership and the guidance and the discipleship of Moses and when it came time for Joshua to take the reins, he focused on God. The other men saw that he was focused on God, and then he had a powerful purpose. His purpose was to bring the people into the Promised Land.

And so, he knew that God was there for him and that this purpose had been laid out in front of them. Guys, in your life, if you will find the right focus for your faith, if you will trust in God, and you will find the purpose for your life, whether that's raising godly kids, having a godly marriage, creating wealth that you can invest in kingdom work. Whether that's speaking into people's lives, that's taking your calling and your gifting and putting it into practice, ask God to show you a powerful purpose for your life. Put your faith in him. Focus your faith on God and you will be a courageous, strong, and powerful man.

Focus your faith on something that's fleeting, money, sex, pleasure, manly strength, status, reputation, those things are not a big enough thing to have your faith in. Those things are not a big enough purpose for you to live the kind of life that God calls you to live. So how do we get there then? Let's look at this tool, so our tool that we're going to talk about is ... Oh, by the way, here's a little shorthand for our big idea. You know $E = mc^2$? Well, $C = f^2p^2$. Courage = the focus of your faith and the power of your purpose. All right?

So, how do we get there? Well, worshiping God is a great way to get there. It helps you find that focus for your faith. Worshiping God helps you find that powerful purpose. Psalm 100:1-3 says, "Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness, come before him with joyful songs. Know that the Lord is God, it is he who made us and we are his people, the sheep of his pasture." And when we worship God, it gives us something worth focusing our faith on, and he will give us a powerful purpose.

FIND EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO WORSHIP GOD

How can we put this into action? Well here's your rock solid challenge for this week, find every opportunity to worship God, to focus on God's goodness and his greatness. I really want to encourage you, when you worship, I think a lot of times we have this vision of worship and it usually means singing in church. "Have you worshiped this week?" "Yes, we sang three praise choruses at church. One praise chorus we sang 27 times in a row, it was wonderful." Now, is that worship? Absolutely. I mean worship is this, singing praising choruses is this much of it. Okay?

So look for opportunities to worship. Engage your head, your heart, and your hands. Serving can be an act of worship. Focusing on a sunset and recognizing God's power in that sunset can be worship. Watching your kids interact with each other or play in a sporting event or do their homework and recognizing God's grace and power at work in your children's lives. That can be an act of worship. Noticing things about God, intentionally developing your knowledge, not just of Bible verses, but of the meaning of having the God of the universe being personally interested in your life. These are ways to worship God.

And then talk to him. We talked about prayer the first session. Talk to him, interact with him, have conversations with him. Tell him what you admire about him. That's how you can worship God, is tell him what you admire about him.

And then you learn about him, you keep learning about him. This is the DAWG that we talked about last week, your daily appointment with God, having a devotional life. Learn about God. And then worship him. And you know what, guys? I know, I know, the worship leaders sing too high. The words sometimes are a little goofy, "Clutch me to your bosom, Lord." I get it. Sing anyway. I stand in church and I see a lot of guys doing this. Put your hands down, get them out of your pockets, I'm a charismatic Presbyterian, I take my hands out of my pockets when I sing.

Listen to the words, don't just read and sing, but take in the content of what you're singing about. Look, you're not singing for the people in the room, you're singing for God. And so, take those opportunities to commune with God, to interact with God, in your church service, when you're alone, on your commute, when you're with your family, when you're out in nature, take every opportunity that you can to worship God. And you will find yourself having a more powerful purpose in your life, having the right focus for your faith. And you will live a courageous life.

So here's our Big Idea, **C = f2p2. Courage is a product of the focus of your faith and the power of your purpose. Let's pray, and then we'll have our discussion time.**

Father, we want to be courageous men. We want to be men who stand up for the Gospel, who speak clearly and winsomely about the power of your grace. Lord, we want to be men who have such a huge purpose of worshiping you, of bringing you glory, of being involved in reconciling the world to you, Lord, that that it so compels us, Father, that through the power of our faith in you and the power of Holy Spirit, Lord, we are courageous men. We are men who step into the fray. We are men in the arena, not men in the stands. And Lord, we pray that you would use us like you used Joshua to lead the people into the Promised Land. That you would use us to lead the people around us towards you and towards the promises that you have given us. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.