

It is no surprise, then, that God has always expected his people to “be strong and courageous.” This command is not, however, given without qualification; where the Lord makes demands, he provides instruction—found in Scripture (see 2 Timothy 3:16–17). Courage is developed when we place our confidence fully in the Lord and his power, understand the nature of our spiritual struggle and the schemes of the adversary, and choose to put on the heavenly armor—standing firm in the midst of the fight and fright (see Ephesians 6:10–12). Indeed, courage is ours for the taking, because Jesus has “overcome the world” (John 16:33).

As with any matter of the mind (attitude), courage is a choice we make. Will we sit in silence, like Nikita Khrushchev, while the battle for right rages around us, or will we confidently stand with the Lord, casting our fears on Him, strengthening our hearts by faith, and preparing our minds for action?

Be strong and courageous; through God you will win, Though great be the armies of error and sin. Your captain will lead you to conquer the land; His arm cannot fail you, and they cannot stand. Be strong and courageous, and conquer the foe! The Lord God is with you wherever you go! (Glenda Schales and Matthew Bassford)

Written by; Marshall McDaniel (taken from westlakechurchofchrist.org)

## Marietta church of Christ

8150 Driggers St.  
Jacksonville, FL 32220

### Times of Worship

Sunday:

9 am - Bible Classes / 10 am - Worship / 5 pm - Worship

Wednesday:

7 pm - Bible Study/Worship

Evangelist: Devin Barber

[www.mariettacoc.com](http://www.mariettacoc.com)



### Eight Marks of a Godless Man

“The transgression of the wicked uttereth its oracle; there is no fear of God before his eyes. For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, that his iniquity will not be found out and be hated. The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit: he hath ceased to be wise and to do good. He deviseth iniquity upon his bed; he setteth himself in a way that is not good; he abhorreth not evil” (Psalm 36.1-4).

Someone has said that verses 1-4 of this psalm are God’s revelation of man to himself, while verse 5-9 are God’s revelation of Himself to man. At any rate, there is in these verses a striking contrast of man’s wickedness with God’s goodness. Note that the wicked man bears these distinguishing marks:

1. **He has an oracle of his own (verse 1).** “The transgression of the wicked uttereth its oracle” — so says the marginal reading of the ASV. He makes his own rules, writes his own laws. The righteous man has his oracle from God (1 Peter 4.11). The godless man is a law unto himself, but he transgresses God’s law whether he admits it or not. The godless one has decided it is all right to sin — *he says so* (see Psalm 2.2-3; 12.4). This “oracle” (or saying) springs from rebellion to God.

2. **He has no concern for divine approval (verse 1).** “There is no fear of God before his eyes.” It is my judgement that the psalmist is referring here to the dread of God which acts as a check or restraint against sin. This man is like the one described in Psalm 10.11: “He saith in his heart, God hath forgotten, He hideth his face, he will never see it.” Thus he believe himself to be free to do whatever he wants.

**3. He is arrogant (verse 2).** “He flattereth himself in his own eyes.”

That is, he flatters himself as to God’s ability to find out and hate his sin. He actually believes that he can conceal his sin from God. This idea may come from his observation that iniquity is not immediately punished, and thus he infers that it never will be. The wicked man acts under the delusion that there is no divine retribution.

Several other things result from this erroneous attitude and thinking.

**4. His word is undependable (verse 3).** “The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit.” This man’s word cannot be trusted. “They speak falsehood everyone with his neighbor; with flattering lips, and with a double heart, do they speak (Psalm 12.2). He says only what serves his self-seeking interest.

**5. He is void of worthwhile activity (verse 3).** “He hath ceased to be wise and to do good.” A godless man has no real reason or desire to pursue things that are noble.

**6. He plots wickedness (verse 4).** “He deviseth iniquity upon his bed.” Even in his quiet and reflective moments he spends his time planning evil.

**7. He pursues a perverted course (verse 4).** “He setteth himself in a what that is not good.” This man does not just drift into evil; he follows it by design. He has progressed in sin so that he not only “stands in the way of sinners” but he also “sits in the seat of scoffers” (Psalm 1.1). He is entrenched in ungodliness.

**8. He tolerates evil (verse 4).** “He abhorreth not evil.” One the surface, thus may not seem to be such a serious charge; in reality, it is the final stroke in the description of the godless man. One who does not *hate evil* cannot possibly *love good* (Romans 12.9). Hatred of sin is an essential feature of God’s character. Habakkuk describes Jehovah as “Thou that art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and that canst not look on perverseness (1.13). We are warned: O ye that love Jehovah, hate evil” (Psalm 97.10; see also Jeremiah 44.4; Proverbs 6.16).

There are the marks of a godless man. Put this psalm in to practice and be sure that none of the salient characteristics mark your life.

Written by; Brent Lewis (Christianity Magazine, August 1985 (p. 249))

## Be Strong and Courageous

During his years as premier of the Soviet Union, Nikita Khrushchev denounced many of the policies and atrocities of Joseph Stalin. Once, as Khrushchev was criticizing Stalin in a public meeting, a heckler in the audience interrupted with a shout, “You were one of Stalin’s colleagues. Why didn’t you stop him?” “Who said that?!” roared Khrushchev. An agonizing silence followed. Then Khrushchev replied quietly, “Now you know why” (“Today in the Word,” July 13, 1993).

What was missing? Courage. Courage is a virtue that is continually assaulted by the wicked and always in danger of fading from human experience. Indeed, if it is not revived in the hearts of individuals in each successive generation, wicked policies and terrible atrocities will reign supreme in this world. Moreover, the lack of courage results in dread and dismay (see Joshua 1:9), yet, when it is present, there is “power” and “love” and “sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7, KJV). “We must build dikes of courage to hold back the flood of fear” (Martin Luther King, Jr.). Courage is, at least partly, the mainstay of all other virtues: “You will never do anything in this world without courage. It is the greatest quality of the mind next to honor” (Aristotle).

This quality of mind is somewhat difficult to define and is often better understood by experience—either positively by seeing it modeled in others or negatively by feeling the effects of its absence. The Scriptures do, however, supply helpful descriptions and illustrations of this important attitude and action. In the New Testament, the word *courage* translates a variety of Greek terms that all convey ideas of “confidence,” “boldness,” and “resolution.” Courage is not, however, the total absence of fear but “resistance to fear” and “mastery of fear” (Mark Twain). Where terror silences those worthy attitudes within us, courage expresses them. It is the characteristic that undergirds and motivates godly thinking and living.

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