



Daily Verse and Comment

Revelation 21:7-8

(7) He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. (8) But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.'

New King James Version

[God](#) declares that He will cast the cowardly into the Lake of Fire. This should give us pause because few of us are the kind of people who "run to the sound of the guns." For most of us, we have sometimes been brave, but perhaps many other times we have been timid and fearful. So what can we do to avoid being a coward when it matters most?

We will start with a definition. *Webster's American Dictionary* defines a *coward* as "a person who shows shameful lack of courage or fortitude." *Fortitude* is "mental and emotional strength in facing adversity, danger, or temptation courageously." The root of the word "coward" derives from the Latin word *coe*, which means "tail." Obviously, it comes from the common sight of an animal "turning tail" and fleeing "with its tail between its legs," metaphorical expressions still in use today.

An Old English word for "cowardly" is *earg*, which also means "slothful." This brings to mind [Matthew 25:24-30](#), where the slothful servant (KJV; the NKJV calls him "lazy") is sentenced to "outer darkness" for failing to carry out the job he was given to do. The servant justified his lack of action, saying, "I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground" ([Matthew 25:25](#)).

Examples of cowardice are found throughout the Bible. The first is that of Adam and Eve, who hid themselves from God, and then, after he was caught,

Adam attempted to shift the blame for his actions onto his wife. As the old joke goes, "Adam blamed Eve; Eve blamed the serpent; and the serpent, well, he didn't have a leg to stand on." Later, both Abraham and [Isaac](#) called their wives their sisters to save their skins. In Moses' day, the ten spies sent into Canaan were afraid to challenge the inhabitants of Canaan, and their cowardly actions dispirited the whole nation.

The New Testament contains examples of cowardice, too: the parents of the blind man whose sight was restored feared the Jews, the rich young ruler feared the loss of his wealth, the disciples feared the storm on the sea, and, of course, Peter denied [Jesus](#) rather than die with him as he had pledged. In Galatia, Peter and others played hypocrites because of fearing the church's Jewish leadership ([Galatians 2:11-14](#)).

The common thread in these occurrences is self-preservation; we all want to continue as we are without sacrificing anything. But God owns us heart and soul, and because of that fact, we need to consider the end toward which God is leading us. Jesus says in [Matthew 16:25](#), "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it." Jesus set us the perfect example of self-sacrifice and boldness, as His crucifixion was only the culmination of a lifelong example of dedication and sacrifice. So we, too, must deny ourselves and follow Him regardless of the cost to us ([Matthew 10:39](#)).

An old adage says, "Sow an act and reap a habit; sow a habit and reap a character; sow a character and reap a destiny." Human experience shows it to be generally true. If a person does something repeatedly, even if at first it is against his will, it will become a habitual practice, especially if it turns out to be a pleasurable experience. If the person continues in his habit until it becomes a necessity to him, it will engrave itself on his character, and at that point, his destiny is pretty much set. So it is with cowardice, running away in fear of hard choices and sacrifice. We cannot allow fear and flight to become our necessary, habitual reactions to difficult situations lest they become set in our characters.

As we have seen, cowardice is related to self-preservation, laziness, faithlessness, and the wrong kind of fear. In [I Corinthians 16:13](#), Paul exhorts us, "Watch, stand fast in the [faith](#), be brave, be strong."

[Deuteronomy 11:8](#) informs us that being strong comes from obeying God's commandments. [Moses](#) exhorts the Israelites in [Deuteronomy 31:6](#), "Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you." Paul encourages us in [Ephesians 6:10-17](#) to take the steps now to dress ourselves with the proper battle gear so that, when we must face the enemy, we will be ready to stand rather than run.

— John Reiss

To learn more, see:
[Fear Not \(Part Two\)](#)

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