

Courageous Living Session # 2

(Courageous DVD, Database for correct names addresses, Priorities checklist, copies, pens, treasure box, copies of the Resolution for Men, copies of Fatherhood Diminished)

Prior to the Start of the Meeting:

*Check for names, address, phone numbers, emails, wives names (if married)

*Open up book of Psalms for use with Spontaneous Prayer

Opening Song: Shout To The North or another appropriate song

Opening Prayer: Spontaneous Prayer using Psalms

(Discussion Starter Questions: 1 question per group; discuss for 5 minutes & report out to other groups; or if group is already small answer together)

- 1.) How have you seen the lack of strong fathers affecting this generation
- 2.) {Read the Resolution Points out loud} Which of those "I will" commitments challenges you the most?
- 3.) How has your relationship with your father affected your life? And how has that relationship affected your view of God?

Courageous Living Session # 1 Recap

-In our first session we were called to courageously fight for our families; to defend them at all times

-We came to realize that we are in a battle and that this battle is not of flesh and blood but a spiritual battle.

-We came to understand that as men, we are under attack because as the man goes, so goes the family... as the family goes so goes the society.

-We came to realize that God's Holy Word, in the Bible, is living and not dead and that it has meaning for us today.

-By reading his word and obeying his CALL, God helps us to take back our responsibility as a man of God, a father, a husband, a son, a brother, an uncle, a priest.

-God is always there to help us lead our family and he never leaves us alone; he is calling us to lead, guide, and protect all who are placed under our care

-Our success with this mission is directly tied to our commitment to reading God's Living Word

-We learned about a Saint that had a calling from God to serve and rebuild the church and he did it in simple, yet profound ways

-We read in the CCC that we are called to know, love, and serve God in this life so that we may be happy with him forever in the next life.

Session 2: COURAGEOUS PRIORITIES

Living Large has a new meaning as of July 2012. While entering a lottery is not advised, Allen and Violet Large of Nova Scotia, Canada, won \$11.3 million in a lottery. After taking care of family and friends, the couple set out to give away the remainder of the money. They gave the rest of their winnings away to local churches, charities, hospitals, and even a local fire station. They told the newspaper, "What you've never had, you never miss!"

Violet Large, who was suffering from cancer at the time and undergoing chemotherapy, felt compelled to give generously to local hospitals and to cancer research. Allen Large told the newspapers that the money meant nothing to him and that it was much more important that the two had each other.

The Larges spoke openly about how winning the lottery had complicated their lives and had been as much a burden as a blessing. Their generosity easily begs the question, "what is really important in life & what are our priorities?"

Large Group Discussion: So we ask you...

- 1.) What does society, the media, and men value as important in life?
- 2.) What are you beginning to realize is important in life?

Keeping up with the Joneses is a challenge for anyone. Comparing ourselves to others and coveting thy neighbors goods can lead to one of two things: aggression or depression. It can either lead you to aggressively pursue what you don't have in order to achieve status that in the end won't satisfy or it can lead you to be overwhelmingly depressed as you shift your focus from life's blessings to unmet wants and desires.

What makes the Larges' generosity so newsworthy is that it is so uncommon. When we find people who understand what matters most, they stand out. It takes COURAGE to be different and to have your life set apart according to a different (higher) standard.

We are being called to begin the process of **STANDING UP & STANDING OUT** with COURAGE and to reorganize our priorities; to model how to live, and move and be; not **NECESSARILY** with words but with actions. We are all being called to be the "light of the world... a city set on a hill."

Courageous Clip # 2: Javier Suit Scene (Courageous DVD 1:16:22 – 1:17:50)

Some keys to this scene:

- Javier just bought a brand new suit (looking at the receipt at open of scene)
- Financially this is a stretch for their family; Javier has second thoughts
- Wife and children are excited about how he looks
- Wife insists that it is the right thing to do to set the importance of what is taking place
- Javier feels like a rich man; Carmen reminds him that he is rich (wife, kids, faith)

Matthew 6:19 – 21

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and decay destroy, and thieves break in and steal. But store up treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor decay destroys, nor thieves break in and steal. **FOR WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS, THERE ALSO WILL YOUR HEART BE.**"

Have men complete Priorities Checklist.

Review & Discuss: Men's Priority Checklist (allow for 5 - 10 minutes)

- A.) What did you realize by doing this checklist?
- B.) What activity would you like to increase?
- C.) What activity would you like to decrease?

Discussion Questions 2: (allow for up to 10 minutes in small group)

1A. Right now, if we were to ask ourselves what we talk about and think about most often, and spend our time and money on, we would discover where our heart is and what we treasure most.

1B. Taking all of that into consideration, In 1 word, where would you say your treasure has been?

2. What 3 things did Carmen identify in Javier's life that made him a truly rich man?

3. List 3 things that matter most to you in this life.

4. Usually relationships tend to move to the top of our priorities list. How is your relationship with God? With your wife? With your family?

5. How might our lives be different if we began to prioritize and live for the things that matter most to us?

Bible Study:

God's word vividly illustrates the principle of wrong priorities. The city of Jericho had just been burned and overtaken (Joshua 6). God commanded that no one should take and keep the precious metals and ores of Jericho, but instead place them in the treasury of the Lord's house. If they obeyed, it would reveal that pleasing God was more important to them than possessing worldly treasures.

God was with Joshua and Israel just as He had promised. His specific instructions spread. Then it happened. Joshua 7:1 tells the story of Achan and the anger of the Lord imposed on the Israelites as the result of sin.

Joshua 7: 1- 15 *Defeat at Ai.*

1 But the Israelites acted treacherously with regard to the ban; Achan, son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah of the tribe of Judah, took goods that were under the ban, and the anger of the LORD flared up against the Israelites. **2** Joshua next sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is near Beth-aven and east of Bethel, with the order, "Go up and reconnoiter the land." When they had explored Ai, **3** they returned to Joshua and advised, "Do not send all the people up; if only about two or three thousand go up, they can attack and overcome Ai. You need not tire all the people: the enemy there are few." **4** About three thousand of the people made the attack, but they fled before the army at Ai, **5** who killed some thirty-six of them. They pursued them from the city gate to the Shebarim, and defeated them on the descent, so that the confidence of the people melted away like water.

6 Joshua, together with the elders of Israel, tore their garments and fell face down before the ark of the LORD until evening; and they threw dust on their heads. **7** "Alas, Lord GOD," Joshua prayed, "why did you ever allow this people to cross over the Jordan, delivering us into the power of the Amorites, that they might destroy us? Would that we had been content to dwell on the other side of the Jordan. **8** Please, Lord, what can I say, now that Israel has turned its back to its enemies? **9** When the Canaanites and the other inhabitants of the land hear of it, they will close in around us and efface our name from the earth. What will you do for your great name?"

10 The LORD replied to Joshua: Stand up. Why are you lying there? **11** Israel has sinned: they have transgressed the covenant which I enjoined on them. They have taken goods subject to the ban. They have stolen and lied, placing the goods in their baggage. **12** If the Israelites cannot stand up to their enemies, but must turn their back to them, it is because they are under the ban. I will not continue to be with you unless you remove that which is banned from among you. **13** Get up, sanctify the people. Tell them, "Sanctify yourselves before tomorrow, for thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: That which is banned is in your midst, Israel. You cannot stand up to your enemies until you remove it from among you. **14** In the morning you must come forward by tribes. The tribe which the LORD designates shall come forward by clans; the clan which the LORD designates shall come forward by families; the family which the LORD designates shall come forward one by one. **15** Whoever is designated as having incurred the ban shall be destroyed by fire, with all that is his, because he has transgressed the covenant of the LORD and has committed a shameful crime in Israel."

Discussion Questions 3: (Large Group)

1.) What did Achan put as his treasure or priority?

2.) What did God do in response to Achan's sin?

3.) How did Joshua respond to God right after the battle of Ai (vv 7 - 9)

Joshua 7: 16 - 26 Achan's Guilt and Punishment.

16 Early the next morning Joshua had Israel come forward by tribes, and the tribe of Judah was designated. **17** Then he had the clans of Judah come forward, and the clan of Zerah was designated. He had the clan of Zerah come forward by families, and Zabdi was designated. **18** Finally he had that family come forward one by one, and Achan, son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah of the tribe of Judah, was designated. **19** Joshua said to Achan, "My son, give glory to the LORD, the God of Israel, and praise him by telling me what you have done; do not hide it from me." **20** Achan answered Joshua, "I have indeed sinned against the LORD, the God of Israel. This is what I have done:

21 Among the spoils, I saw a beautiful Babylonian mantle, two hundred shekels of silver, and a bar of gold fifty shekels in weight; I coveted them and I took them. They are now hidden in the ground inside my tent, with the silver underneath." **22** Joshua sent messengers and they ran to the tent and there they were, hidden in the tent, with the silver underneath. **23** They took them from the tent, brought them to Joshua and all the Israelites, and spread them out before the LORD. **24** Then Joshua and all Israel took Achan, son of Zerah, with the silver, the mantle, and the bar of gold, and with his sons and daughters, his ox, his donkey and his sheep, his tent, and all his possessions, and led them off to the Valley of Achor. **25** Joshua said, "What misery have you caused us? May the LORD bring misery upon you today!" And all Israel stoned him to death. They burnt them with fire and they stoned them. **26** Over Achan they piled a great heap of stones, which remains to the present day. Then the LORD turned from his anger. That is why the place is called the Valley of Achor to this day.

SOME INSIGHTS:

The Promised Land was not simply a gift from God to Israel. It was the gift that proved Gods power and presence was real and tangible. The gift of the land made it possible for Israel to survive. It was a gift like no other, it provided food, clothing and shelter. Without the land Israel could not be a people. The promise Land was the central theme of their faith.

The book of Joshua is the conclusion of one story (God demonstrates his faithfulness and love for his people by liberating them from slavery and leading them to the promise land); and it is also the beginning of another story (the Israelites struggle to maintain control of the land).

In the book of Judges and the remaining books of the Bible we see a consistent pattern of the Israelite community having their priorities mixed up and misusing the gifts God has given them. (Much like us)

*Some keys to remember when answering the following questions:

- God judged the nation based on the sins of 1 individual
- God removed his blessing because of the sins of 1 individual
- Sin was in the camp and it had to be removed
- Achan's entire family suffered and died because of his sin

-Remember when Shane was dealing drugs as a police officer and Adam had to turn him in
-1 failing grade brings down a G.P.A.; 1 act of infidelity can bring down a family; 1 single sin of omission or commission can have everlasting effects on our family for generations to come

- One misplaced value / priority is all satan needs to grab a foothold in our family
- Achan coveted the things of this world rather than the promises of God
- He couldn't even enjoy the spoils of the treasure he took, he had to bury them and hide them in order to have them

Discussion Questions 4: Large Group Discussion (10 minutes)

4.) Why did Achan take from the articles consecrated to the Lord (v21)?

5.) What are the false idols and gods, we take as our first priority, in our society today?

6.) Why do you think Achan's sin stood out enough for God to teach the people such a strong lesson?

7.) What does this story have to do with us and our attempt at taking the Courageous Resolution?

Saintly Priorities:

He was born to Monica and Patricius Aurelius in Algeria, North Africa in 354 AD. He is considered to be one of the most important church fathers and is a Doctor of the Church. He was raised a Christian and left the faith at age 17. He became a well educated and successful young man who rose to great distinction in the academic world. In his 20's and early 30's he lived a hedonistic lifestyle of sexual exploitation of women and having a son out of wed lock. He was often quoted as saying, "Grant me chastity and continence, but not yet." Finally, through the prayers of his mother and guidance of St. Ambrose, he became a Christian at age 35. At one point of his Conversion, he heard a child-like voice saying, "Take up and read. (the Bible)" He opened the Bible to St. Paul's Letter to the Romans 13:11-14 which spoke about not living for the flesh but living for Jesus Christ himself. He eventually became a priest and then a bishop. He increased / re-established the faith of the people of his time. He helped to formulate the doctrine of Original sin and often spoke about God's grace. He died at the age of 76 and is the patron saint of brewers, printers, theologians, and those needing alleviation of sore eyes. He is often credited with the following quote, "Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you." His name is ?????

St. Augustine of Hippo

Catechism of Catholic Church:

Because Jesus came to earth as both God and man, we have the ability to have a personal relationship with him. That personal relationship with him is based upon our prayers. Through prayer we can nurture and develop this personal relationship with him.

Christian prayer is prayer in the attitude of faith, hope, and charity. It is persevering and resigns itself to the will of God. Someone who prays as a Christian steps, at that moment, out of himself and enters into an attitude of trusting faith in the one God and Lord; at the same time he places all his hope in God that He will hear, understand, accept, and perfect him in faith.

THE LIFE OF PRAYER

2697 Prayer is the life of the new heart. It ought to animate us at every moment. But we tend to forget him who is our life and our all. This is why the Fathers of the spiritual life in the Deuteronomic and prophetic traditions insist that prayer is a remembrance of God often awakened by the memory of the heart "We must remember God more often than we draw breath." But we cannot pray "at all times" if we do not pray at specific times, consciously willing it. These are the special times of Christian prayer, both in intensity and duration.

2698 The Tradition of the Church proposes to the faithful certain rhythms of praying intended to nourish continual prayer. Some are daily, such as morning and evening prayer, grace before and after meals, the Liturgy of the Hours. Sundays, centered on the Eucharist, are kept holy primarily by prayer. The cycle of the liturgical year and its great feasts are also basic rhythms of the Christian's life of prayer.

2699 The Lord leads all persons by paths and in ways pleasing to him, and each believer responds according to his heart's resolve and the personal expressions of his prayer. However, Christian Tradition has retained three major expressions of prayer: vocal, meditative, and contemplative. They have one basic trait in common: composure of heart. This vigilance in keeping the Word and dwelling in the presence of God makes these three expressions intense times in the life of prayer.

IN CONCLUSION:

The desire for happiness resides in every human. St. Augustine once said, "Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in You." Re-organizing our priorities will help us to find the true joy and happiness that God desires for all of us. All it takes is for us to be faithful men. God has, and will continue to use, imperfect men like us to save and lead our families, our church, and our country. Let us begin anew with lives of prayer and to reorganize our priorities to be in line with God's will for us.

HOME STUDY:

*Children Live What They Learn

*Resolution for Men Book Chapters 3, 4, 5 and answer questions in book

*Read rest of Joshua Chapter 7 and answer At Home Study Questions below

*Read 1 John 2: 15 - 17

*Read One of the following: Story of Gideon (Judges Chapter 6 – 8); Samson (Judges Chapter 13 – 16)

*Next Month Meeting date:

At Home Study Questions for Chapter 7 of Joshua

- 1.) How does the world tempt you to place value on material wealth more than on Christ?
- 2.) Share a time when something you thought was very satisfying turned out not to satisfy you at all. What things other than God do you look to for satisfaction?
- 3.) Does the philosophy of “keeping up with the Joneses” ever take hold of you? Of your family?
- 4.) How does the current economic climate have you wanting more and fearfully holding on to what you have?
- 5.) Are we allowing hidden sin in our lives? Do we really think it will not affect our families?
- 6.) How can we literally stamp sin out of our lives today?
- 7.) How is repentance from sin like putting it to death in our lives?

“Anytime our selfish desires take priority over God’s Word in our lives, we sin. That sin has powerful implications for our spiritual health as well as the condition of our family’s spiritual health. When we desire the things of this world more than the things of God, we open up our lives and our family to dissatisfaction and ultimately to the consequences of our actions. MISPLACED VALUES MEAN MISPLACED LIVES.”

Shout To The North:

1.) Men of faith rise up and sing, of the great and glorious King. You are strong when you feel weak, in your brokenness complete...

CHORUS: Shout to the North and the South. Sing to the East and the West. Jesus is Savior to all Lord of Heaven and earth.

2.) We've been through fire, we've been through rain; We've been refined by the power of Your name. We've fallen deeper in love with You; You've burned the truth on our lips. CHORUS

3.) Rise up church with broken wings, Fill this place with songs again. Of our God who reigns on high; by His grace again we'll fly. CHORUS

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PRIORITIES CHECKLIST

Using the total number of 24 hours in a day, HONESTLY, write down how many hours you spend doing the following:

_____ Working (paid)

_____ Working (unpaid)

_____ Praying / attending church services

_____ Sleeping

_____ Computer / Internet

_____ Sports / Leisure (reading, games, etc.)

_____ Eating meals with your family

_____ Watching TV

_____ Playing / Spending time with family / children

_____ Yard Work

24 Hours Total

Children Learn What They Live

Children who live with criticism learn to condemn

Children who live with hostility learn to fight

Children who live with fear learn to be apprehensive

Children who live with pity learn to feel sorry for themselves

Children who live with ridicule learn to feel shy

Children who live with jealousy learn to feel envy

Children who live with shame learn to feel guilty

Children who live with encouragement learn confidence

Children who live with tolerance learn patience

Children who live with praise learn appreciation

Children who live with acceptance learn to love

Children who live with approval learn to like themselves

Children who live with recognition, learn it's good to have goals

Children who live with sharing learn generosity

Children who live with honesty learn truthfulness

Children who live with fairness learn justice

Children who live with kindness and consideration learn respect

Children who live with security learn to have faith in themselves & those about them

Children who live with friendliness learn the world is a nice place in which to live

Courageous Living Session #2
COURAGEOUS PRIORITIES

Discussion Starter Questions #1

- 1.) How have you seen the lack of strong fathers affecting this generation
- 2.) {Read the Resolution Points out loud} Which of those “I will” commitments challenges you the most?
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Discussion Questions 2: (Small Groups)

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1B. Taking all of that into consideration, In 1 word, where would you say your treasure has been?

2. What 3 things did Carmen identify in Javier's life that made him a truly rich man?

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Discussion Questions 4: Large Group Discussion (10 minutes)

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7.) What does this story have to do with us and our attempt at taking the Courageous Resolution?

Saintly Priorities:

He was born to Monica and Patricius Aurelies in Algeria, North Africa in 354 AD. He is considered to be one of the most important church fathers and is a Doctor of the Church. He was raised a Christian and left the faith at age 17. He became a well educated and successful young man who rose to great distinction in the academic world. In his 20's and early 30's he lived a hedonistic lifestyle of sexual exploitation of women and having a son out of wed lock. He was often quoted as saying, "Grant me chastity and continence, but not yet." Finally, through the prayers of his mother and guidance of St. Ambrose, he became a Christian at age 35. At one point of his Conversion, he heard a child-like voice saying, "Take up and read. (the Bible)" He opened the Bible to St. Paul's Letter to the Romans 13:11-14 which spoke about not living for the flesh but living for Jesus Christ himself. He eventually became a priest and then a bishop. He increased / re-established the faith of the people of his time. He helped to formulate the doctrine of Original sin and often spoke about God's grace. He died at the age of 76 and is the patron saint of brewers, printers, theologians, and those needing alleviation of sore eyes. He is often credited with the following quote, "Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you." His name is ?????

Catechism of Catholic Church:

Because Jesus came to earth as both God and man, we have the ability to have a personal relationship with him. That personal relationship with him is based upon our prayers. Through prayer we can nurture and develop this personal relationship with him.

Christian prayer is prayer in the attitude of faith, hope, and charity. It is persevering and resigns itself to the will of God. Someone who prays as a Christian steps, at that moment, out of himself and enters into an attitude of trusting faith in the one God and Lord; at the same time he places all his hope in God that He will hear, understand, accept, and perfect him in faith.

THE LIFE OF PRAYER

2697 Prayer is the life of the new heart. It ought to animate us at every moment. But we tend to forget him who is our life and our all. This is why the Fathers of the spiritual life in the Deuteronomic and prophetic traditions insist that prayer is a remembrance of God often awakened by the memory of the heart "We must remember God more often than we draw breath." But we cannot pray "at all times" if we do not pray at specific times, consciously willing it. These are the special times of Christian prayer, both in intensity and duration.

2698 The Tradition of the Church proposes to the faithful certain rhythms of praying intended to nourish continual prayer. Some are daily, such as morning and evening prayer, grace before and after meals, the Liturgy of the Hours. Sundays, centered on the Eucharist, are kept holy primarily by prayer. The cycle of the liturgical year and its great feasts are also basic rhythms of the Christian's life of prayer.

2699 The Lord leads all persons by paths and in ways pleasing to him, and each believer responds according to his heart's resolve and the personal expressions of his prayer. However, Christian Tradition has retained three major expressions of prayer: vocal, meditative, and contemplative. They have one basic trait in common: composure of heart. This vigilance in keeping the Word and dwelling in the presence of God makes these three expressions intense times in the life of prayer.

IN CONCLUSION:

The desire for happiness resides in every human. St. Augustine once said, "Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in You." Re-organizing our priorities will help us to find the true joy and happiness that God desires for all of us. All it takes is for us to be faithful men. God has, and will continue to use, imperfect men like us to save and lead our families, our church, and our country. Let us begin anew with lives of prayer and to reorganize our priorities to be in line with God's will for us.

HOME STUDY:

*Children Live What They Learn

*Resolution for Men Book Chapters 3, 4, 5 and answer questions in book

*Read rest of Joshua Chapter 7 and answer At Home Study Questions below

*Read 1 John 2: 15 - 17

*Read One of the following: Story of Gideon (Judges Chapter 6 - 8); Samson (Judges Chapter 13 - 16)

*Next Month Meeting Date:

At Home Study Questions for Chapter 7 of Joshua

- 1.) How does the world tempt you to place value on material wealth more than on Christ?
- 2.) Share a time when something you thought was very satisfying turned out not to satisfy you at all. What things other than God do you look to for satisfaction?
- 3.) Does the philosophy of “keeping up with the Joneses” ever take hold of you? Of your family?
- 4.) How does the current economic climate have you wanting more and fearfully holding on to what you have?
- 5.) Are we allowing hidden sin in our lives? Do we really think it will not affect our families?
- 6.) How can we literally stamp sin out of our lives today?
- 7.) How is repentance from sin like putting it to death in our lives?

“Anytime our selfish desires take priority over God’s Word in our lives, we sin. That sin has powerful implications for our spiritual health as well as the condition of our family’s spiritual health. When we desire the things of this world more than the things of God, we open up our lives and our family to dissatisfaction and ultimately to the consequences of our actions. MISPLACED VALUES MEAN MISPLACED LIVES.”