

SOMETHING TO CHEW ON

Everyone needs courage. The slum dweller needs courage to cope with monotonous food, overcrowded rooms, and the claustrophobic horizon of bricks, asphalt and concrete. The white-collar worker needs courage to keep up with ever-present time payments, and the spiralling costs of clothes, food, and the occasional holiday away from the relentless tedium of inescapable routine. The sick need courage to be patient. The bereaved need courage to face life with a diminished circle of companionship. The rich need courage to cope with the risks of investments and the demands of the tax man. Soldiers need courage to risk everything in a supreme act that may or may not affect the course of history. We all need courage. But how to find it, that's the question.

Most of us lack confidence. We act a little like a frightened youngster on his first day at school. We are somewhat awed with the scene. It seems too big for us. We are strangers. We are far from capable. Hardly cut out for the struggle. We doubt we are equal to the demand. So we retreat into a shell and say, "The quicker this is over, the better." We paint a mini-picture of ourselves, hang it in the front window of our minds and say, "That's my limit. So far - no further".

It is all so wrong! We have tremendous abilities. We have outstanding capabilities. We have limitless opportunities. We have enormous potential. And there is a formula that can revolutionize the rest of our life. A lack of courage causes most of our difficulties, so a formula that shows how to regain courage will resolve most of our problems.

The word courage comes from the word "coeur," which means "heart". The great English king "Richard Coeur de Lion," was in reality Richard with the heart of a lion. He entertained only big concepts. He never allowed his thinking to become small. He looked beyond the problems to the potential solutions.

During the last war, Winston Churchill wrote these words of Queen Victoria on a piece of cardboard, and placed them in his underground cabinet room, "Please understand there is no pessimism in the house, and we are not interested in the possibilities of defeat. They do not exist." With that attitude, small wonder England rallied behind Churchill.

Seneca wrote, "Courage leads starward. Fear leads towards death." You need courage for a positive, satisfying and fulfilling life. Richter said, "Courage consists not in blindly overlooking danger, but in seeing and conquering it." What then is the key to courage in life?

It is based on a changed way of thinking, because as a "man thinketh in his heart so is he." Proverbs 23:7. The way we think, determines the way we act. The way we act determines how we get on in life. Most people fail to make great progress because they don't dare to do so! Their restricted thinking cripples progress. They don't expand in business, because they think in terms of small business. They don't excel in sports because they think of themselves as being mediocre. They don't get promotion at work because they think of themselves as being one of the lesser workers. They don't get top

marks at school because they think of their mental capacity as ordinary. But in this life it is not I.Q., or being born with "an aggressive attitude," or being a "born leader" that counts. IT IS HOW WE THINK that determines where we will go, how fast we will go, and what rewards we will get as we go. Change our thinking and we change everything.

"It sounds too simple," we say. "I'm just an ordinary sort of person. It might work for someone else, but it would never work for me." If we think that way, it will be that way! The limits of our thinking are the limits of our development.

We might say, "I never get any breaks." But that is just not true. Everyone has similar opportunities, only some recognize them, others don't. Opportunity knocks at every door. But we have to be awake to hear the knocks. Opportunities come more by being aware than by waiting.

When we dismiss negative, defeatist thoughts, thoughts of imagined or real fears, and think positively, it will do three things for us.

First, we will accept each new situation as a challenge not a burden. Face the problem. Say, "I'm going to find a way through this," This attitude will take us halfway to the answer. Remember, "Problems are only solutions in disguise."

Pierre and Marie Curie had to use a ton of pitchblende, fifty tons of water and five tons of chemicals to produce just six grams of radium. Edison said, "I speak without exaggeration when I say I have constructed three thousand different theories in connection with the electric light, each one of them reasonable and apparently likely to be true. Yet in two cases only did my experiments prove the truth of my theory." The positive attitude which says "I will succeed" is the one that gives you courage to tackle each new situation as a challenge.

Second, a positive attitude promotes good physical health which makes it easier to tackle life as it comes. A doctor once said, "More human suffering has resulted from negativism than from any other single cause." When a person loses the WILL to live, then medical science is greatly handicapped. If a man is sick, thinking can be as important as medicine.

Len Barnard was a pilot. He was one of that strange breed of men called missionaries. He had been happy to exchange the comforts and conveniences of modern life for a small mission station in the highlands of New Guinea. In November, 1966 while testing the compression in the cylinders of his little plane prior to takeoff, by a million to one chance some heated carbon caused the engine momentarily to spring to life. The spinning propeller virtually severed one of his legs above the knee. Miraculously the surgeons at Goroka successfully stitched it back on and before too long he was back in the cockpit of his plane. Medically speaking he should not have that leg. But through faith in God and a firm will, he regained its use. And, incidentally, while lying in bed, weights dragging on his foot to stop the injured leg shrinking, he turned author and wrote a captivating best-seller called "Banish the Darkness."

Which brings us to the third aspect, a positive mental attitude. That is, allowing the mind to act as God originally made it. Resources are available that can change our way of thinking. The Bible says, "God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." 2 Timothy 1:7. We are born with a negative nature. Modern psychiatry has tried to devise means of making it a positive nature - with varying degrees of success. But God has a plan where we can quit this nature, so to speak. Get rid of it because it's negative. He says, "Start again" - be "born again" is the Biblical phrase - and in this new life, here and now, we will automatically have a positive, progressive, expansive, successful way of thinking, and then life will automatically follow the same vein.