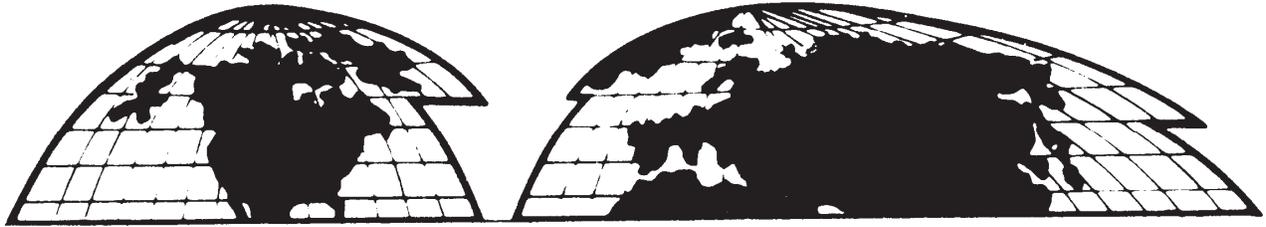
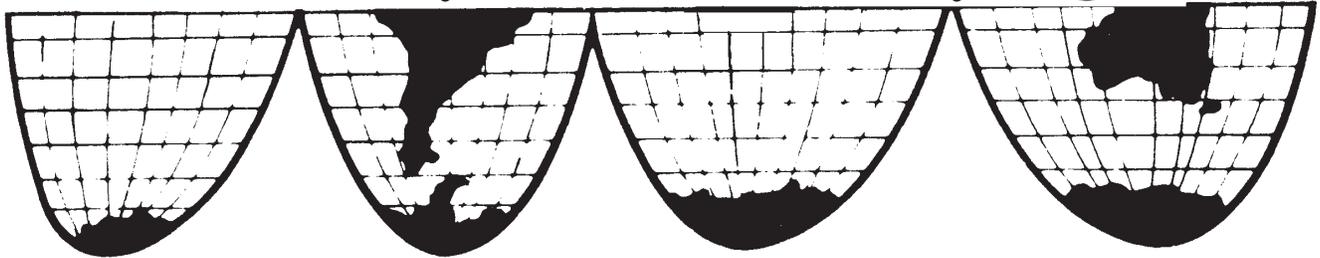


PRAYER IS THE MIGHTIEST FORCE • II CHRON. 7:14



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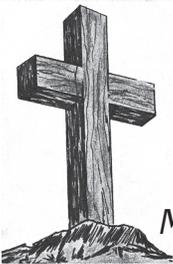
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Thomas A. Edison once said, *"The greatest part of the courage that is needed in the world is not a heroic kind. The common need is for courage to be honest, courage to resist temptation and courage to speak the truth."*

Why is it that so many of us begin as defenders of principles and grow up to be cynics? What has happened to us? Where did we go wrong? Are we ourselves to blame, or society? Today most everything in life is being measured by dollars and cents and it is becoming increasingly difficult to see anything beyond that point. As Oscar Wilde put it: *"We see the price of everything, but the value of nothing."* There was a time when we were so anxious to die for our ideals, for they seemed so honorable and priceless. Now the society says: *"You have beautiful aspirations, but they are not practical. In this life it is every man for himself; if you don't believe it just stick around and you will see."*

Why does our society scorn principles, morals, honor and courage as old-fashioned taboos? Many of our forefathers were ardent defenders of principles and ideals, and what an enduring legacy they left in this republic, America. Some of them had to sacrifice their lives to preserve and protect the sanctity of their cherished ideals and convictions. The crown is for the courageous, not for the indolent. If our conviction is from God, no fire will ever be able to quench it. The modern problem is that profit kills ideals and convictions. For example, a young man begins his journey in life with bold courage and deep conviction; he passionately believes in his basic ideals: honor, courage, fair play and integrity. Nothing, he thinks, shall keep him from his noble objectives. So he charts his course with pure ideas and noble goals and runs into his first competition, and there he learns a valuable lesson on profit; principles are elbowed into the sewer. So the young man asks himself, *"Why should I bend over backward to be honest, when it is so easy to be dishonest?"* Here he experiences the untimely death of principles and ideals. So he joins the crowd and conducts business as usual.

In ancient Greece there were two classes of intellectual leaders: the philosophers and the sophists. The true philosopher was the one who sought after wisdom, who placed the pursuit of wisdom above all personal vantage, who was willing to lay down his life for the truth. The true philoso-

Courage, a Missing Virtue



Matthew Skariah

pher exposed sham-goodness and fallacious opinions without regard to personal safety. He was therefore at times persecuted, even put to death. Socrates, before taking hemlock, said, *"I would rather die having spoken after my manner than to speak in your manner and live."* But on the other hand, the sophist was the one who taught the art of sophistry by becoming a demagogue and an apple-polisher. His art consisted of inflammatory phrases, convoluted logic and rhetorical barages without endurance or substance or reality.

When we elbow principles into the sewer, we are in great danger of befogging their seriousness and vast inclusiveness. We should never allow social and political considerations and material advantages to obstruct principles and values. A person of real conviction will overcome a pathetic air of apology, a ring of feebleness and a sickly note of timidity. We answer the modern-day material sophists as though they were the accusers and we are the accused; we accept their pernicious and twisted doctrine of profit over principles; we callously let ourselves be drawn into their materialistic dialectic.

Almost everyone has heard and admired the ardent testimony of Polycarp, the Christian saint and martyr, and a companion of the apostle John. When asked to denounce Christ or forfeit his life, he responded: *"Eighty and six years have I served Him and He has never done me wrong; and how can I blaspheme my king who has saved me?"* Polycarp's courage still remains a source of spiritual strength and inspirations to millions around the world.

I wish every person in the world and particularly in the United States would establish his/her conviction like William Lloyd Garrison, who liberated almost 4 million slaves through the 'underground railroad.' He said, *"I will be heard. I am in earnest. I will not prevaricate. I will not retreat an inch."* Do you know what they did to him? During a Boston riot on October 31 1835, they dragged him through the streets of Boston and he barely escaped death. They abused him physically because of his strong conviction against slavery. But after his death, the good citizens of Boston built a great monument in his memory.

In 1941, when Great Briton was facing total inhalation at the hand of the Nazis — Winston Churchill declared these words: *"Never, never,*

never, never give up.” He spoke to his fellow countrymen that he was not brought into the Premiership for the liquidation of Great Briton. Greatness is produced in the crucibles. William Penn, the great Quaker Statesman wrote: “Right is right even if everyone is against it and wrong is wrong even if everyone is in favor of it.” We must teach our young people more than letters, mathematics, history and philosophy. They must also be trained in the art of courage, honesty, respect, fair play, values and the importance of

soul and conscience. Moral and ethical decisions should be made by consulting with our conscience. As Alexander Pope expressed his commitment: “Unblemished let me live or die unknown; give me an honest frame or give me none.”

One does not have to compromise his basic ideals and principles to get ahead in life. Nice guys don’t finish last, and being true to our conviction is not a sign of weakness, but a sign of strength and courage and moral moorings.

“Lord, give me the courage of my convictions. Make me put up or shut up.”
(Robert Raines)

MATTHEW SKARIAH IS AN INTERCESSOR, FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR OF WORLD PRAYER BAND MINISTRIES, AND THE AUTHOR OF PRAYERGRAM, A FREE MONTHLY PUBLICATION, FIVE BOOKS, AND CURRENTLY WORKING ON A NEW BOOK.

If you’re looking for an argument against Christianity, you can always find a carnal and disgrumped Christian and attempt to make an example out of him. The media does that all the time. They always come up with an example of a failed Christian who left the faith for moral laxity. So if you happen to be cynical about the Christian faith, I appeal to your intellect, not to make a rash judgment on Christianity or Christians on the basis of some failed preachers or Christians. If you walk away from God, because of the action of one sinful individual, then your faith is shallow. At times, man’s logic seems to be more palatable than God’s Word, and man’s rhetoric appears to be more intellectual than God’s precepts.

People who level faulty charges against Christianity especially are afraid to look within themselves. Truth always exposes our hidden agenda and brings us naked before our Creator. People need to think for themselves, and not let others do their thinking. If we sincerely approach the throne of God, He can free us from the tyranny of our own ego! Oh, the facade, the camflouge, the pretense, the deception! Recently, I read a stat that one in every three Britons admit to buying a book “strictly to look intelligent.” We are afraid to look within ourselves because we may find things hidden that we don’t want anyone else to

know about. That is why the doctrine of “dying to self” is so unpopular among Christians as well as non Christians.

Culture Watch by Matthew Skariah Faulty Argument

When was the last time we attended a Bible conference on “dying to self?” I rest my case. One cannot approach the ‘hill of Golgotha’ with pride, sin, egotism; the cross of Christ shatters all pride and carnality. Every believer should make a journey to the ‘hill of Golgotha’ every day, every hour, every minute and every second to have a better perspective of sin and all its alluring propositions.

Unbelievers live a monotonous life; obsessed with self; while saints live a glorious life, blessing God and others. When we start questioning God, we cease to obey God. When we surrender ourselves to His will, the problems never come between us and God. Over and over again, men water down the Word of God to accommodate rebellious people who do not love God, and consequently the Word of God is trampled under the feet of “swine.” Unbelievers are full of self and willing to side step everything that is good and wholesome and pure in order to prove their point of view while practicing disdain for God and His Word. How can we achieve greatness when we lack humility? We must stop our patronage of Jesus Christ and of the Bible, and have a much deeper affection and reverence for the holiness of God as it is taught by Hebrew wisdom.

Walk humbly. Listen quietly. Act reverentially. Behave properly.
Think deeply. Live vigorously.

Just a thought... Imagine, George Muller, God’s chosen servant, a remarkable man of faith and prayer, urging the believers of his day to use their credit cards or asking permission to draw a certain sum each month from their checking account to support the work of the orphanage that was entrusted to his care.

Today’s evangelical Christianity has fallen on hard times. Let’s not attempt to supplement God’s providence by our provisions. The life of Jesus is not a life of begging, shrewdness, marketing and psychological trickery but a life of faith, trust, passion, devotion, power and purity. Let’s trust God without the smallest admixture of doubt!

Books Ignite Revival in Nigeria

“My name is Rev. Joseph Chajiekwu, and I’m a professor at the Voice of the Lord Bible College. Ever since your book entitled, *Free But Not Cheap* came to my hand through one of my Bible students, I have wanted to tell you how much that book meant to me and my ministry. The book was like a divine arrow which propelled me to the bosom of my Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ. Since the book was a blessing to me, I asked all my students to read it.

I see the book as a precious jewel to ministers and Christians, so I taught most of the contents to our various congregations in my superintendency, and it was a great blessing to the believers. In fact, without exaggeration, your book has kindled a tremendous revival in our Churches throughout the Southern District. There are many powerful testimonies of spiritual quickening and dedication since the teaching. I believe every minister and every Christian need the book in this age of carnality, lukewarmness and haphazardness. This book has renewed the spiritual lives of many in our country.”

Rev. Joseph Chajiekwu, Director, Voice of the Lord Mission, Inc., Akwua, Ibom State, Nigeria



Brother Matthew: “I want to express my thanks to you for the book you wrote titled, *Talk Less and Pray More*. The message of the book has prompted revival in my prayer life, and it is spreading in my youth fellowship as well. Really, this book is ordained by God for His Church in these last days to put the church in an incessant ‘talk less’ and prayerful mood.”

Trinyemia Benson, Lagos, Nigeria

Brother Matthew: After reading your books, I was deeply blessed and my prayer life has since been influenced positively as a result. I’ve already recommended them to our members, especially our prayer team. Our people have obtained many copies from your representative here. Your books are a blessing to us.

Pastor Prince Echem, Port Harcourt, Rivers State

“I pastor a church at Aguluezechukewu town in Anambra State, Nigeria. After reading Matthew Skariah’s book, *Talk Less and Pray More*, tears filled my eyes and I fell on my knees in shame asking God to change my prayer life because I have been talking more and praying less. It is my desire to be an intercessor for the world. This book has greatly transformed my prayer life. I am particularly challenged by the lives of John Hyde, David Brainerd, Jonathan Edwards and George Muller as chronicled in the book.

I have decided to devote the remaining part of my life to intensive prayer of intercession so that Christ’s Kingdom will cover the whole earth. I long after holiness, humility and meekness. Please send me your monthly publication – *Prayergram*.”

Pastor Freeborn A. Agbude, Anambra State

Dear Bro. Skariah: “My daily prayer for you is that God never let you die without affecting more lives the world over. Reading your books quietly assures me that the church will not fall flat consequent upon the kind of gospel men are propagating in these last days. I mean snack bar sermons which try to color one’s environment without offering a lasting solution to the miseries of man. Thank you for preaching about the cross courageously and unapologetically.

I read all your books and they have been such a great help to me, especially the *Forbidden Zone*, an expose’ on dying to self. When you were here last, you preached about the cross and we are still talking about the impact that made on our lives and we look forward to your coming again to share with us. Thank you for remaining true to Jesus.

Imma Okorie, Aba, Abia State

Dear Brother Skariah: “As an evangelist spreading the Word of God, I came across your book *Talk Less and Pray More*. I have been enlightened since then, and now I’m moving along the real path of the Lord in prayer. The book has proved beneficial to my ministry and has turned the congregation around for the better. Please send us your monthly publication, *Prayergram*, to boost the morale of my flocks.

Evang. Goodluck Agofore, Lagos, Nigeria