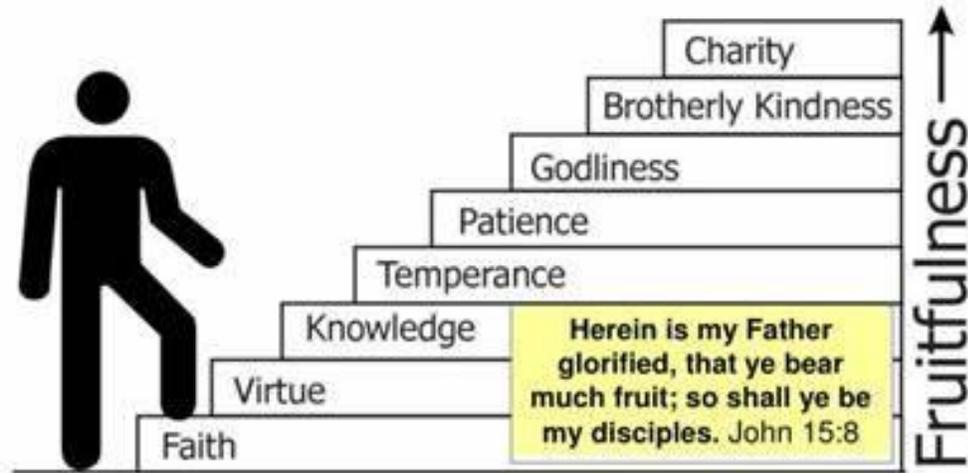


God's Call to Spiritual Growth

The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand. Psalm 37:23,24



JANUARY BIBLE STUDY SERIES

SOLID STEPS OF CHRISTIAN GROWTH

LESSON THREE

Lesson Three:
Add To Your Faith Virtue
(Moral Excellence)

Scripture Lesson:
II Peter 1:5-7

II Peter 1:5-7, But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.

The Christian's Thought Life

**The mind is the starting
point for behavior.**

**Philippians 4:8 (NKJV), Finally
brethren, whatever things are true,
whatever things *are* noble, whatever
things *are* just, whatever
things *are* pure, whatever
things *are* lovely, whatever
things *are* of good report, if *there*
is any virtue and if *there is* anything
praiseworthy—meditate on these
things.**

**We Must Learn To Think
Christianly.**

GET RIGHT, THINK RIGHT, LIVE RIGHT.

1 Peter 2:9, to proclaim the praises (or excellencies) of God who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Moral excellence is the inner strength to do right, the courage to live out your faith and fight against temptation; how to maintain a clear conscience.

“ WISDOM is knowing what to do next, SKILL is knowing how to do it, and VIRTUE is doing it.”

Psalm 18:30, As for God, His way is perfect; The word of the Lord is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him.

Virtue is a strength - a supernatural ability to say “no” to temptations and “yes” to right and good things.

**The opposite of virtue is vice -
virtues are what is right with a man
and vices are what is wrong with
him.**

**What Does Moral Excellence Look
Like Without Faith?**

**A Christian's FAITH is directed
towards God. A Christian's VIRTUE
is directed towards sin and
temptation.**

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How To Add Moral Excellence To Our Faith

**A Christian's moral excellence
is derived from the Word.**

Romans 10:17, So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

II Timothy 3:16-17, All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for [a] instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

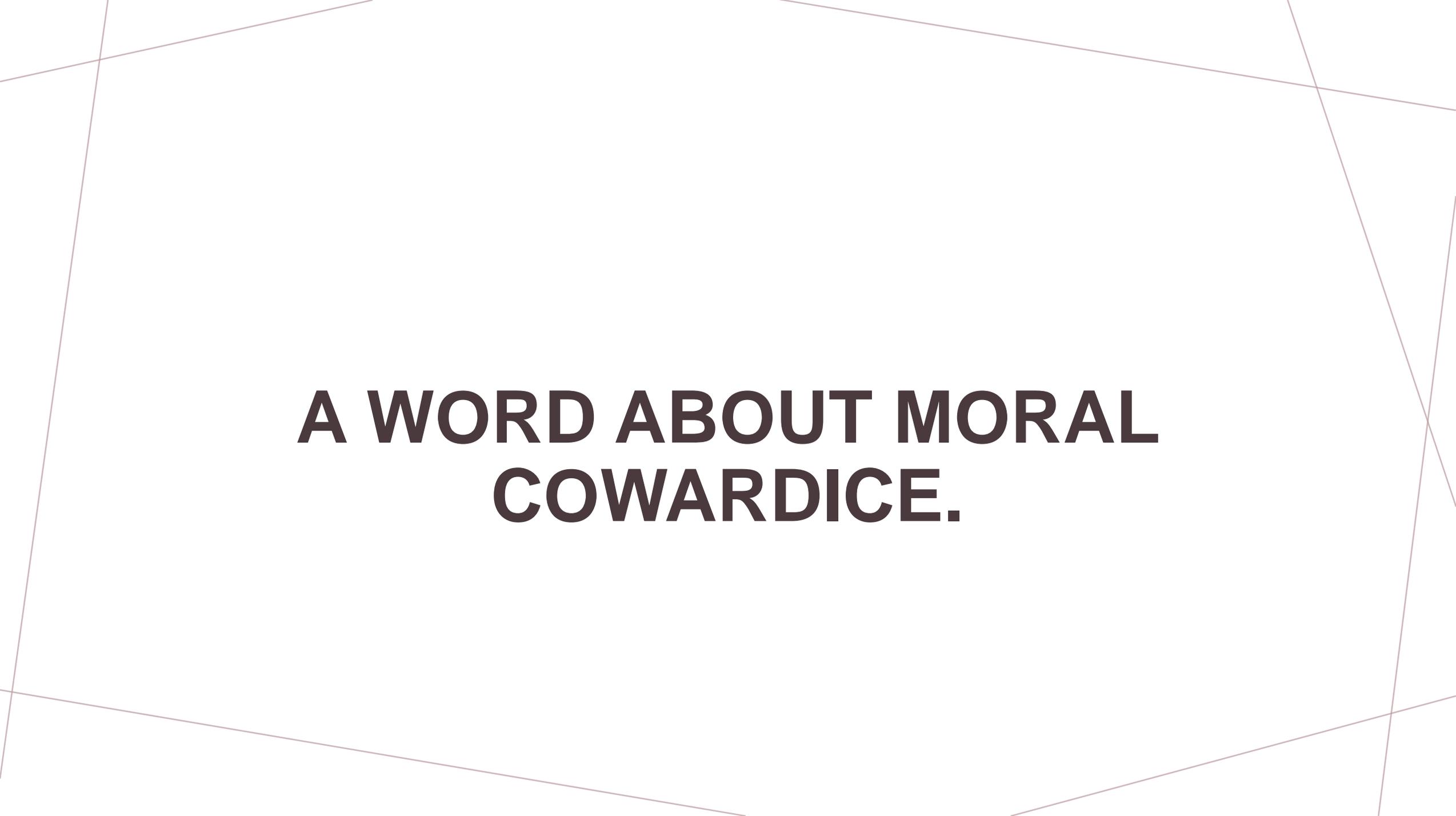
James 1:22-25, But be doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the Word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.

James 3:10-12, Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening? Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear fig? Thus, no spring yields both salt water and fresh.

1 Thessalonians 4:9-10, Concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; and indeed, you do so toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia.

Being a Christian demand having a spiritual backbone; the conviction of faith and the willingness to stand and live by faith.

1 Corinthians 16:13, Be on guard. Stand firm in the faith. Be courageous. Be strong.

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A WORD ABOUT MORAL COWARDICE.

A coward is someone who lacks courage in facing danger, difficulty, opposition, pain, etc., A timid or easily intimidated person.

Pilate: Failed To Use His Authority To Free The Innocent (Jesus).

Luke 23:20-25, Wanting to release Jesus, Pilate appealed to them again. But they kept shouting, “Crucify him! Crucify him!” For the third time he spoke to them: “Why? What crime has this man committed? I have found in him no grounds for the death penalty. Therefore, I will have him punished and then release him.”

But with loud shouts they insistently demanded that he be crucified, and their shouts prevailed. So, Pilate decided to grant their demand. He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, the one they asked for, and surrendered Jesus to their will.

**Moral Cowardice Knows What Is
Right, But Will Not Do It.**

**James 4:17, therefore to him
that knows to do good, and
doeth it not, to him it is sin.**

**Moral Cowardice Tries To Justify
Itself Before It Peers.**

Peter: A Man who knew the Truth but Failed to Acknowledge It.

Matthew 26:69-72, Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came to him, saying, “You also were with Jesus of Galilee.” But he denied it before them all, saying, “I do not know what you are saying.” And when he had gone out to the gateway, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, “This fellow also was with Jesus of Nazareth.” But again, he denied with an oath, “I do not know the Man!”

**Moral Cowardice Values Safety
Over Truth.**

**Moral Cowardice Fears
Consequences Of Standing For
Truth.**



A WORD ABOUT MORAL COURAGE

PAUL: A Man who Publicly Resisted Sin.

Gal 2:11-14, Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.

But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before *them* all, “If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?”

**Moral Courage Is Public About Its
Faith.**

DANIEL AND HIS COMPANIONS: Commitment to the True God.

Daniel 1:8, But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore, he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

**Moral Courage Requires Purpose
Of Heart.**

Moral Courage Trusts In God.

Dan 3:16-18, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If that *is the case*, our God whom we serve can deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver *us* from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up.”

**Moral Courage Will Not
Compromise.**

Dan 6:7,10, All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions. Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.

1 Timothy 5:21, I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality. Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure.

Our Need For Moral Courage.

**It Takes Courage To Practice Moral
Purity.**

1 Pet 4:3-5, For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do—living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. They are surprised that you do not join them in their reckless, wild living, and they heap abuse on you. But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

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A COMMUNITY OF VIRTUOUS PEOPLE

Bible Study Follow Up Chat Questions:

- 1. Do you have an energetic, vigorous faith? Is it active, alive, and growing?**
- 2. Are you fulfilling your intended, created purpose?**
- 3. What does your life reflect to others about the nature and character of God?**
- 4. When was the last time you publicly stood for truth?**

5. What actions are you taking in maintaining moral excellence in your household?

6. Describe situations in which you are aware of evil being called good (Isaiah 5:20).

7. What is a moral compass? And why do you need one?