

“Nicole invites us to a deeper understanding of Jesus-courage that empowers and transforms our lives. You need this book!”

-CHRISTINE CAINE



B R A V E E N O U G H

Getting over our fears, flaws, and failures to live BOLD and FREE



NICOLE UNICE

Every woman I know needs more courage—to make the hard choices that lead to the best decisions. In *Brave Enough*, Nicole invites us to a deeper understanding of Jesus-courage that empowers and transforms our lives. You need this book!

CHRISTINE CAINE

Founder of Propel Women and A21 Campaign

Nicole gives us a kick in the pants (gentle, but still a kick!) to step up our courage and live the lives we've been called to live. And then she offers practical steps to take our giftings further and further!

ELISA MORGAN

Speaker and author, *The Beauty of Broken* and *Hello, Beauty Full*; cohost, *Discover the Word*

Nicole's book helps us see that the life God is calling us to goes far beyond what feels safe. She reveals that what God calls us to do requires bravery. The good news, however, is that Jesus requires us only to be *brave enough*: brave enough to take that step of faith into the unknown, the messy, the scary, the downright ugliness of loving hurting people, the place where we risk failure, and the place that requires vulnerability. Nicole then shows how he comes to meet us there and gives us what we need to live out what he has for us.

SARA POMEROY

Founder and CEO, Richmond Justice Initiative

Life—in all its joy, pain, and complexity—is not for the fainthearted. Raw and real, Nicole shares stories, wisdom,

and practical tools that empower us to live in freedom and hold tightly to courage for the days ahead.

JO SAXTON

Co-pastor of Mission Point Church, chair of 3DMovements board,
speaker, author

In *Brave Enough*, Nicole gives us permission to be courageous. She challenges us to be confident and dares us to step into the purpose, passion, and potential that God designed us to embrace. It all begins with a daily, authentic encounter with Jesus. With real-life wisdom and authenticity, she invites us into a new adventure of being, living, and exploring the grace and growth of life in Christ.

HEATHER ZEMPEL

Discipleship pastor at National Community Church in Washington, DC;
speaker and author of *Amazed and Confused* and *Community Is Messy*

Brave Enough is a call to abandon ourselves—our fears, flaws, and failures—for a called-out life, a life that stands the tests of time and pressures of the crowd. As followers of Christ, we are called out to live bold and free. Christ's grace makes us brave enough. Nicole offers this gift to the church with a challenge to live graciously and courageously. I also love the prayer prompts, journaling, and exercises available throughout the book, as I have found these foundational disciplines instrumental for mentoring and discipleship.

NATASHA SISTRUNK ROBINSON

Assistant director, Center for the Development of Evangelical Leadership,
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Charlotte

As a pastor, husband, and father of a grown daughter, I found that *Brave Enough* speaks to the heart of the real stuff. Life's hard experiences require us to be brave, but some of the more ordinary things require us to be brave too. And while this book

is beneficial not just for women, it uniquely speaks to them and offers freedom from many of the fears that put chains on life. It gives them permission to not be Christian superwomen or the people that “the voices” say they should be. Instead, *Brave Enough* offers each reader the freedom to be the person God has made her to be. The insights and encouragements in this book are needed, and they offer us help for living in a culture filled with insecurity by comparison.

DAVID DWIGHT

Senior pastor, Hope Church

A lack of courage holds us back from doing those things—uncomfortable, risky, costly things—that God is calling us to. Nicole Unice reminds us that the One who calls is also the Source of the courage we need. A timely, welcome message at a time when we have Kingdom work to do!

CAROLYN CUSTIS JAMES

Author of *The Gospel of Ruth*, *Half the Church*, and *Malestrom*

Brave Enough is an eye-opening, soul-embracing, spirit-filled book with wisdom on living in the freedom God has called us all to. Nicole challenges women to truly engage their hurts and hang-ups with insight into the daily journey that God wants with us. Through her practical engagement, you will be given invaluable tools to truly get your brave on each and every day. She reminds us that as women, at our core, we are all *brave enough!*

EBONY HALLIBURTON

Lead associate director for women, DC Metro Church

Brave Enough is one of those books that stays with you. As I read, I felt as if Nicole was writing directly to me, opening my broken areas and pouring the truth of God’s love and power back into those very spaces. Her words are gracious,

understanding, challenging, and life-giving, and you will find more freedom and more courage by the time you reach the last page.

LAURA C. ROBB

Writer and creator of LauraCRobb.com

Brave Enough offers wise, practical teaching for anyone who wants to uncover truth from God's Word. Nicole Unice has lived and learned what it means to be brave enough in the midst of a busy life as a counselor, ministry leader, and mom. She is an articulate Bible teacher who has the unique ability to make scriptural principles understandable. Her stories, examples, and advice will inspire you to apply godly insight in your own circumstances. If you are brave enough to open the pages of this book, I believe it will change your life.

MARY ANN RUFF

Women's ministry director at Hope Church, Memphis

Nicole Unice is one of those souls who becomes an instant friend the moment you meet her. Kind, smart, funny . . . all around likable. She has you belly laughing one moment and in deep, soul-searching conversation the next. Nicole's new book, *Brave Enough*, is Nicole doing what she does best—encouraging, challenging, and motivating us to live boldly and freely the life God has for us.

JENNI CATRON

Church leader and author of *Clout*



B R A V E E N O U G H

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*Let us then approach God's throne of grace with
confidence, so that we may receive mercy and
find grace to help us in our time of need.*

HEBREWS 4:16

INTRODUCTION

I WANT TO LET YOU IN on a not-so-hidden secret: We are all a little scared. We all feel threatened by riptide emotions that seem dangerous and out of our control. We keep a white-knuckled grip on our ideas of what we must be for the world—and what the world must be for us. We're often afraid of being irrelevant, worthless, or forgotten. We worry about what will happen if we speak up, or what will happen if we stay quiet and rest for even a moment. We are like trapped little hamsters . . . scared into stillness but vibrating with anxiety.

Some of those same feelings recently nagged at me and three of my close friends. We had barely spoken in a month, but it wasn't because we were mad. We were just busy. Between the four of us, we had enough carpools, church meetings, and work deadlines to exhaust Martha Stewart. Plus we had to work around our husbands' travel schedules and then nurse not one kid but three with ear infections. And so we did what women do to maintain their friendships—we exchanged quick hugs in the carpool line and a text message or two, pushing off our own needs so we could keep up with the needs of others.

Finally we found one Wednesday morning to squeeze in a

few minutes over a fancy omelet and coffee. We tried to make up for lost time by just getting right to the good stuff, because when these friends ask “How are you?” they mean it.

Lisa went first. It was pleasantries and all the things we Christians think we are supposed to say, about loving our kids and trusting our God. Then Lisa’s bright smile faltered and her voice cracked and she held her cup between her hands to shield her face a little. “Actually, it’s been really hard,” she said. And Lisa, capable Lisa, together Lisa, Christmas-cards-on-time Lisa, broke down just enough to let us in, to tell us that there are layers of worries with her two sets of twins, with her now-staying-at-home mommy life, with the struggles that come with adoption. And it wasn’t like a volcano eruption, just a pin-sized leak in her soul, and she confessed about seeing her own limits and the ugliness in it all. And then Lisa let out a sigh, a confused/frustrated/tired sigh, and said, “I know God wants us to trust him with our lives, but it’s *hard*. And sometimes I don’t know how to *feel*!”

And because Lisa had been courageous enough to let down her guard, the rest of us opened up too. Elizabeth talked of the surprising joy she was discovering as she read through the Bible for the first time and then ranted for a while about her rocky relationship with her in-laws. Ashley waved off our questions about herself—maybe it was too much for that day. But she listened well and offered encouragement to the rest of us as we cheered and lamented over the everyday stuff that makes up our lives. I tried to fill them in on my hardship du jour, which was largely related to my impatience and my stubborn desire for quick fixes. And Elizabeth said she knew it was hard and Ashley texted me later to tell me she loved me.

As I think back to that day, it occurs to me that not one of us

at that table thinks of herself as heroic. We are women who are trying every day to make it, to just—live. But what I see in each of my friends is a woman being *brave*. She is confused and sad at times. Sometimes she is even angry and doubtful. But she is not trying to escape from the highs or the lows. She is growing—even when she fights it. She is choosing honesty—even when it stings. She is trying to follow Jesus—even when it's hard.

You might not think your normal life requires much bravery. You might not think *courage* is the answer to right-now problems. But what if courage is the surprising virtue we *all* need? What if your life requires courage?

Some have paraphrased the philosopher Plato, defining courage as the ability to persevere through all emotions.¹ What if learning to hang in there through the fear is the key to the life God planned for us? What if being brave enough to be honest, to name our fears, to face our failures, and to listen to ourselves well—what if those are the first steps toward growth, toward beauty, and toward freedom?

Now imagine this: What if, starting today, *starting right now*, you weren't scared anymore? What if that worried energy were gone? Imagine a life with more joy, more wonder. Imagine if the weight of responsibilities and the burden of failure lifted off your shoulders forever. Imagine what it would feel like not to worry about tomorrow or the next day. Just imagine.

What would you do?

Who would you be?

How would you live bigger?

Would you laugh more, jump off the swings, run that marathon? Would you tell your husband the truth, start that business, join the small group? Would you move on from your past?

What would it take to start living . . . brave?

Brave Enough is an invitation to experience life with courage. This book is about opening our eyes to the ways God is calling us to move beyond our fears into boldness. It's an opportunity to taste the sweetness of grace in new ways, to discover how his love changes how we think, feel, act, and respond in our daily lives. If you've felt that your life is too small, too confining, too complicated, or too broken for an adventure, *Brave Enough* will introduce you to practical, everyday courage that sets you free.

And if you'd prefer to explore this topic in the company of friends, I invite you to check out the *Brave Enough DVD Group Experience*, an eight-session curriculum. The curriculum includes teaching, interviews, and additional questions and exercises for diving deeper into Scripture and walking through the book as a group.

So if bravery conjures up images of Xena the Warrior Princess or Katniss from the Hunger Games, I'd like to introduce you to the *brave-enough* woman. We aren't talking heroics here; we are talking about real life—about the bravery you need to live the life you have *right now*. We are talking about the courage to find honesty, to walk through the tension of a life full of unexpected turns that sometimes bring suffering and sometimes bring deep joy. We are talking about being brave enough to receive grace, to listen and act on God's voice. We are talking about the courage to let go of guilt and to say yes and no with confidence, the courage to live with joy and to leave behind worry. We are talking about being *brave enough*—just brave enough to start living differently. This book is about the courage to be who you are—not who you wish you were.

Let's start there—with the bravery you need to live the life you've been given. And who knows? When you start being just brave enough, you might find your life is far bigger and more exciting than you ever dreamed possible.

Brave Enough

You will never do anything in this world without courage.

ARISTOTLE



IT'S RIDICULOUS, really, I told myself. *Just do it!* I had felt a nudge, a small but holy whisper, to do something I didn't want to do. There had been conflict and I was hurt, and the last thing—the last thing that would even cross my mind as a good idea—was to take another step of reconciliation. I knew that the whisper was from God (because I sure wasn't coming up with it myself) and that what I needed to do was the right thing. And the right thing, on a cold Thursday morning, was to write a note of apology.

I was fighting with God about writing a note.

Because dear friend, let me say it again, in case you missed it:

I didn't want to.

I bet you've felt this before too—whether you've said it out

loud or under your breath or deep in your heart (as if the God who knows all doesn't hear us when we grumble in our hearts!): There are things that life asks of us, good things, hard things—and sometimes we don't want to do them.

When it came to this note, I really didn't want to write it. I didn't want to with all of my heart. I didn't want to risk being hurt, I didn't want to try to see it differently, and I didn't want to work harder at this relationship. I didn't want to make peace; I wanted to turn around and run. As I thought about holding the pen over the paper, I felt my throat constrict, like my very heart was trying to hold on to those words, not let them become real and flow out of me. I had to sneak them out the side door of my soul, through the pen onto the paper and into the hands of the other. So I began to write; faltering, stopping, and starting again. I thought about what really matters, and I willed my mind to choose the truth and not what I wanted to believe, not what was easier to believe.

I still didn't want to write that note. But something was just a bit stronger than my fear, stronger than my pride, stronger than my own self-created stories. And I believe that something is what we all need—whether we are facing one small act or one monumental leap in our lives.

That something is courage.

The definition of *courage* is “mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty.”¹ The root of courage, *cor*, comes from the Latin, meaning “heart.” So said another way, courage is a strong heart. Courage is the will to move past fear and get out of our own way, to become the women God has made us to be. Though fear might cause us to cower, courage causes us to grow. Courage is the

titanium foundation of our character and the marble-solid pillar of our soul.

Maya Angelou once said, “Courage is the most important of all the virtues, because without courage you can’t practice any other virtue consistently. You can practice any virtue erratically, but nothing consistently without courage.”² Courage is not just a virtue—courage is *the* virtue, the one that stands above all others. Courage cuts across circumstances. We need courage in good times, when God calls us to live in faith. We need courage in hard times, when God calls us to endure.

And although we often assume bravery isn’t all that important except in the dramatic, do-or-die moments of our lives, courage is forged in the countless, seemingly-small-but-difficult challenges that everyday life brings us. We need courage to make the everyday choices that become the compilation of who we are, what we value, and how we love.

Sometimes we need courage to write notes, to get out of bed, to say hard things. And yes, sometimes we need courage for the unexpected, defining moments of life.



I brought a pint of ice cream and two plastic spoons to the hospital room. Nothing says “Get well soon” better than sneaking in a high-fat dessert. My friend Ellie and I happily passed the pint back and forth as we caught up on life. I had met Ellie when she was in the seventh grade. Even then, she was a compassionate, quiet young woman with a heart for God and for people. Now Ellie was twenty-six years old and twenty-five weeks pregnant, her Young Life T-shirt almost covering her little belly. We were reconnecting—but not over the dilemmas

of middle school, like mean notes and hard teachers. Now we talked medical terms—early contractions and steroid shots and stress tests—over the whirl of machines. Ellie put on a brave smile, and we prayed together. As I left the hospital room that night, I thought to myself, *She's so young.*

Tucker was born by emergency C-section later that week. He weighed one pound, ten ounces, and had a gap between his esophagus and stomach.

Her little boy is now a toddler, and Ellie now knows what it means to walk through the valley of the shadow of death. She can teach NICU nurses like a pro. She's performed CPR on her son while dialing 911.

Ellie didn't sign up for this life. But she loves her husband and son with the strength of a fighter. She wouldn't have called herself a courageous woman when we shared ice cream, but she's learned to be brave because she had to. God didn't give her any other choice—and now she knows him in a richer, more meaningful way. Turns out, she had just the right DNA for this fight. Ellie's brave . . . *enough.*



Sara was working in a call center—a young, single professional planning on a career as a worship leader—when she first heard about human trafficking. She stayed up late one night, scouring the Internet for any information she could get about how organizations were fighting the brutality of human slavery. She was horrified by the videos, so she prayed that night before bed, not expecting God to answer her. But he did. As it turns out, she was part of his plan when it comes to responding to this tragedy.

When I met Sara two years after this defining moment, a lot had changed. One step at a time, Sara had responded to the call. She started a domestic anti-trafficking organization. She eventually quit her job and became a full-time missionary for the organization. She's been awarded grants, has championed legislation, and has begun a prevention curriculum that's being used in high schools around the country. But Sara's job can be lonely and demanding. She's dealt with conflict and confusion and chaos. Yet at every turn, God seems to already be there, fighting her battles and showing her favor.

Sara didn't listen to a podcast on human trafficking with the intent to change the world. But it turns out God had a big plan for a courageous young woman. Sara has learned. She is brave . . . *enough*.

When Maria tells me the story about the day her world changed forever, she points out the good things first. She says that it was a beautiful morning and that she and John had coffee and prayed together before he left. She explains that John was running around the college campus where he was a professor—just like he loved to do. She mentions he had no ID with him. She tells how it was unusual that during the day John hadn't called or texted that he would be home late, which alerted her to start looking for him. As a result, many family and friends were at her house when she got the phone call.

She is grateful that she could receive the news of John's sudden and absolutely unexpected death from her father-in-law, who identified John at the hospital and first bore the brunt of the shock. John was forty-six years old and had been a part of

her life for more than twenty-five years. They had begun dating when they were both fifteen.

When Maria talks about John, you see the love and the peace. But she twists her wedding rings around her finger when she talks, and I wonder how hard it is at night. Nevertheless, Maria's making it. This isn't anywhere near the life she expected. But she's a courageous woman raising four amazing children. Maria's brave . . . *enough*.

Your Daily Brave

I want to suggest to you that your life—your ordinary life—requires courage too. Whether you are facing a life-altering circumstance like Ellie, Sara, and Maria or an everyday challenge like writing a note of apology, courage is the force that propels us to take a step forward—whether that step is a tiny hop or a desperate leap.

This brave-enough grit is not stereotypical superhero bravery. I'm not talking about the kind of courage that the world loves, courage forged through experiences or knowledge, perhaps resiliency we admire from afar—the kind of resiliency that we hope we'll never need.

This is different, a courage that comes from outside of yourself but that changes you inside your soul. This courage releases the vise grip of fear and gives you the energy and strength and *heart* you need to face whatever life's got for you. Ellie, Sara, and Maria need it because it's these brave-enough steps that have forged their character today. My breakfast buddies, Lisa, Elizabeth, and Ashley, need it because it's the brave-enough grit that's allowed them to be honest. I need it because I've learned that every day presents an opportunity to be brave enough. This kind of courage

doesn't come because we are extraordinary in ourselves, but because we have placed our full confidence in an extraordinary God.

No matter what you face today, God offers the same to you. His love—not your own ability or goodness—will be the source of your true bravery and strength. Becoming brave enough to meet the challenges of daily life is where this begins. And when we become brave enough for the small challenges of today, we become brave enough for the big opportunities of tomorrow. Let's explore what this altogether-different courage looks like—what I like to call “Jesus-courage.”

God's love—not our own ability or goodness—is the source of our bravery and our strength.

Jesus-Courage

What exactly do you know about Christ's love? Like me, you can probably sing, “Jesus loves me, this I know.” You may even have warm-fuzzy feelings, like Hallmark Channel–movie love, when you hear this song. “Jesus loves me” makes me think of little Dixie cups of apple juice and feltboard Bible stories. But those warm fuzzies can't even get me to be more patient in traffic, much less sustain my heart in the real storms of life.

Of course it is true that Jesus loves us. His relentless passion and ministry spring from love—love for his Father and love for us. But *love*, a word that is so carelessly flung around in our culture, doesn't seem to fully capture what Jesus does for us. Yes, Jesus loves you in your weakness, your failure, and your need, but he also loves you in far greater ways. Jesus loves you into a whole new way of being—a whole new person.

When we examine what happens to people when they encounter Jesus in the Bible, we begin to notice some similarities.

Sometimes Jesus met their physical needs, but he always left them remarkably changed on the inside. They became bold and confident and courageous. I want to suggest that maybe our needs today are not much different from the needs of the men and women who encountered Jesus in person. Neither are the strength and courage that Jesus offers us. Let's look together at the power behind this transforming love.

Take heart

When Jesus came on the scene in the countryside of Judea, it didn't take more than a hot second for people to realize that he was worth listening to. He didn't just speak words—he taught with authority and with power. Word got around, and soon Jesus couldn't go anywhere without hordes of people following him, asking him for miracles, for teaching, for healing.

Once when Jesus was preparing to teach, he went into a house. I would imagine he was speaking in a crowded room where people jostled one another, elbowing and positioning for the best spot to see him. I bet that the room was hot with breath and sweat and that it smelled of people—all hungry to see Jesus, to know him, half-excited and half-frightened about what he might say. And then came a rustling from above and shouts as men pushed their paralyzed friend through the roof so they could drop him right in front of this fascinating man who had been *healing* people—really changing them.

Imagine what it would be like to be that friend. Powerless: unable to move of your own accord. Desperate: completely dependent on others. For years, perhaps even all your life, you've been the outcast, never able to do or be anything—to pull your own weight, to work, to live like those around you.

Perhaps your heart has twisted and guarded itself. Perhaps you pretend you don't care about the stares and the whispers. But it doesn't really matter what you think because your friends insisted that you must see this man. When they couldn't find a way to carry you into the room, they lifted you up to the roof and dropped you down in front of Jesus. Now there you are, in the crowded room, looking up at the faces—faces with expressions that say everything you've ever believed about yourself and about this life, about the haves and the have-nots.

And then it grows strangely quiet. You look up and you see him—*Jesus*. Something in you wells up, something that's foreign and distant. It's been so long since you've felt it that you can't place the feeling immediately. It's . . . *hope*.

Jesus' first words to you are these: "Take heart . . . your sins are forgiven" (Matthew 9:2). Before the healing, before you stand up and walk, before Jesus glorifies the power of God in front of this crowd, he addresses a more pressing need than even *that*. Don't miss this key word in the passage. Our English translation says "take heart," but the original word used here in the Greek is *tharseo*, which simply means "courage." Take a deep breath and take in what Jesus addresses *first*, before he meets any other need:

Courage. Your sins are forgiven.

Be encouraged

Another time, Jesus walked along with a powerful man, a ruler who wanted Jesus to come help him. Even then, people were following Jesus, pressing in on him, shouting his name, needing him. And in that crowd was a woman who suffered from an

illness that caused chronic, unmanageable bleeding—a woman who had suffered for years.

Imagine what it would be like to be that woman. Hope was lost so long ago that all you can do now is try to eke out the best existence you can, one day at a time. You are a woman who bleeds, so you are unclean, unacceptable, unwanted. You are shamed for your ailment and discarded for your illness, and you have had to remove yourself from community because you are not allowed around other people.

You are isolated. Alone. Hurting. Desperate.

If you were this woman, I wonder if you could find the strength and the grit and the hope to once again believe life could be different. Would you have the desperate strength to do what she does—to reach out for Jesus' cloak and to touch him and to . . .

Be healed.

The Bible says that “Jesus turned around, and when he saw her he said, ‘Daughter, be encouraged! Your faith has made you well.’ And the woman was healed at that moment” (Matthew 9:22, NLT).

“Be encouraged” is that same Greek word, *tharseo*. Before Jesus does anything else, he imparts *tharseo*—courage!

Courage. Healing is here.

Don't be afraid

The Bible also tells us about the disciples, Jesus' closest friends and followers. From scriptural accounts, you can almost picture what it would be like to experience the amazing things that they did. Imagine the excitement, confusion, worry, and hope they feel as they witness miracles and listen to teaching they've never

known. They are like most of us, a mix of faith and doubt, of power and weakness.

One night, after another long day of ministry and healing, Jesus stayed behind and sent the disciples off in a boat. It was dark and stormy, so the boat swayed and tipped. The wind howled and the waves pummeled these disciples, so even these lifelong fishermen were terrified.

That was some storm.

And in the midst of this powerful disturbance, perhaps the storm of a lifetime, Jesus walked out to them. Walked out on the water, defying the law of gravity and every law of nature, providing his disciples a front-row seat to his power and goodness and God-ness. They were terrified. “Jesus immediately said to them: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid” (Matthew 14:27). Here it is again, courage!

Tharseo: Courage.

Jesus is near!

Forgiven sin.

Healed lives.

Powerful presence.

There are only four places in the Gospels where this Greek word *tharseo* is used. Each time, it is spoken by Jesus himself. In John 16:33, Jesus says it for the fourth time; “In this world you will have trouble, but take heart [*tharseo*!] I have overcome the world.” Jesus gives us a promise with power. Jesus-courage comes with forgiven sin, with healing, with presence, and with the ability to overcome. Yes, Jesus love us: he loves us into a completely different experience. He loves us into a new way of living.

What if every single place of frustration, difficulty, worry,

or doubt is just a small footpath that leads you to one of these Jesus truths? What if the *obstacle* you are facing today is really an opportunity, leading you right to your own need for forgiveness, healing, and confidence in Christ?

Like the paralyzed man, the bleeding woman, and the disciples, we need this courage. This Jesus-courage is strong, powerful, and steady. It gives energy where we lack it and strength where we are knee-knocking weak. It is the essence of Jesus himself, the Resurrection power that we have when we

receive him into our hearts and allow him to govern our lives.

Jesus gives energy

where we lack it and

strength where we

are knee-knocking

weak.

We can be women who live in this kind of freedom, who confront the dizzying choices and difficult circumstances of life with boldness and confidence. We become these women by taking a journey with Jesus through the darker parts of ourselves,

through the refining fire of his healing, and toward the strength and courage we need to follow him. That's an incredible journey, completely worth the shadowy and sometimes scary places we might have to travel through. So we don't go at it alone—we do this with one another and with Jesus, who promises to bring “courage!” for whatever we face.

To help you engage with what you're learning and experiencing, you'll find a variety of exercises at the end of each chapter. These questions are designed to prompt reflection—you might find it helpful to use a journal for your answers.

Together let's get honest about where we really are in life right now—the places where we feel too scared to change, too tired to endure, too weary to persevere, too worried to let go.

Let's take all of that energy and direct it toward God's truth—what he says about who we can be. Let's investigate if this virtue of *courage* can be the catalyst in our souls to compel us and propel us into lives of freedom, love, and, yes—bravery. Jesus did give us a promise: “You will have trouble” but he also gave us his power: “*Tharseo! I have overcome the world.*”

There it is again. *Courage*. It's a Jesus word. And it's everything.

Brave-Enough Pause

Our Daily Brave

Growth starts with honesty. Take an inventory of your life this week. What scares, worries, or concerns you? Do any patterns or themes emerge as you list them (e.g., worries about the future, about money, about what others think of you, etc.)?

When you consider the stories of Jesus-courage, do you relate most to the way Christ forgave sin, healed, or offered his presence? Why is that?

Pray

God, knowing you starts with honesty. I want to tell you how I really am, the places I feel like I'm too worried (or fearful, or needy, or simply too much) and the places where I feel I'm lacking. I don't want to keep acting as if it's on me to make my life work. I want to invite you to be the Lord of my life and have an honest, daily, real relationship with you. Would you show me how to do that every day? I want to trust you..