

HEALINGLINE

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COURAGE

JUDITH MACNUTT

We all need courage. When the Holy Spirit comes into your life, He will ask things of you that will make you totally uncomfortable. If you are not uncomfortable, it might mean you're in trouble, because you might be trying to do life in your own strength.

The dictionary's definition of a hero is: "A person who is admired for great or brave acts, or nobility of character."

When I think of a person of distinguished courage, admired for brave deeds and noble qualities, I think of Jesus. Jesus is our model for courage. Jesus was fully human and fully divine - that's the miracle of the incarnation.

You are fully human with the divine in you! You have the presence of the Holy Spirit; it is Jesus within you who gives you His courage.

Jesus will ask you to pray for someone and everything in you might be responding, "I can't do that," but you will lay hands on that person. He will ask you to speak a word, and you might be thinking, "Lord, I don't know what to say." But then you do speak. This takes courage! What the Lord is trying to do with you is stretch you, enlarge you, heal you, transform you, and let you experience new truth so you can walk into a new freedom in Christ.

We can have courage in the midst of difficult times, because God is in our suffering. Sin and sickness are always going

to be present because we live in a fallen world. God uses suffering, but He doesn't send suffering to teach us a lesson. This truth is very important to remember.

In times of suffering the Holy Spirit is incredibly active. He gives us courage, love, faith and community. When we feel we can't handle any more, the community of the faithful goes through difficulties with us.

There are three important things to remember about suffering:

1. You are not alone! God did not send this to you. There is hope – there is an end to it! I always say to myself, "This too shall pass; even if I go to heaven, it's going to pass!" When the disciples were overwhelmed with sorrow, Jesus said to them, *Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.* (John 14:1-3) That is one of the greatest promises in scripture.

2. Then He goes on to say, *I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth.* (John 14:16) It is very important to understand that the person of the Holy Spirit is your friend. He cares very deeply about you. He's in this journey with you. Jesus said, *Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.* (John 16:7)



When He returned to the Father, He told the apostles and disciples to wait for the coming of the Spirit, and they did. They waited, and then came the rush of mighty wind, and tongues of fire settled on every one of them, and they were filled with the Holy Spirit of the living God.

3. Likewise, when God tells me to wait, I wait. When we are guided by our own strength, or ministering out of our own strength, we get into trouble. Waiting takes courage! Daily invite the Holy Spirit to totally fill you, guide you, and lead you into all truth. He will bring deep healing and transformation. He will bring comfort in suffering. He will bring power for ministry and courage for spiritual battle. ✨

JUDITH MACNUTT is author, teacher, conference speaker and co-founder of CHM.

DON'T LET A SECRET RUIN YOUR LIFE

are you allowing the shame of your past to overpower you?

J. LEE GRADY

I don't know exactly why, but many people confide in me. I can't count the times people have told me, "I don't know why I'm telling you this, but ...," and then they share a horrible moment from their past. They finish by saying: "You're the first person I've ever told."

At a recent men's retreat in South America, dozens of men came to the altar one evening and asked for prayer because they had been victims of sexual abuse or they struggled with a pornography addiction. Most of them told me they had never shared their secret with anyone because it was too embarrassing.

After they admitted what happened—often through tears—they found indescribable relief. It was as if a 200-pound weight they'd carried for years just dropped off their shoulders.

We know what the Bible says about secrets. Whether we are hiding a sin we committed or suffering from the shame of something done to us, transparency is the path to freedom. James 5:16a says: "Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you may be healed."

The devil thrives in darkness. Satan loves it when we keep our sins, failures and embarrassing moments locked up in a vacuum-sealed emotional compartment. As long as no one else knows our pain, our enemy can exploit it.

When no one else knows about our issues, Satan whispers his lies without being challenged. His arsenal is full of accusations. He tells us: "No one else struggles with this," "You are the only one with this problem" or "Anyone with your problem is a terrible Christian—you might as well give up."

Have you heard those words? If you have never brought your pain into the light, unlock your heart and allow the light of God's love into your darkness. The old adage says, "Confession is good for the soul," but it's good for your physical health, too. Here are nine of the most common secrets people are afraid to reveal:

1. **Abuse:** Some victims of abuse were warned if they ever told anyone about what happened, they would be harmed. No wonder so many people hide this ugly secret.
2. **Abortion:** Our culture minimizes the emotional effects of abortion, and some people even push others to abort. Yet abortion is often accompanied by overwhelming guilt—for the woman who ends a pregnancy or for a man who is responsible for it.

3. **Bullying:** Some people have been marked for life by verbal abuse – toxic words spoken by parents, classmates, teachers or relatives. God can shatter the power of these hateful word curses.
4. **Rejection or abandonment:** People who have been abandoned by parents or spouses are tempted to blame themselves—and then they hang a huge scarlet "R," for "Rejected," around their neck for the rest of their lives.
5. **Sexual sin:** I will never forget the moment when a man wept in my arms and admitted he had been unfaithful to his wife more than eight years earlier. He had carried that weight for too long, and he assumed God would never forgive him. The blood of Jesus is powerful enough to forgive; today his marriage is healed, and he is active in ministry.
6. **Sexual confusion:** Some Christians lack compassion for people who struggle with same-sex feelings or gender confusion. But the fact is that people wrestle with their sexual identity for a variety of reasons. If the church does not become a safe place to talk about these problems, people will simply seek help from the world.
7. **Panic attacks, anxiety or unnatural fears:** Some people are tormented by embarrassing fears or worries. It's hard to admit such quirks to others, so we suffer in silence.
8. **Depression:** People who suffer from depression often choose to hide their sadness behind a mask—since "good Christians" are supposedly happy all the time! But hiding depression is not only bad for you—it is bad for the people around you. You need to talk about it.
9. **Addictions:** Many Christians never grow in their faith because they are hiding a secret addiction—to either prescription medicine, alcohol, gambling, nicotine or marijuana.

The only way to silence such voices of confusion, fear and rejection is to bring your pain into the light. Open up and share what you are wrestling with. When you decide to open your heart, don't just talk to anyone. It is best to share with a mature Christian who has a track record of confidentiality and compassion. In some cases, it is also good to join a support group with others who have the same struggles. After some initial prayer ministry, you also may decide you need to talk to a professional counselor.

Find those who will listen without judging, speak words of forgiveness and help you receive God's amazing mercy! ➤

J. LEE GRADY

Former editor of *Charisma* magazine, author, speaker and Director of The Mordecai Project. Visit the mordecaiproject.org to learn more. He will also be our guest speaker at our Ignite 2018 conference, June 20-23, 2018 in Burlington, VT.



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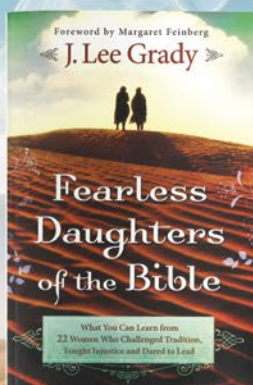
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