

HOW ADVANTAGEOUS IS COURAGE TO ACHIEVING ONE'S GOALS?

Courage is the fuel of victory. Like a river, it flows from source to mouth as it grows in proportion to the effort required to complete one's goals. Courage is a passionate spiritual virtue which gives a man the strength to overcome danger. To be courageous is to face danger.

Courage is the province of Ares, Achilles and Alexander the Great. Without courage, a man is a coward. A coward is that petty man who shirks dangers; is alarmed by all things and is prone to flee from distressful situations. We may say many modern ideologists — from socialists to feminists to racialists — fit the criteria for cowardice. Although, cowardice is as common to extremists as it is to men far exposed to danger.

Courage is advantageous for man in achieving his physical, spiritual, possessive and political aims. Let us see how this is so.

Courage is advantageous for achieving one's physical goals. The physical assets that are most congratulated include beauty, strength, health and good breeding. Assuming men aim for beauty, strength, health and good breeding, with courage, a man will achieve health by accepting his dangers to health (lack of exercise and poor diet) and challenging this problem head on. That is, by doing exercise and eating a good diet voluntarily — one step at a time — against the dangers he faces. The same, in turn, applies to strength; for much exercise will produce physical strength. Strength can then produce beauty; with muscle definition amplifying harmony, proportion and symmetry on man: and so amplifying the appearance of his rational disposition. And beauty, that proximity to reason, provides good breeding in that reason is the currency of noble actions, choices and speech. Of course, physical deformities can put some in naturally immovable positions. Some men will stay in a physically corrupt state: relative to the nature of reason. Furthermore, physical advantages are no promise of advantages elsewhere. Nevertheless, a man can grow his physical advantages by following these steps and, by being courageous, achieve his physical goals.

In addition to man's physical goals, courage is advantageous to his spiritual goals. Courage helps to protect and grow his competencies — in quality and quantity — and in this way is advantageous. This advantage will be in his rational virtues, his passionate virtues, his appetitive virtues and his other virtues. Courage tells a man his dangers in wisdom. It tells him where he needs to learn to improve himself, and the consequences of ignoring this knowledge. And so, with this wisdom, courage will help him to find the means to overcome his ignorance to become wise in speech and act. The same applies to temperance: to identify the dangers of self indulgence; and justice to grow and protect the balance of excess and deficiency in the context of possession between two parties. Of course, courage is a spiritual virtue and it would be foolish to say courage is conducive of courage. However, courage gives a man the power to achieve the maximisation of his other virtues, and so in this way courage is advantageous to spiritual goals.

Building on physical and spiritual goals, courage is advantageous for possessive goals. Possessive goals include wealth, property and friends. With courage, a man identifies the obstacles to his acquisition of wealth, or to the maintenance of it, and so can voluntarily take up his cross and fight to achieve his goals in wealth. In a similar way, courage helps a man to grow and protect his

property: be it his estate or his furniture. Courage is also advantageous for making and preserving one's friendships with other persons. Of course, the workings of the gods influence all these goals too. Fortune may give a man riches as easily as she snatches it away. And friendships are built as much on wisdom and tact as they are on courage: especially friendships based on utility and pleasure over fraternal friendships. All the same, courage plays a part in growing and protecting the advantages gained by achieving one's possessive goals.

After physical, spiritual and possessive goals, courage is advantageous to achieving one's political goals. By political goals, we mean those goals concerned with the *polis*: the group of individuals who come together to serve a common interest. It is clear courage is useful in certain areas: such as war and peace. However, courage is as advantageous for war and peace as it is for worship, forming alliances and revenue collection. Courage helps to identify the dangers in these topics, and so take on the necessary burdens to overcome them. Although, like possessive goals, political goals are determined by the other virtues and glamorous fate. Although, as before, courage is still advantageous to growing and protecting one's political goals.

Half of the work of courage is identifying dangers. The rest — like Christ and Nietzsche's Übermensch — is to use one's skills to overcome the dangers and turn them into trophies to add to one's museum. Courage is advantageous to achieving one's goals. It is not the sole virtue necessary; however, by virtue of its nature, it is the chief virtue to keeping one's progress on track. Cowardice only leads to ruin. Only skill and discipline, only habit of courage and all the other virtues trumps courage per se. Courage is a friend of true heroes. With courage, a man will live a fulfilled, happy and long life. Cowardice will make it solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short. You only need look at your experience to tell you otherwise. Find your dangers, accept them, overcome them.