

**No. 12 Courage Weakens Versus Courage Strengtheners (Symposium)
-Doubt Versus Faith**

[PLEASE NOTE: This symposium discusses Psalm 27. Discuss only the verses that are included in your outline. The talks include video dramatizations that feature the same family. In each talk, a member of the family is confronted with a challenge that tests his or her courage. This talk contains one video]

HOW DOUBT WEAKENS COURAGE (3 min.)

Doubt can easily entangle us [Read Hebrews 12:1] (w11 9/15 22 ¶9-10)
If a runner wore a garment that could wrap around his legs, he might fall and even fail to finish the race
Similarly, doubts can restrict our courage, hinder our worship, and cause us to lose out in the race for life
Even experienced servants of Jehovah are not immune to doubt
By using the word "us" at Hebrews 12:1, Paul may have been admitting his own tendency toward momentary weakness of faith
Peter, although empowered to walk on water, briefly gave way to doubt and began to sink (Mt 14:30, 31)
Building faith is a lifelong project
To have the courage to finish the race for life, we all must work to expel doubt by strengthening our faith

HOW FAITH STRENGTHENS COURAGE (5 min.)

Strong faith gives us courage to endure hardship and to preach boldly
To endure hardship, we must believe that Jehovah is real, that he cares for us, and that he will reward us (Heb 11:6)
In Psalm 27, David referred to hardships that could have tested his faith
He endured opposition from enemies (Ps 27:6, 12)
He prayed earnestly for Jehovah's help but may not have received an immediate answer [Read Psalm 27:7-9]
David was able to endure difficulties because he trusted that Jehovah would never abandon him [Read Psalm 27:10]
Like David, we will have the courage to endure any hardship if we trust that Jehovah will not abandon us (w12 7/15 24 ¶9-10)
To preach boldly, we need strong confidence in the value of the good news
Opposers may dismiss the preaching work as unimportant, but in reality it can save our lives and the lives of others (1Ti 4:16)

WHAT YOU CAN DO (4 min.)

Analyze whether your faith is growing stronger or weaker (w15 9/15 14-16)

Build faith in the following ways:

(1) Pray for more faith

Ask Jehovah for holy spirit, since faith is an aspect of the spirit's fruitage (Ga 5:22)

(2) Meditate on Bible prophecies

Note how Jehovah fulfilled prophecies in the past; this will bolster your faith that he will do so in the future

(3) Study examples of faith

Examine accounts in the Bible and in our publications; look for ways that others have increased and demonstrated their faith (Jas 2:26)

(4) Attend congregation meetings

At meetings, we associate with others who have strong faith, and we are mutually encouraged (Heb 10:24, 25)

(5) Preach to others

Helping others to build faith will strengthen your own faith
As we extinguish our doubts by strengthening our faith, we will have
the courage to endure to the finish in the race for life (Mt 24:13)

WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED FROM THIS SYMPOSIUM (1 min.)

To "be courageous and very strong," we must avoid what weakens courage
and pursue what strengthens it (Jos 1:7)

Throughout this symposium, we have watched Brother and Sister Matthews
and their family deal with various challenges

One member of the family, however, has had a particularly difficult
time with courage; for this family member, cultivating courage has
been a lifelong battle

In the final dramatization of this series, notice how this person was
helped by the very things discussed in this symposium

VIDEO (4 min.)

BE DETERMINED TO KEEP STRENGTHENING COURAGE (1 min.)

The need to strengthen courage is not limited to those who are young or
who are new in the truth

Even experienced Christians must make a deliberate effort to
strengthen their courage and maintain it

Like Brother Matthews, each of us can strengthen our courage by
strengthening our confidence in Jehovah

This symposium discussed several courage strengtheners—hope,
thanksgiving, the field ministry, good associations, personal study,
and faith

Why not select one that fills your particular spiritual need and
give it special attention?

Whether you are a new or a longtime Witness, be determined to replace
any attitudes and activities that weaken courage with attitudes and
activities that strengthen it!

TO BE COVERED IN 18 MINUTES