

BOLD

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I want to be bold. I feel intense admiration when I read of the courage of the early Christians. I want to understand how one boldly proclaims faith in a hostile world. Why are some Christians bold while others are timid? While one must avoid the temptation to a quick fix, I list four things I believe are essential if we are to be bold Christians. The acrostic is a memory tool.

Belief. Step One: boldness is a function of a deep, abiding belief in God. We will never be bold until we settle the question of faith. Upon what/whom do we depend? What matters more to us than anything else? Who/what is the foundation of our world view? What is our beginning point? What are our orienting concepts? The answers to these questions yield a snapshot of our belief system, and any person (Christian or non-Christian) who is bold has settled the belief question. This is what is worth standing up for. This is what really matters. Our lack of boldness as Christians may be due to a lack of biblical faith. Faith is more than intellectual assent to a few truths. Faith is the foundation of life.

Obedience. There may be a better word than obedience, but obedience is the result. This is the acid test of your relationship with God. What is your attitude toward God? Do you hear him, listen to him, and talk with him? Ours is a communicating God. Ours is a personal God. Genuine obedience does not come from duty and distant, dry words that we are finally convinced must be obeyed. The kind of pliable, moldable Christian I am trying to describe acts out of relationship and desire to be like God.

Love. Certainly it is true that we will love God, but that is included in the second point above. When we love God, we keep his commands. When I list love as the third requirement for boldness, I am thinking about our horizontal relationships. People are bold for one another. We commit to taking the same kind of love that has blessed our lives and spreading it into this world. We love others because we have been loved.

Discipleship. This is an internal question. This is who I am. This is my relationship with myself. I have decided. I am willing to dedicate myself. I am determined. I will follow. I am a learner following a teacher. I have decided to follow Jesus. I am set for the defense of the gospel. There are a whole host of "D" words that may come to mind, but the one I choose to use as summary is disciple.

Obedient, loving believers imitating Jesus in our world! Let us be bold!