

Five Ways to Win Louisiana

It doesn't take a genius to realize that we live in a time when society is trying its dead-level best to mute the voices of believers. With even greater frequency, we experience a fear of walking boldly with Christ. And what does walking boldly actually mean? Does it mean a fish decal on our car? A hot take on social media? Winning a debate at the watercooler? No. Walking boldly with Christ cuts much deeper than these common applications and surfacy caricatures. When you became a Christ-follower, you were explicitly called to walk boldly with Christ and live a life of bold, courageous, and sometimes dangerous service. You are one in a long line of servants, like Stephen who, amidst the onslaught of hurled stones, stood unashamed. It's a counter-cultural undertaking. It's revolutionary. How do you know you're standing unashamed? Here are five ways:

1. To stand when others are falling.

Finally, be strengthened by the Lord and by his vast strength. Put on the full armor of God so that you can stand against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this darkness, against evil, spiritual forces in the heavens.

Ephesians 6:10-12

We all know how hard it is to stand consistently and how easy it is to fall. The Apostle Paul reminds us, "to resist in the evil day, and having prepared everything, to take your stand." There's no doubt that we are living in an evil day. People are walking away from their faith and the church. We must stand for truth in an age of temptation, rage, selfishness, unbelief and ungodliness. We must stand! Dudley Tyng stood in a day when slavery was practiced in the 1830s. He stood boldly against it. He said, "*I would rather that this right arm were amputated at the trunk than that I should come short of my duty to you in delivering God's message.*" Before he died, he was asked if he had a message for the ministers he knew. It was simple: Let us all stand up for Jesus.

2. To love the ones no one else is loving.

We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, "I love God," and yet hates his brother or sister, he is a liar. For the person who does not love his brother or sister whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And we have this command from him: The one who loves God must also love his brother and sister.

1 John 4:19-20

Christ-followers are God's safeguard for the neglected. Those first deacons were commissioned to restore the safety, provision, and dignity of Greek widows. These widows were being neglected in food distribution. The gaps of language and social status among these women became a point of reckoning for the early church. As servants is our inflection point of purpose.

We are called to love and care for those who may be neglected. This requires attentiveness and presence of mind. We must be self-starters when it comes to compassion.

Video Option: Show the Christian Job Corp Video Story “Hope Restored”

3. To speak when no one else is speaking.

Every believer must be on mission. Can you imagine what it would be like if every Louisiana Baptist spoke the gospel? Every believer is called to speak with boldness when others cower. This is difficult for many believers because we are called to serve. How can someone serve by speaking boldly? Your boldness become a catalyst for eternal change. Sometimes serving means that we speak words that someone needs to hear rather than something someone wants to hear. We can speak bold words that save!

4. To give when everyone else is hoarding.

Walking boldly requires us to give boldly. We place all of our assets under the lordship of Christ. At the end our lives, we will be more grateful for the things that we gave away than the things we kept to ourselves. Generosity is countercultural in an era of excess and accumulation. It requires a bold focus on stewarding our resources in such a way that we have a capacity for boldness in giving. Interestingly, giving is contagious. When you give daringly, you embolden others to do likewise. They’ll see you have skin in the game, and they’ll want in on the action. Our boldness in giving is accompanied by a promise: *“Test me in this way,” says the Lord of Armies. “See if I will not open the floodgates of heaven and pour out a blessing for you without measure.”* (Malachi 3:10b CSB)

This is the reason we give through the Georgia Barnette Louisiana Missions Offering. We have such an incredible need to share Jesus through generosity. As we give we are expressing our willingness to invest in the mission to reach Louisiana.

5. To believe when everyone seems to be doubting.

An unashamed believer walks in faith and imbues an optimism for the mission he endeavors to achieve. Like Caleb and Joshua looking over the heads of the giants to see the amazing vineyards of the promised land, we can walk joyfully into the challenges before us. The outcome of our mission is in His hand, so let’s believe and not doubt.

Let us stand, love, believe, give, and speak with great boldness. With these guiding principles, we can step into a much larger and grander story. Others will follow our lead and we’ll discover we are not alone. We learn the truth in King David’s words that *“when we trust in you, we will not be ashamed.”* Psalm 22:5