

## **Guest Opinion Article First Published in the Loveland Reporter-Herald 9/10/2025**

**By Don Overcash**

Cowardly behavior is revealing

Recently I spoke about the mindset of scarcity or abundance. During that discussion I concluded that the current national culture is suffering from an abundance of cowardice behavior and a corresponding scarcity of courage.

Cowardice and courage are two opposing traits that describe how individuals respond to fear, danger, and challenges. Cowardice refers to the inability to face fear, pain, danger, or adversity. It often leads to avoidance or retreat in the face of challenges. Individuals displaying cowardice may flee, procrastinate, or hide from confrontations or demanding situations. Driven by fear of failure, judgement, rejection, or harm, people prioritize their personal well-being over exhibiting bravery by resisting evil and promoting good.

By contrast, courage is the ability to confront fear, pain, danger, or adversity. It involves taking risks for a greater good and driven by values such as integrity, justice, or love and the prioritization of doing what is right over personal convenience.

A growing concern is the prevalence of cowardly bullying behaviors on social media. The combination of anonymity, avoidance, emotional detachment, and the lack of accountability allows individuals to act in ways they might not dare to in face-to-face interactions. A frequently bullying tool is ad hominem attacks. Cowardice is evident when someone responds to an argument or opinion by attacking the character, motives, or attributes of the person making the argument rather than addressing the argument itself. Rather than seeking to engage in a debate on the merits of a position, the attacker employs a full toolbox of tools including personal insults, motives, name calling, character attacks, mockery and Impugning intelligence which can derail meaningful conversations and undermine rational debate. Instead of engaging with ideas, they focus on personal attributes, which is often indicative of a lack of substantive counterarguments.

Christians are not immune from acts of cowardice. Cowardly behavior, through their silence regarding sinful behaviors, is epidemic from the pulpit, in the pews, in the public square and even within their homes. The reasons are varied, but one thing is clear. It is impossible to love God and love one's neighbor if you tolerate, even condone sin. Reasons offered for silence towards sin include.

- Fear of confrontation. This fear of conflict can lead them to remain silent instead of addressing sin, which they might believe could damage relationships or lead to rejection.
- Aspiration for social acceptance and positive regard. In a culture that promotes acceptance of diverse lifestyles, Christians may choose silence over speaking out against

behaviors God calls sinful. The desire to fit in or be liked overshadows their commitment to their beliefs.

- Misinterpretation of Love and Grace by believers leads to significant confusion. When Christians confuse love of the sinner with acceptance of the sin, believing that silence is more loving than admonishing and warning, they are denying Jesus who loved sinners to death and also warned them to no longer live in sin.
- Avoiding personal accountability can serve as an avoidance strategy, in which individuals may choose not to address certain issues in others to prevent attention being drawn to themselves.
- A lack of understanding about Scripture or how to engage in dialogue about sin may lead Christians to stay silent. They might fear saying the wrong thing or not having adequate responses to questions or challenges related to the topic.
- In an increasingly secular society, Christians may feel pressure to conform to prevailing cultural norms that downplay or dismiss traditional views of sin. Societal pressure can lead to silence as a means of self-preservation in a cancelled culture environment.
- Christians may become indifferent to the sinful behaviors around them, believing that change is unlikely or feeling apathetic towards issues that do not directly affect their lives. This complacency can lead to a lack of action or voice on important moral issues.

Cowardly behavior stems from fear and reveals what a person genuinely believes. Psalm 27:1, "The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" Christians are to engage others lovingly and thoughtfully by displaying true courage to resist evil, do good and demonstrate faithfulness by loving God and our neighbor. Be courageous, it's a choice.