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The Courage to Change Direction

by Scott Stoner

*Although no one can go back and make a brand new start,
anyone can start from now and make a brand new ending.*

—Carl Bard

“**A**nd having practiced courage, this woman’s life would never again be the same.” This line from Dominic Barrington’s reflection yesterday describes just what can be at stake when a person chooses to practice courage. Courage can change the whole trajectory of our lives, as it clearly did for the Samaritan woman at the well.

This week’s theme will focus on the courage it takes to change direction. When we choose to keep on doing what we’ve always done because it is the “path of least resistance,” we rarely consider that a courageous choice. The truth is that change is hard; we all love patterns and routines. In fact we need patterns and routines to order our lives. But when those patterns and routines no longer serve us, or when they themselves are unhealthy, it takes courage to change.

The Samaritan woman had a daily routine of going to the well alone. We have no idea how long she had been doing so, but we can imagine that she had been doing the same thing day in and day out, month after month, year after year. And then one day her life is changed by the courageous choices she makes, both in her willingness to be open to a chance encounter with an unexpected visitor, and afterwards when she dares to go back into the city to proclaim the miracle and bounty of her encounter with Jesus. She could have chosen to ignore him, but she found the courage to honestly engage him and her life was never the same.

God gives us free will and therefore we are always free to change, or not. The choice is ours. May we all be inspired by the courage of the woman at the well.

Making It Personal: Have you ever made a choice to change directions that was as dramatic as the Samaritan woman at the well? Are you considering such a change now? Can you think of a time when you practiced courage in even a small way, and your life was never the same again?