

# THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE

by Stephen Crane



## THE AUTHOR

Stephen Crane (1871-1900) was born in Newark, New Jersey, as the fourteenth and youngest child of a Methodist pastor. Because the Methodist Church moved its ministers around frequently, the family rarely lived long in one place. His father died when he was eight, and young Stephen suffered chronically from bad health. He never finished college, flunking out of both Lafayette College and Syracuse University because he spent too much time playing cards and baseball, and as a young man settled in New York, working as a newspaper correspondent and beginning his writing career. He hated the sentimental literature of the day, and was determined to make his writing true to life. His first novel, *Maggie: A Girl of the Street*, was the tale of a prostitute, and was so realistic that he was unable to find a publisher, forcing him to finance and publish the novel himself. His masterpiece, *The Red Badge of Courage*, was published in 1895 after originally appearing in serial form in the newspaper. It became an instant best-seller, and Crane's reputation and fortune were made. He published *George's Mother* the next year, and *Maggie* now gained a wider reading public. He found fame horribly uncomfortable, and accepted an assignment covering a revolution in Cuba. This would have been his first exposure to war, but his ship sank and he never arrived on the island. He later covered the war between Greece and Turkey and the Spanish-American War.

His personal life was marked by a bohemian lifestyle that reflected a total rejection of the Christian faith in which he had been raised. He became notorious for his rejection of middle-class values, carrying on many love affairs, often with prostitutes many years his senior. He contracted malaria while in Cuba during the Spanish-American War, and died of tuberculosis in England at the age of twenty-eight. At the time he was living with the proprietress of a bawdy house, Cora Taylor, even though she was married to another man.

*The Red Badge of Courage*, considered a masterpiece of psychological realism, was written in 1895, when Crane was only twenty-four years old. At the time he had no firsthand experience of war (his experiences as a war correspondent came later), but he had done considerable research, reading personal accounts of soldiers who had fought in the Civil War. He generally disliked these narratives because, as he argued, they said everything about what the writers *did* and nothing at all about how they *felt*. Influenced by Darwin's theory of evolution, Crane believed that people's actions were determined by environmental factors rather than by conscious choices on

their part. He believed also that conflict was the crucible in which human development occurred, and thus was attracted to the violent and seamy aspects of human experience. *The Red Badge of Courage* presents its few characters more as types than as individuals, rarely referring to names, even that of the protagonist. The setting is also left vague, though hints in the story pinpoint the involvement of New York's 304<sup>th</sup> Regiment at Chancellorsville, Virginia, in 1863.

## **PLOT SUMMARY**

The Union army has been encamped for eight weeks, but rumors begin to spread that a battle is in the offing. Henry Fleming, a young Union soldier, longs for the glory of battle despite repeated warnings from his mother about the horrors of war. She had sent him off with plenty of warm clothes and the exhortation to shun bad companions, especially those who would entice him to drink and swear. As he goes south with the army, he is treated as a hero everywhere he goes, though he secretly fears running away the first time he encounters live fire. The next day the men find the rumor of coming action to be false, but that only gives Henry more time to fret about his possible reaction. He decides that the only approach is to wait and see, then observe what his legs do when the bullets begin to fly. The bravado of the others makes him wonder if anyone else is secretly doubting his own courage, but he fears to ask lest he be ridiculed.

The next morning, the regiment leaves and joins a long Union column on the way to meet the Confederate troops. The soldiers speculate about battle strategy and talk as if victory is assured. Henry, meanwhile, suffers from homesickness and can't help visualizing routine days back on the farm. His internal struggles make him feel alienated from his comrades, all of whom seem so calm and confident. They cross a river on pontoon bridges and enter a forest, where the men soon cast aside any unnecessary clothing and burdens. One day at dawn, the regiment is roused and sent on the run toward the enemy. They see skirmishes in the distance, but never reach the line of fire. Henry is tempted to call out and warn his fellows of a potential ambush, but resists the urge for fear of making a fool of himself. Every time they stop, the soldiers dig small mounds to protect themselves, but then are ordered to move on. Henry decides that this is all nothing but a "blue demonstration," a pointless exercise to show their strength to the enemy. But then they hear cannon and musket fire and realize that real fighting is likely to begin. One of his mates, convinced that his first battle will also be his last, gives Henry a yellow packet and asks him to give it to his parents.

As the regiment moves toward the front, the veteran troops begin to retreat from the battle ahead of them, and soon the Confederate charge approaches. In the fighting, the captain is killed, the lieutenant wounded, and many others fall. The charge is repulsed, but the battle continues in the distance. Henry is mightily pleased with himself for weathering his first taste of combat. Relief is only temporary, however, and soon the charge is renewed. This time it is the Union soldiers who flee, and Henry runs with them. The Union lines hold, and the ebb and flow of battle again turns against the Confederacy. Irrationally, Henry feels angry at his comrades who had held the line. After all, he had been wise to flee and preserve his life to fight another day; why should he feel guilty because other fools had stayed in place and gotten lucky?

As Henry wanders far from the battle, he throws a pine cone at a squirrel. The fact that the squirrel runs away comforts him – he sees it as Nature justifying his flight of self-preservation. Later he enters a grove of trees that reminds him of a chapel. Here he finds the body of a dead Union soldier leaning against a trunk. The boy has been dead for some time, and the corpse is

crawling with insects and in an advanced state of decay. As the dead eyes stare at Henry, he flees wildly through the underbrush.

He soon hears the sounds of battle again, and begins to run toward the clash of arms. He has no intention of fighting; he simply wants to see the battle. On the way he encounters wounded men leaving the front and joins them. When one of the wounded men asks him where he had been hit, he slinks away in embarrassment. Despite his feelings of guilt, however, he continues to walk with the wounded, and wishes that he, too, had a “red badge of courage” like them. One seriously wounded soldier gruffly drives away any who seek to help him. As Henry approaches him, he realizes with horror that the soldier is his friend Jim Conklin. Jim asks Henry to take him to the side of the road before he dies so he won’t get run over by the artillery wagons. Before Henry can answer, the wagons are heard in the distance and Jim starts to run. When he finds a suitably peaceful place, his body gives a final wrenching shiver and he falls down dead in the grass.

As Jim dies, a tattered soldier comments on the strange manner of his death – his insistence on finding a suitable place to lie himself down. The soldier himself has been wounded twice and is very shaky on his feet. Henry fears that he will have to witness another death, so tries to slip away. Before he goes, however, the tattered soldier asks him where he has been wounded, and this becomes another arrow piercing the conscience of the runaway.

As Henry gets closer to the front, he sees men and wagons retreating; this gives him a measure of comfort, knowing that he is not alone in leaving the scene of battle. But then a column moving into battle passes by, and Henry’s guilt is intensified. He envies them and wishes he could be like them, but knows that they are a breed apart, with courage that he can never hope to find in himself. He starts to follow them toward the front, but then many reasons arise in his mind for why he should not do so. He finds the reasons convincing, and his resolve is quickly lost. He still longs to see the battle, however, and begins to consider the benefits of defeat; after all, if the army is routed and many brave men run, why should he not be counted among them? He then tries to invent some tale to tell his comrades, but doubts that any fabrication would be believable. He is now convinced that he will inevitably become an object of scorn and derision.

Soon a large body of soldiers comes running through the clearing in full-fledged retreat. Henry tries to stop someone to find out what is happening, but the panicked soldier hits him in the head with the butt of his rifle, drawing blood. Another soldier with a cheery voice strikes up a conversation, wondering how Henry got so far away from his regiment, but gives him no opportunity to explain. He gradually leads the now-wounded boy back toward the battle, and points out Henry’s regiment in the distance. As he approaches the fire, he fears the inevitable ridicule that will follow his return to the regiment. When he gets there, however, he simply tells them that he was separated from the others and was wounded in the head during fierce fighting, after which they warmly take him in and begin to care for him. His friend Wilson bandages his head, gives him coffee to drink, and gently puts him to bed under his own blanket, after which Henry falls into a deep sleep.

When Henry wakes up, he begins to notice how Wilson has been changed by his experience in battle over the last forty-eight hours. He is calmer, more gentle, less likely to be ruffled by harsh words from his comrades. He is, in fact, a “loud young soldier” no longer. Soon a fight breaks out among nearby soldiers, but Wilson steps in to break it up. Henry then tells him that Jim Conklin is dead, and Wilson speaks of what had appeared to be the loss of half the regiment on the previous day; apparently, however, most of those believed to be lost had straggled back into camp having fought somewhere else on the front, as Wilson believes Henry himself to

have done. Later, as they prepare to leave for the front, Wilson sheepishly asks Henry to return the packet of letters he had given him for his loved ones two days earlier. Henry now feels truly brave, as one chosen by the gods to survive the carnage of war. As they take up positions, the din on all sides is such that Henry remembers a newspaper headline and is tempted to call out jokingly, "All quiet on the Rappahannock!" The noise is such that he never gets the chance, however.

After a brief retreat, the regiment again stands its ground, waiting for the Confederate attack. Soon it comes, and the woods are alive with gunfire. Henry works up great feelings of hatred for the enemy that unreasonably refuses to allow him the rest and recuperation he deserves after the adventures of the previous day. He fires with such maddening intensity that, even after the enemy withdraws, Henry continues to pump bullet after bullet into the empty woods. His comrades stare at him with astonishment and declare him a "war devil," and Henry is convinced that he is now a genuine hero. His pride is almost overwhelming.

As the battle becomes more heated, the noise and smoke become intolerable. All are parched with thirst. When one of the soldiers in the regiment, Jimmie Rogers, takes a body shot and lies on the ground creaming in pain, Henry and Wilson go for water and are soon inundated with the canteens of others who want theirs filled. They find no water, however, and return to the front empty-handed. As they move back toward the battle, they encounter the general who leads their division talking to another officer. The Confederate troops are planning another assault in a spot where the Union line is weak, and the decision is made to send the 304<sup>th</sup> – Henry's regiment – to reinforce the position, realizing that few of them are likely to survive. Henry is shocked to realize how expendable they are in the eyes of the officers. When they return, the regiment is preparing for what is likely to be their last battle.

The regiment is called upon to lead the charge against the enemy, and Henry and Wilson, along with the others, rush forward in wild abandon, feeling almost as if time had come to a standstill. At one point in the charge, the sergeant carrying the flag is killed, and Henry and Wilson grasp it at the same time and wrench it from his lifeless hand. The regiment soon retreats, however, and Henry is ashamed to be the flag-bearer for such a failed company. He had hoped to give the lie to the officer who had considered them expendable because they were nothing but "mule drivers," but now the man had been proved right by the events of the battle. As the regiment regroups, they see a company of Confederates almost upon them – the enemy soldiers had advanced, not knowing the location of the Union troops. After a few minutes of fierce firing on both sides, the smoke clears to reveal that the enemy is gone; they had succeeded in repelling the charge.

When they return to their lines, they are mocked by the veterans for their paltry achievement, and soon realize that the distance they had traveled in the charge and the time consumed by the engagement had been vastly exaggerated in their own minds. The general then arrives and reproaches their colonel for failing to fulfill his mission, noting that they would have accomplished something of value had they advanced a mere one hundred feet farther, but had not even succeeded in creating a worthwhile diversion. Later the colonel turns to the lieutenant and singles out Fleming and Wilson for praise. When two men who overhear this conversation report it, the two friends are so pleased they forget the humiliations heaped upon them by the general.

When the battle begins again, Henry is able to observe it from his position on the top of a nearby hill. He watches the ebb and flow of the battle and sees the sources of the noises that had so terrified his regiment earlier. When his regiment is called again into action, Henry is sure that

he is going to die, and thinks it sweet revenge against the general who had insulted him and his friends. As the fighting continues, the regiment's numbers are greatly reduced, though Henry is pleased to see that his friend Wilson is still alive. The colonel then calls for a charge to dislodge the Confederates from a fence behind which they were hiding. The regiment rushes forward, heedless of death and danger, and finds that most of the Confederate soldiers flee before the onslaught. A few stubbornly remain, and Henry determines that he will capture the flag held by the Rebel remnant. Wilson, however, is the one to seize it from the mortally-wounded confederate flag-bearer and bring it back as a trophy of victory. A few of the Southerners are captured, and Henry gets his first up-close look at prisoners of war. Some are calm and friendly, others are angry, and some are silent. As the battle ends and the regiment joins the rest of the army, Henry prides himself in his achievements and considers that war has made him a man, but cannot forget the cowardice of his initial flight.

### **MAJOR CHARACTERS**

- Henry Fleming – The protagonist, he is a young Union soldier who longs for the glories of battle, but soon learns that the reality is quite different.
- Jim Conklin – The “tall soldier” who is part of Henry’s company, he dies bravely after being wounded in battle.
- Wilson – The “loud young soldier,” he gives Henry a packet of letters to pass on to his loved ones if he dies, and later tends Henry’s wound after he is hit in the head with a rifle butt by a retreating soldier from his own army.

### **NOTABLE QUOTATIONS**

“From his home his youthful eyes had looked upon the war in his own country with distrust. It must be some sort of a play affair. He had long despaired of witnessing a Greeklike struggle. Such would be no more, he had said. Men were better, or more timid. Secular and religious education had effaced the throat-grappling instinct, or else firm finance held in check the passions.” (ch.1, p.5)

“His emotions made him feel strange in the presence of men who talked excitedly of a prospective battle as of a drama they were about to witness, with nothing but eagerness and curiosity apparent in their faces. It was often that he suspected them to be liars.” (ch.2, p.13)

“For a moment he felt in the face of his great trial like a babe, and the flesh over his heart seemed very thin.” (ch.3, p.21)

“Once he thought he had concluded that it would be better to get killed directly and end his troubles. Regarding death thus out of the corner of his eye, he conceived it to be nothing but rest, and he was filled with a momentary astonishment that he should have made an extraordinary commotion over the mere matter of getting killed.” (ch.3, p.25-26)

“He was welded into a common personality which was dominated by a single desire.” (ch.5, p.31)

“He conceived persons with torn bodies to be peculiarly happy. He wished that he, too, had a wound, a red badge of courage.” (ch.9, p.49)

“The simple questions of the tattered man had been knife thrusts to him. They asserted a society that probes pitilessly at secrets until all is apparent.” (ch.10, p.56-57)

“He discovered that he had a scorching thirst. His face was so dry and grimy that he thought he could feel his skin crackle. Each bone of his body had an ache in it, and seemingly threatened to break with each movement. His feet were like two sores.” (ch.11, p.59)

“If he himself could believe in his virtuous perfection, he conceived that there would be small trouble in convincing all others.” (ch.11, p.60)

“If men were advancing, their indifferent feet were trampling upon his chances for a successful life.” (ch.11, p.61)

“Apparently, the other had now climbed a peak of wisdom from which he could perceive himself as a very wee thing. And the youth saw that ever after it would be easier to live in his friend’s neighborhood.” (ch.14, p.75)

“It was a temporary but sublime absence of selfishness.” (Ch.19, p.94)

“It was difficult to think of reputation when others were thinking of skins.” (ch.20, p.99)

“It was clear to him that his final and absolute revenge was to be achieved by his dead body lying, torn and glittering, upon the field.” (ch.22, p.110)

“He had been to touch the great death, and found that, after all, it was but the great death. He was a man.” (ch.24, p.118)

## **ESSAY QUESTIONS**

Discuss the following in a five-paragraph essay:

1. In chapter seven of Stephen Crane’s *The Red Badge of Courage*, the author compares the copse of trees where Henry Fleming finds the dead Union soldier to a chapel. The description of the site is full of religious imagery. What is the significance of these analogies? Discuss what Crane is implying about nature and about war in this brief chapter.

2. In chapter eight of Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*, Henry Fleming muses about the fact that, while all soldiers view themselves as great heroes, they fail to realize that the battle in which they are engaged "would appear in printed reports under a meek and immaterial title." Similarly, Paul Bäumer dies on a day in which the only news report is "All quiet on the Western Front" in the novel of the same name by Erich Maria Remarque. How do these comments suggest a common theme of the two novels? Support your discussion with specifics from both books.
3. Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* tells the story of a young man testing his makeup in the crucible of war. The author lived in a way that indicated how much he valued such testing, exposing himself to extremes of danger and violence as a war correspondent. What is the outcome of the test pictured in the novel? What does Henry Fleming discover about himself? Does he emerge from his first battle with a true picture of his character, or is he self-deceived? Support your conclusion with details from the novel.
4. Compare and contrast the quality of the realism used to portray war in Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* and Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*. In which novel do you consider the realism to be more effective, and why? Be sure to use detail from both books to support your conclusion.
5. Compare and contrast the views of military authority pictured in Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* and Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Do the protagonists despise their officers equally, or for the same reasons? Relate these views of authority to the leading themes of the two novels.
6. Compare and contrast the role of friendship in Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* and Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*. To what extent do the two authors develop the concept? Which values it more, and why?
7. Compare and contrast the views of war presented in Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* and Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*. While Remarque's book is clearly an antiwar novel, is the same true of Crane's masterpiece? Why or why not? Support your conclusion with specifics from the books.
8. Compare and contrast the protagonists in Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* and Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Which man is more likeable? Which is more honest? With which man can you as a reader identify more easily? Why?
9. Compare and contrast the role of introspection in Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* and Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Which novel gives greater insight into the inner life of the protagonist? Why do you think so? To what extent does this introspection enable the reader to identify with the leading themes of the respective novels?

10. Compare and contrast Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* and Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* in the extent to which they reflect the personal war experiences of the two authors. Remarque fought in the German army during World War I, while Crane never fought, but served as a war correspondent, though only after the completion of his most famous novel. Do the respective experiences of the two authors affect the extent to which they are able to picture war from the inside? If you see differences, what are they? If not, explain why the two accounts are essentially equal in their portrayals of war.
11. Critic Richard Chase argued that the literary naturalism of Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* was influenced by Darwinism because it pictured man as an animal in conflict with other men and his environment. Do you agree with this assessment? Support your conclusion with specific quotations from the novel.
12. Critic Richard Chase argues that "the recurring, perhaps obsessive, idea in [Stephen] Crane's writing is that man must believe what is obviously not true – namely, that he is a rational creature whose mind through thought and the imagination of the ideal can control and give significance to human conduct. The truth, Crane believes, is that man is pretty much at the mercy not only of his own illusions but of superior social and cosmic forces and of his own instincts." Evaluate Chase's assertion with respect to *The Red Badge of Courage*. Use specifics from the novel either to support or refute his analysis.
13. Discuss the use of irony in Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*. Give particular attention to the irony of the recorded thoughts of the protagonist. How do those thoughts, particularly his assessments of himself and those around him, differ from reality? What is Crane trying to communicate through these ironic descriptions of Henry Fleming's mental processes?
14. At the end of Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*, Henry Fleming declares himself to be a man. Do you consider the book to be a coming-of-age story? Does Henry achieve manhood by the ways in which he changes over the course of the novel, or is he merely self-deceived? Does his definition of manhood correspond to that found in Scripture? Support your conclusion with details from the book.
15. Discuss the use of color in Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*. The author often uses color words to establish his settings. What is the impact of these images? Do they paint a visible picture that draws the reader into the narrative, or is their impact more emotional? Use specific examples to support your argument.
16. Stephen Crane, the author of *The Red Badge of Courage*, once argued that "environment is a tremendous thing in the world and frequently shapes lives regardless." How does his most famous novel illustrate this idea? Be sure to use specifics to support your argument.

17. Critic C.C. Walcutt, in discussing Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*, argued that Henry Fleming, the protagonist, is "an emotional puppet controlled by whatever sight he sees at the moment." Do you agree? What does this assessment say about Henry's character, determination, and maturity?
18. Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* contains no mention of God beyond the use of His name in profanity, and indeed leaves no room for God within the bounds of the narrative despite the frequent use of religious imagery. What characteristics of the story reveal the author's rejection of the Christianity in which he had been raised? Be sure your analysis goes deeper than the use of language and penetrates the worldview of the novel.
19. Some critics of Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* view the character of Jim Conklin as a Christ figure. They note his initials, his character, and the manner of his death, even arguing that the reference to the red sun being "pasted in the sky like a wafer" at his death symbolizes a communion wafer, and that Jim's courageous death somehow redeems Henry's cowardice. Evaluate this interpretation. Do you agree or disagree? Why or why not? In your answer, consider both what you know about the author and the philosophical underpinning of the novel's central themes.
20. Discuss the significance of the title of Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*. How does the way in which Henry Fleming receives his "red badge" contribute to the ironic tone and thematic emphasis of the story?
21. In Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*, Henry Fleming receives his "red badge," not in combat, but when struck with a rifle butt by another Union soldier. While this wound may not be the product of courage on Henry's part, but merely the product of his flight from battle, does it ultimately *give* him courage? Why or why not?
22. Do you consider Henry Fleming, the protagonist of Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*, a hero or a coward? Compare your assessment with Henry's view of himself at various points in the novel.
23. In Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*, the author very rarely gives names to his characters. What is his purpose in doing so? How does this stylistic decision contribute to the message he is trying to convey through the narrative?
24. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, artists began to feel more and more alienated from the society around them. The art of the period expresses that alienation in a variety of ways. In literature, protagonists often feel so isolated from the society around them that they do little but engage in introspection. To what extent is this true of Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*? What does the author's portrayal of Henry Fleming say about his view of the human dilemma and the absence of true human relationships?

25. Discuss the role of nature in Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*. Does Henry Fleming consider nature to be a source of comfort, a menacing presence, indifferent to the plight of man, or all of the above at different times? How does the view of nature presented by the author correspond with the influences that shaped Crane's thought? With the themes of the novel?
26. Discuss the author's use of sensory images in Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*. How do his descriptions of the sights, sounds, and smells of the battlefield enhance the reader's ability to identify with the protagonist? How do these descriptive elements contribute to the themes of the novel? Choose specific examples to support your argument.
27. Much of Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* involves descriptions of the thoughts of the protagonist. Based on these descriptions, as well as the dialogue and actions that make up the narrative, how well does Henry Fleming know himself? Does he gain insight into himself as the narrative progresses, or is his self-understanding static throughout? Support your conclusions with specifics from the novel.
28. What, according to Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*, is courage? How does one obtain it? How is it manifested? Why does war tend to draw it forth from those who think they lack it? Be sure to incorporate incidents and quotations from the novel in your discussion of the issue.
29. In chapter 19 of Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*, the narrator describes a charge by the protagonist's regiment as "a temporary but sublime absence of selfishness." Is this the author's definition of courage? Do you consider it an accurate definition? Why or why not?
30. Compare and contrast the view of courage in Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* with that found in the book of Joshua, in which it is an important theme. Aside from the fact that both books focus on warfare, do you see any similarities in their definitions of courage? What significant differences exist, and why are these important?
31. In Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*, the reader gets inside the thoughts of the protagonist only during wartime, but in the process learns quite a bit about his character. On the basis of what the narrator tells you about Henry Fleming, describe his life at home. Choose either his life before or after the war, and discuss what kind of person Henry must have been. Be sure to do more than empty speculation in your assessment; make use of the details of the novel to draw your characterization.
32. Discuss the use of personification in Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*. Why does the author frequently speak of inanimate objects as if they were living creatures? How do these descriptions contribute to the reader's insight into the character of the protagonist? Use specific examples to support your conclusions.

33. Stephen Crane, the author of *The Red Badge of Courage*, was strongly influenced by the works of Charles Darwin and his emphasis on the importance of the survival instinct. In the novel, Crane portrays the impact of that survival instinct – the ways in which it influences human behavior as well as the circumstances in which it may be overcome by something greater. From reading the novel, what do you think Crane considered more powerful than the inborn instinct of survival? Do you agree with his conclusion? Evaluate his answer to this question from Scripture.
34. In chapter 11 of Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*, the narrator describes the protagonist's struggle with his image of himself in these words: "If he himself could believe in his virtuous perfection, he conceived that there would be small trouble in convincing all others." Throughout the novel, Henry Fleming wavers between self-assurance and self-doubt. Does he ever arrive at a true picture of himself? If so, how? If not, why not? How does God's Word provide insight into the solution to Henry's dilemma?