



Session 2 "Take Courage"

OPENING

1. What is something you're afraid of that others in the group wouldn't suspect? For example: a fear of heights, spiders, or going bald.

BIBLE STUDY

Read Matthew 14:22-33

The fourth watch of the night is after 3 AM which means that the disciples have been struggling to row their boat against the wind all night long. This is after they have had a long, exhausting and miraculous day of ministry (the feeding of the 5,000). It is very likely that the disciples are physically and emotionally drained when this encounter occurs.

1. What are the "waves" that are "buffeting" your life right now? What difficulties are you facing? What is draining you?
2. Fear is a major obstacle to living a God-sized life. Who or what are the disciples afraid of and why?
3. Why are people afraid of Jesus? Why are non-Christians afraid of Jesus? Why would Christians be afraid of Jesus?
4. Many people are surprised by this, but Jesus gives the command, "Do not be afraid," or some variation, more than any other command. In fact the command to not be afraid is the number one command given in the Bible. Think about the relationship between fear and faith, think of what would have happened if fear won out in the boat that night. Why is it so important to Jesus that we "Fear not?"
5. If you were in the boat that night, and you heard Jesus call you to come to him on the water, what would you be thinking and feeling? What would you do?

6. What if Jesus were to say “Come” to you, “Come, follow me and forgive the person who hurt you,” would you do it? Would you come? What if Jesus was to say “Come, follow me and give generously”; or “Come and volunteer to serve in a ministry at church,” would you do it? What if Jesus is saying, “Come, I have a different job for you, a different purpose for your life, but it won’t be as financially rewarding or secure,” would you do it? Why or why not? What fears would hold you back? Could those fears be preventing you from experiencing a God-sized life?

APPLICATION

1. As you will see from the verses below, Jesus does say “come” to forgiveness, generosity and service. What do these verses say you will miss out on if you fail to answer Jesus’ call?

Matthew 6:14-15

2 Corinthians 9:6-11

Ephesians 4:11-16

2. The first step to living a God-sized life is to hear Jesus say to us, “Take courage. It is I. Do not be afraid.” In what areas of your life do you need to hear and respond to Jesus saying, “Take courage?” What would hold you back from attempting to live a God-sized life?
3. Fear numbs our memory. One effective way to develop godly courage is to remember all the ways God has supported you in the past. When we remember what God has done, we are en-couraged to trust in what God will do. Our fears are driven away when we remember that God has been, and will continue to be, with us.

As an encouragement to yourself and your friends, share ways in which you have experienced God’s goodness in times of crisis or blessing.

4. Another way to build godly courage is to hear God encourage you through Scripture. This week’s daily scripture readings will ask you to read, reflect on, and memorize verses of courage. You might be thinking that memorization is not your thing. The truth is you memorize all the time – phone numbers, passwords, the streets to take to get to this small group, etc. You do have memorization skills and God can use them to powerfully work in your life. When you memorize scripture, you are burning God’s living and active word into your mind and heart. That word has power and when you memorize it and recall it in the face of fears it will empower you to overcome those fears and step into a God-sized life. So, you are strongly encouraged to take 10 minutes of each day to engage in the daily growth exercises below.

PRAYER

Break into groups of men and women.

Pray for the needs of people in your group but then also pray for each person in your sub-group, one at a time. Pray that they will be courageous in the areas where they have shared their need for God’s courage.

PERSONAL GROWTH

This week, the daily scripture readings are short, just one verse each day. This is because we are encouraging you to memorize each verse. Just keep repeating it over and over until you have it down. Saying it out loud will help. On Day 2, review Day 1's verse and then memorize Day 2's verse. On Day 3, go over Day 1 and 2...etc. When you read the verse, you are also encouraged to use a simple Bible Study method we call "The 4 C's." Use the "4 C's" questions to help you reflect on the verse and connect it to your life.

Day 1: Joshua 1:9

Day 2: Philippians 4:13

Day 3: Romans 8:31

Day 4: Romans 8:37

Day 5: Hebrews 13:6

The 4 C's

CELEBRATE: What can you praise God for from this passage?

CONFESS: Does this passage convict you of something you need to confess to God?

COMMIT: What commitment does this passage challenge you to make?

COMMUNICATE: What did you learn that you could share with someone else?