

Into the Wild

Week 3 | Fearless

BOTTOM LINE

The power to overcome fear comes with the decision to trust our Heavenly Father.

GOAL OF THE GROUP

To create meaningful conversation that stretches our faith and draws us closer to the heart of God. We will dig into fear – a feeling of anxiety concerning the outcome of something. Often times fear causes us to live in a world of inaction, however, eliminating fear also eliminates our ability to imagine. God calls us to *overcome* fear, not *eliminate* it.

SCRIPTURE

Genesis 15:1-6, Matthew 10:28-31, Psalm 118:6 – In Genesis God called Abraham towards great things, but Abraham was fearful. In Matthew we look to Jesus' own words about fear and placing trust in a Heavenly Father that is present in our lives.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Our imaginations can take us to helpful or hurtful places. Think of a time when you let your imagination run wild. Where did it take you? Share with the group.
- Read Genesis 15:1-6 and Discuss.** "Do not fear" by itself is a terrible statement, but when God says to Abram "I am a shield to you" it changes everything. God even acknowledges that the reward for trusting Him will be great.
 - Abraham wants to know "how", but God says you don't have to understand the HOW to choose to obey the WHAT. How do you see God's invitation to trust and follow Him in these verses?
 - When God calls you to something, He rarely reveals all of the steps at one time. How does this parallel with fear or anxiety that leads to inaction?
 - Do you see an invitation to trust and follow God in a particular area of your life right now? Where or how?
- Read Matthew 10:28-31 and Discuss.** Many of us fear death or someday will. Jesus tells this group of people that even in their worst fear, they should place their confidence in God, not humans.
 - Jesus seems to assume that fear is a part of life, but doesn't have to be a controlling part of life. How can you overcome fear?
 - If you believe God has a purpose and plan for your life, how can you overcome a fear that immobilizes what God created to be mobilized?
 - The power of fear is often found in the narrative we embrace about our situation rather the situation itself. What could you really do if you were confident that the God of the universe was walking with you? How could your life be different?
- What would it look like for you to move as if God loved you so much that He cared for even the smallest of details in your life?

The power of fear is often found in the narrative we embrace about our situation rather the situation itself.

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TRY THIS

We can spend our energy imagining a future of faith-filled vision or worry-filled fear. The focus of our imagination can either build upon purpose or build towards inaction. Consider these three steps: (1) Acknowledge what could happen; (2) Redirect your focus to what should happen; (3) Move toward the next best step. Read Psalm 118:6. Talk to God. Pray for the power to overcome fear and move towards the future that God has for you.

Into the Wild

Week 2 | Setback

BOTTOM LINE

Disappointment is an opportunity for God to work. Even when God can't be seen, He's still working behind the scenes.

GOAL OF THE GROUP

To create meaningful conversation that stretches our faith and draws us closer to the heart of God. Sometimes we feel defeated and let down by circumstances after following what we think is God's will. We ask, did he really call me to step out or did I miss His plan?

SCRIPTURE

Genesis 16:1-4 and 37:17-26 – Abraham struggled to wait on God and there were consequences of not waiting, however, God's grace redeemed Abraham's sin.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do you define risk? Do you consider yourself a risky person?
2. Have you ever felt something in your gut or something that several people said over and over to you? Think about opportunities or changes that have presented themselves throughout your lifetime. Perhaps you asked yourself "what if I step out". Besides fear, what stops us from taking risks?
3. Do you think there is less fear attached to a risk that God calls us to take? Why or why not?
4. **Read Genesis 16:1-4 and Discuss:** God promised Abraham and Sarah that they would have children in their old age. Years after the promise there was still no sign from God that he would fulfill his promise. Abraham chooses to sleep with Sarah's maid to have a child.
 - a. Sometimes God reveals his plan, but he does not reveal how he will accomplish it. What can go wrong when we do not wait for God's plan?
 - b. What went wrong in Sarah, Abraham and Hagar's story?
 - c. Steps of faith are often accompanied by setbacks and times of disappointment. Can you think of a time you questioned what God called you to do? Share your story with the group.
5. **Read Genesis 37:17-26 and Discuss:** Even in Abraham's sin, God uses it to do something miraculous generations later. Abraham's great grandson would eventually be saved by the descendants of Ishmael during the moment that Joseph's brothers betrayed him. Abraham's sin became a set-up for Joseph being saved.
 - a. Our God is filled with grace and redeems us when we do not follow his will. Does knowing this make it easier to follow God's will for your life? Why or why not?
 - b. How does God respond when we take small steps of faith?

Steps of faith are often accompanied by moments of disappointment. Setbacks are a part of any courageous journey.

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TRY THIS

It is always a bad idea to try to accomplish God's plan in our own way and in our own timing. God's plans come complete with His methods and His timing, and when we try to tinker with it, things get messed up. Our character and trust in God is tested in these moments and the way we respond, will dictate our experience in the "wild". During this week look at how you are tested and pray about how you will respond. Look for God to show up in the midst of the testing and meet you in the uncertainty.

Into the Wild

Week 1 | Hearing Clearly

BOTTOM LINE

Obedience in what God has already revealed positions us to experience what He has yet to reveal.

GOAL OF THE GROUP

To create meaningful conversation that stretches our faith and draws us closer to the heart of God. We ask, is it possible to know God's plan for my life? We will discuss how to understand clearly what He has called each of us to do.

SCRIPTURE

Genesis 12:1-5 – God called Abraham and promised He had a plan for Abraham's future. Abraham trusted and followed where God was leading him, but he stumbled along the journey.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. We all live a life of adventure, whether we're leading it or not. What life adventure do you dream about?
2. Many of us are living a life filled with distractions and a tight schedule. It can be hard to even imagine when you'd have time to hear from God with everything else we are trying to keep afloat.
 - a. How do you find time to dream about the future, the unknown or your life?
 - b. What is your process to hear from God or take time to talk to Him?
(no judgement here, you are not alone if you forget to pause or this is a new idea)
 - c. What comes to mind when we talk about 'hearing from God'?
3. **Read Genesis 12:1-5 and Discuss:**
 - a. Abraham has an encounter with God and learns what it means to trust God and follow him into the unknown and uncertain. He is shown something he has yet to see. How would you navigate both the angst and comfort that Abraham would have felt in that moment?
 - b. Our circumstances are very different than Abraham's, but we too can find ourselves at a similar place.
 - c. Consider that there is no unknown territory for God, when you are faced with difficult moments like this, how do you trust God's plan or direction when you can't see the future?
 - d. God calls Abraham from comfort and promises to show him the way. What is something that is comfortable for you today that God is calling you to trust Him with?
4. Listening to God is connected with trust. Do you believe God is trustworthy? Why or why not?
5. Often God reveals His plan for your life one step at a time. It is in our obedience that He reveals the next step. If you were to take the next step in some area of your life, what would it be, big or small?

Your actions in obedience will help you see most clearly where God is leading you.

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TRY THIS

Those who follow God into the wild... into the uncertainty and away from comfort, begin to see that discovering God's will requires us to be engaged in discerning it. What areas of your life have been most affected by your lack of attention to God's will? Perhaps it is Work/School/Career, Family, Finances, Friendships. Pray and ask God to reveal what hinders you from taking the next steps He wants you to take.