

Faith Over Fear Small Group Guide

Warm-up Question: (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part all together, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. Which would be easier for you, going without food for 24 hours or staying awake for 24 hours?
2. Share with the group one “high” and one “low” from the past week.

Read the following passage: Psalm 91.

Fear and anxiety affect all of us. At times, they can be paralyzing. Chronic fear affects us physically, emotionally, and spiritually. But this psalm reminds us that God does not want us to live in fear. He wants us to trust in his faithfulness. We can overcome our fears by choosing to trust in God, being honest and specific about the things that we fear, and addressing those fears with God’s faithfulness and truth.

Questions for Discussion:

1. The real God can deliver us from fear. False idols cannot. Read the following comments delivered by David Foster Wallace in a speech to graduates. How does following the wrong gods lead us into fear?

In the day-to-day trenches of adult life, there is no such thing as atheism. There is no such thing as not worshipping. Everybody worships. The only choice we get is what to worship. ... If you worship money and things — if they are where you tap real meaning in life — then you will never have enough. ... Worship your own body and beauty and sexual allure and you will always feel ugly, and when time and age start showing, you will die a million deaths before they finally plant you. On one level, we all know this stuff already... The trick is keeping the truth up front in daily consciousness. Worship power — you will feel weak and afraid, and you will need ever more power over others to keep the fear at bay. Worship your intellect, being seen as smart — you will end up feeling stupid, a fraud, always on the verge of being found out.

The insidious thing about these forms of worship... is that they are unconscious. ... They’re the kind of worship you just gradually slip into, day after day, getting more and more selective about what you see and how you measure value without ever being fully aware that that’s what you’re doing.

David Foster Wallace

2. When we experience fear, we are often told to be more self-confident, to believe in ourselves. Do you think this advice is helpful or unhelpful? In what sense? Explain.

3. In Psalm 91, the psalmist specifically names a wide variety of potential threats including the fowler's snare, the deadly pestilence, the terror of night, the arrow that flies by day, and many others. Explain the sense in which we have a tendency to "go global" when we start experiencing fear. Why might specifically naming our fears help us?
4. What are some specific fears you struggle with? What would you tell a friend who was struggling with those fears?
5. Read Matthew 6:25-34. What does Jesus say to those who are worried about the basic necessities of life?
6. Joshua had the extremely challenging responsibility of leading the Israelites into the promised land. Read Joshua 1:7-9. What did God tell him? How can these instructions help us face fear?
7. Choosing faith over fear does not mean we will never experience pain or difficulty in this life. The apostle Paul was flogged, whipped, pelted with stones, shipwrecked, imprisoned, mocked, threatened, and betrayed. He experienced hunger, thirst, and sleeplessness. He was even tormented by a thorn in his flesh, which he called a messenger of Satan. And yet, he lived a life of faith over fear. Read Philippians 1:18b-21; 3:7-11; 4:10-13. How did Paul walk in great faith in the midst of such suffering?
8. What is one thing you can do this week to walk in faith over fear?

Pray