

Faith Isn't Safe 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. Have you been, or would you ever go, skydiving?
2. What is one thing about yourself that most people don't know?

Read the following passage: Hebrews 11:32-40.

None of the central figures in the biblical narrative lived safe lives. God called Abraham to leave everything to go to a land he had never seen. God called Moses to return to the people he was hiding from and gave him the impossible mission of delivering the Israelites from the hand of Pharaoh. Ruth, a Moabite widow, went with her widowed mother-in-law to the land of her people's enemies. Daniel committed himself to living a holy life while serving in the king's court in Babylon. Esther risked her life to appeal to her husband, a Persian king. Most of us would prefer to live safe lives. But real faith isn't safe.

Questions for Discussion (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. Read Mark 8:34-37. In consideration of this passage, in what sense is following Jesus the safest thing a person can do, and in what sense is following Jesus potentially unsafe? What does it mean to deny ourselves and take up our crosses? What are some ways in which God is calling you to die to yourself?
2. Why might Jesus' Jewish followers have been ashamed of Jesus or his words? What might it look like for a person to be ashamed of Jesus or his words in our cultural context?
3. When was the last time you talked with someone who is not yet following Jesus about your faith? How did it go? How might you have "Gospel conversations" on a more regular basis?
4. Read Philippians 2:3-11. How should Jesus's incarnation and sacrifice affect how we relate to other people? What are some practical ways you can put into practice Paul's instructions in verses 3 and 4? In what sense is investing valuable resources in other people risky?
5. Read Matthew 5:43-45. Take a moment to identify some categories of people you are prone to be critical of. (For example, people who voted for a particular political candidate, people who play loud music in public, people who talk about themselves all the time, etc.) What can you do to love people you are prone to be

critical of?

6. What are some risks you think God is calling you to take?

Pray