



Knock! Knock! Is Anyone There?

Adapted from "Tag! You Are It" Series by Jimmy White

As you walk through these lessons, open your heart to hear what the Spirit is trying to communicate to you. There are many who are lost and will not be able to enter the eternal peace of heaven. They are knocking on eternities door with questions such as, "Is anyone there?" Read this remarkable story from John Bradshaw:

Early this century, a young Norwegian immigrant stood, heart pounding, on Ellis Island gazing in awe at the young Manhattan skyline taking shape across the harbor. New York City represented to him the chance for something that until now had been unattainable. A better life, greater opportunities, new possibilities, and a new start lay just beyond the shimmering stretch of blue water, a vision of loveliness to him and multiplied thousands before him. Surely this city would be a sanctuary, a haven, a city of refuge. Ninety years later I stood at Ellis Island where this young man once stood, his name now etched into a wall of remembrance honoring many of the immigrants who entered America via this famous gateway. And with me stood my wife, Melissa, Joseph Olsen's great-granddaughter.

Together we realized that if Melissa's great-grandfather had not made that journey across the Atlantic Ocean life would be vastly different for both of us. That city represented a gateway of hope that changed everything for a young immigrant seeking a new start. There, life began again. From the moment, he arrived on that shore, nothing was ever the same.

The Bible talks about cities of hope and promise where people seeking sanctuary could realize the prospect of a completely new beginning. As New York City has been to the millions of immigrants that came to the United States in search of a better life, so were these cities to those wanting to start life over again. These biblical cities of refuge provide tremendous insight into the plan of salvation and the wonderful promise of redemption through our Lord Jesus Christ.¹

¹ John Bradshaw, "City of Refuge," Inside Report, August 1, 1999 <https://www.amazingfacts.org/news-and-features/inside-report/magazine/id/10701/t/city-of-refuge> (accessed July 26, 2017).

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COURAGE

C1: Describe your church in which you grew up.

C2: If you were in charge, what would church look like?

C3: Read and answer the following.

Psalm 27:4–5 (ESV) One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple. For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble; he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will lift me high upon a rock.

Proverbs 18:10 (ESV) The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous man runs into it and is safe.

Deuteronomy 33:27 (ESV) The eternal God is your dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms. And he thrust out the enemy before you and said, 'Destroy.'

- From these verses, what are three things you glean about the church?

STRENGTH

S1: In Old Testament times there were special cities for failures, messed up people, and those who couldn't defend the accusations against them. Read and answer the following.

Joshua 20:1–9 (ESV)

- What does the word refuge mean?
- What does this say to us about the church today?

S2: These cities were the first churches if you will. From the verses in **S1**, write down the city names and their meaning. What does this speak to us today? Read and answer the following.

Numbers 35:6 (ESV)

Numbers 35:25 (ESV)

- What was the job of the priest to someone coming into a city of refuge?
- What should be our attitude to those outside the church, coming to the church, the city of refuge?

S3: On a scale of 1-4, with 1 being very well and 4 being not very well, rate yourself at how well you accept outsiders into the city of refuge – the church? Write out a plan to improve.



ENDURANCE

E1: God's desire is to raise up servant warriors who will walk in authority and be a shelter to those outside the city. Read and answer the following.

Matthew 16:18–19 (ESV)

Acts 2:1–3 (ESV)

Acts 4:31–35 (ESV)

Acts 5:11–12 (ESV)

Acts 8:3–4 (ESV)

Acts 9:31 (ESV)

Acts 14:23 (ESV)

Acts 14:27 (ESV)

Acts 15:3 (ESV)

Acts 20:28 (ESV)

Acts 20:17 (ESV)

Acts 20:20–21 (ESV)

1 Corinthians 12:28 (ESV)

Ephesians 1:22–23 (ESV)

1 Timothy 5:16 (ESV)

James 5:14 (ESV)

2 Corinthians 8 (ESV)

- From these verses, what are 16 things the church has been called to fulfill? Discuss how well you are doing each of these and how to improve.

E2: Churches tend to change over time. Read and answer the following.

Revelation 3:14–20 (ESV)

- Compare and contrast the church of Laodicea in the Book of Revelation with the same church in Acts. There are seven major differences. List what they are.

- Where do you think the church went wrong?

E3: God has called us to be a priest NOT the high priest. Read and answer the following.

2 Corinthians 5:20–21 (ESV)

Psalms 84:10–11 (ESV)

- From these verses, what is our role in the city of refuge (the church)?

- On a scale of 1-4, with 1 being very well and 4 being not very well, rate yourself on how well you are a doorkeeper in the city of refuge. Write out a plan to change.