

Small Group Guide: Life in Progress Week 4 Stretch your Faith



Summary:

Faith is not about your talents or abilities. It's about obedience to God's call, even when it's uncomfortable or scary.

Remember: God doesn't call the qualified, He qualifies the called.

'By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.' - Hebrews 11:8

What is God calling you to do today? Will you step out in faith?

Key Takeaways:

1. Faith is the foundation of our relationship with God and how we interpret the world.
2. God works through people because of their actions taken in faith, not their personal abilities.
3. Stepping out of our comfort zone is necessary for faith to grow and be strengthened.
4. Our calling to ministry is based on obedience to God, not our perceived strengths or weaknesses.

Discussion Questions:

1. The sermon mentions that "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). How do you understand this concept in your daily life?
2. Reflect on a time when you stepped out in faith despite feeling inadequate or unprepared. What was the outcome?
3. The sermon discusses several biblical figures (Abraham, Moses, Rahab) who acted in faith. Which of these stories resonates with you most and why?
4. How do you typically respond when God's commands seem to contradict each other or don't make sense from a worldly perspective?
5. The speaker mentions his experience at NYSEM and initial reluctance to go. Have you ever felt resistant to something God was calling you to do? How did you overcome that resistance?
6. Discuss the statement: "You don't act because you lack faith, but your faith never grows because you don't act." How have you experienced this in your own life?
7. How can we balance learning from our failures in ministry while not letting them deter us from future obedience?

Practical Applications:

1. Identify one area in your life where God might be calling you to step out in faith. What's one small step you can take this week towards obedience in that area?
2. Keep a "faith journal" for the next month. Record instances where you acted in faith and how God worked through those actions.
3. Choose a biblical figure mentioned in Hebrews 11 and study their story in more depth. Reflect on how their faith journey can inspire your own.
4. Practice sharing your faith with someone this week, even if it feels uncomfortable. Reflect on the experience with the group next time you meet.
5. Spend time in prayer asking God to reveal any areas where fear or insecurity might be hindering your obedience. Ask for the courage to step out in faith.

Closing Prayer

5-day Bible reading plan and devotional guide



Day 1: Stepping Out in Faith

Reading: Hebrews 11:1-6

Devotional:

Faith is the foundation of our relationship with God. As we read about the "heroes of faith" in Hebrews 11, we're reminded that faith is not just belief, but action. Abraham, Noah, and others acted on God's commands even when it seemed illogical or impossible. Today, reflect on areas in your life where God may be calling you to step out in faith. What's holding you back? Remember, God doesn't call the equipped; He equips the called. Pray for the courage to trust God's promises and act on His leading, even when it feels uncomfortable or uncertain.

Day 2: God's Presence in Our Weakness

Reading: 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

Devotional:

The sermon highlighted how God often works through our weaknesses rather than our strengths. Paul's words in 2 Corinthians remind us that God's power is made perfect in our weakness. Think about the areas where you feel inadequate or ill-equipped. How might God be inviting you to rely on His strength rather than your own? Consider how your perceived weaknesses could actually be opportunities for God's power to shine through. Today, surrender your insecurities to God and ask Him to work powerfully through your limitations.

Day 3: Obedience in the Face of Fear

Reading: Joshua 1:1-9

Devotional:

The story of Joshua and the walls of Jericho demonstrates the power of obedience, even when God's commands seem illogical. Joshua faced an impossible task, but he chose to trust and obey God. What "walls" are you facing in your life? What fears or doubts are holding you back from fully obeying God's call? Meditate on God's promise to Joshua: "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." Ask God for the courage to take the next step of obedience He's calling you to, trusting in His presence and power.

Day 4: Growing Through Challenges

Reading: James 1:2-4

Devotional:

The sermon emphasized how our faith grows when it's tested. James echoes this, encouraging us to consider trials as opportunities for growth. Reflect on a recent challenge you've faced. How has it stretched your faith? What have you learned about God's character through this difficulty? Instead of praying for an easy life, consider asking God to use your challenges to deepen your trust in Him and shape you more into the image of Christ. Thank Him for His faithfulness in past trials and ask for the strength to persevere through current struggles.

Day 5: Answering the Great Commission

Reading: Matthew 28:16-20

Devotional:

Jesus' final command to His disciples was to go and make disciples of all nations. This call extends to all believers today. The sermon reminded us that our effectiveness in ministry isn't based on our talents or abilities, but on our willingness to obey God in faith. What hesitations do you have about sharing your faith or engaging in ministry? Remember, Jesus promised to be with us always as we carry out this mission. Today, pray for opportunities to share God's love with others. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide your words and actions, trusting that God will work through your obedience, regardless of your perceived inadequacies.