

5 WEEKS



OLD TESTAMENT HEROES

IN THIS SERIES WE ARE LOOKING
AT SOME AMAZING OLD TESTAMENT
EVENTS ABOUT PEOPLE THAT
BATTLE WITH FEAR, MUCH LIKE WE
DO. YET, GOD DELIVERS THEM FROM
THEIR FEAR TO A VERY STRONG
POINT OF FAITH.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

WEEK 1	
Gideon	4
WEEK 2	
Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego	6
WEEK 3	
Benaiah	10
WEEK 4	
Jonathan	12
WEEK 5	
David and Goliath	14
Top 10 Tips for Leading a Small Group.....	18
Group Agreement	19

GIDEON

WEEK 1

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

What is your biggest fear?

Big Idea:

God helped Gideon overcome his insecurities, that He might use Him and demonstrate His own power in the process.

Key Scriptures:

2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."

Judges 6:1-2

"Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, and for seven years he gave them into the hands of the Midianites. Because the power of Midian was so oppressive, the Israelites prepared shelters for themselves in mountain clefts, caves and strongholds."

Judges 6:11-16

"The angel of the LORD came and sat down under the oak in

Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites. When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, "The LORD is with you, mighty warrior." "Pardon me, my lord," Gideon replied, "but if the Lord is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our ancestors told us about when they said, 'Did not the Lord bring us up out of Egypt?' But now the Lord has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian." The Lord turned to him and said, "Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you?" "Pardon me, my lord," Gideon replied, "but how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family." The Lord answered, "I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites, leaving none alive."

Judges 8:28

"Thus Midian was subdued

before the Israelites and did not raise its head again. During Gideon's lifetime, the land had peace forty years."

2 Corinthians 12:9

"But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

Discussion:

1. Read Judges 6:1-2, 11-16, and Judges 8:28. What do you learn about God's plan to deliver Israel from Midian in this passage? (If time allows in your group, read the entire story in Judges 6-8 together)
2. God saw Gideon as a mighty warrior. Gideon saw himself as weak and lesser-than. How might Gideon's weakness have been an advantage from God's perspective?
3. Gideon had two fears: he was afraid he wasn't enough and he was afraid God wouldn't be faithful. Discuss together with which of these fears do you struggle most.
4. How has fear kept you from doing what God wants you to do?
5. God often uses an unsure, insecure and fearful person to do the impossible. How

have you seen that to be true?

6. How might God choose to use you despite your weakness?
7. Read 1 Corinthians 12:9. Discuss how God's message to the apostle Paul compares with God's message to Gideon.
8. How might that message encourage you when you face your own weaknesses?

Wrapping It Up:

As you close your time together, pray for one another to have the strength to believe what God says about you, and to believe that God WILL be faithful in whatever situation He is asking you to step into.

Memory Verse:

"But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." 2 Corinthians 12:9

Prayer Focus:

Pray for Beloved, our middle school girl's conference this week on March 3, that many girls will come to know Christ as their Savior.



OLD TESTAMENT HEROES

SHADRACH, MESCHACH & ABEDNEGO

WEEK 2

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

Describe a time when you were the hottest you've ever been.

Big Idea:

A faith that's tested by fire is a faith that can be trusted.

Key Scriptures:

2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."

Daniel 3:1-30

"King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, sixty cubits high and six cubits wide, and set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. He then summoned the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials to come to the dedication of the image he had set up. So the satraps, prefects,

governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials assembled for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up, and they stood before it. Then the herald loudly proclaimed, "Nations and peoples of every language, this is what you are commanded to do: As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace." Therefore, as soon as they heard the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp and all kinds of music, all the nations and peoples of every language fell down and worshiped the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. At this time some astrologers came forward and denounced the Jews. They said to King Nebuchadnezzar,

“May the king live forever! Your Majesty has issued a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music must fall down and worship the image of gold, and that whoever does not fall down and worship will be thrown into a blazing furnace. But there are some Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon—Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—who pay no attention to you, Your Majesty. They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up.” Furious with rage, Nebuchadnezzar summoned Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. So these men were brought before the king, and Nebuchadnezzar said to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up? Now when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, if you are ready to fall down and worship the image I made, very good. But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?” Shadrach,

Meshach and Abednego replied to him, “King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty’s hand. But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.” Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and his attitude toward them changed. He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual and commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace. So these men, wearing their robes, trousers, turbans and other clothes, were bound and thrown into the blazing furnace. The king’s command was so urgent and the furnace so hot that the flames of the fire killed the soldiers who took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and these three men, firmly tied, fell into the blazing furnace. Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, “Weren’t

there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?" They replied, "Certainly, Your Majesty. He said, "Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods." Nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the blazing furnace and shouted, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!" So Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of the fire, and the satraps, prefects, governors and royal advisers crowded around them. They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them. Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God. Therefore I decree that the people of any nation or language who say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be cut

into pieces and their houses be turned into piles of rubble, for no other god can save in this way." Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the province of Babylon."

Discussion:

Read Daniel 3:1-30 and discuss the following:

1. Discuss the difference between believing in God and believing God. In what ways did Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego demonstrate they believed God?
2. Verses 24 and 25 describe another in the fire with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Discuss who and why that Presence might be.
3. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to allow the expectations of others to override God's commands. In what area of life are you most tempted to follow people's expectations instead of upholding God's ways?
4. What happened as a result of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego believing God and trusting Him more than they feared what man could do to them? (vs. 26-30)

5. Faith that's tested is faith that can be trusted. What "fiery trials" have you endured that strengthened your faith?
6. How might you demonstrate that you believe God, not just believe in Him?

Wrapping It Up:

Pray for one another in the areas where you are most tempted to follow others' expectations rather than God's commands.

Memory Verse:

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."

2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV

Prayer Focus:

Pray for our work with Mission India in our three-year commitment to reach the Sunderbans.



BENAIAH

WEEK 3

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

Share about a time when you had a scary encounter with some kind of animal.

Big Idea:

Lion chasers know that the bigger their God is the smaller lions become.

Key Scriptures:

2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."

2 Samuel 23:20-21

"Benaiah son of Jehoiada was a valiant fighter from Kabzeel, who performed great exploits. He struck down two of Moab's best men. He also went down into a pit on a snowy day and killed a lion. And he struck down a huge Egyptian. Although the Egyptian had a spear in his hand, Benaiah went against him with a club. He

snatched the spear from the Egyptian's hand and killed him with his own spear."

Daniel 6:20-22

"When (King Darius) came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?" Daniel answered, "O king, live forever! My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions."

Discussion:

1. Read 2 Samuel 23:20-21. Benaiah's story is not as well known as others, but he was one of David's most valiant and courageous warriors. Discuss how you see his courage demonstrated in these passages.
2. Going down into a pit on a snowy day to kill a lion gave Benaiah a reputation as a "lion chaser". Discuss what he would have had to overcome in order to do that.

- Clearly Benaiah was able to overcome his fear to do the crazy, risky feats he was known for. What does that tell you about his faith?
- Read Daniel 6:20-22. Although Daniel wasn't quite choosing to chase a lion, his story, along with Benaiah's, demonstrates that lion chasers know that the bigger their God is, the smaller lions become. What lions seem bigger than your God right now?
- What do you need to do chase them down and conquer them (and your fear)?
- How might our series' verse in 2 Timothy 1:7 encourage you?

Wrapping It Up:

Share together one commitment you each can make to cultivate the kind of faith over fear that Benaiah showed, understanding that his God is bigger than any lion or enemy he faced.

Memory Verse:

"Benaiah son of Jehoiada was a valiant fighter from Kabzeel, who performed great exploits.. He also went down into a pit on a snowy day and killed a lion."
2 Samuel 23:20-21

Prayer Focus:

Pray that many couples will experience a refreshing, renewal and recommitment at our Marriage Retreat held on March 17-19 at the Riverfront Marriott.



JONATHAN

WEEK 4

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

Are you more of a hoarder or one who let's go of things easily?

Big Idea:

Scarcity mentality is rooted in the fear that there is never enough; abundance mentality recognizes the limitless nature of God.

Key Scriptures:

2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."

1 Samuel 15:3

"Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy everything that belongs to them. Do not spare them..."

1 Samuel 15:7,9

"Then Saul attacked the Amalekites all the way from Havilah to Shur, to the east of

Egypt....But Saul and the army spared Agag and the best of the sheep and cattle, the fat calves and lambs — everything that was good. These they were unwilling to destroy completely, but everything that was despised and weak they totally destroyed."

1 Samuel 14:6

"Jonathan said to his young armor-bearer, "Come, let's go over to the outpost of those uncircumcised fellows. Perhaps the LORD will act in our behalf. Nothing can hinder the LORD from saving, whether by many or by few." In that first attack Jonathan and his armor-bearer killed some twenty men in an area of about half an acre. Then panic struck the whole army — those in the camp and field, and those in the outposts and raiding parties — and the ground shook. It was a panic sent by God."

1 Samuel 14:14-15

"In that first attack Jonathan and his armor-bearer killed some

twenty men in an area of about half an acre. Then panic struck the whole army—those in the camp and field, and those in the outposts and raiding parties—and the ground shook. It was a panic sent by God.”

Mark 8:35-36

“For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?”

Discussion:

1. Read 1 Samuel 15:3 7,9. Discuss what this passage tells you about God’s command to Saul and Saul’s response.
2. What might have been Saul’s motivation for disobeying God?
3. Having an abundance mentality starts with:
 - Knowing God as my unlimited supply.
 - Knowing who I am in Him.
 - Knowing what He can do through me.

Discuss with which of these that you most struggle.

4. Read 1 Samuel 14:6. Discuss the ways that Jonathan demonstrated an abundance mentality.
5. Jonathan was willing to take

risks because of his faith in God and his ability to provide. What risky fight do you need to pick?

6. Contrast the mentality of Saul vs. Jonathan. What fears might have been at the heart of Saul’s actions? What did that fear cost him?
7. Jonathan was willing to risk it all to serve God’s purpose in his life. How did that risk pay off?
8. Share with your group the fears that tend to keep you rooted in a scarcity mentality.

Wrapping It Up:

Pray for each person in your group to be able to live into an abundance mentality, with faith overcoming fear.

Memory Verse:

“For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?” Mark 8:35-36

Prayer Focus:

Pray for our new members who were presented this weekend.



DAVID & GOLIATH

WEEK 5

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

What's the biggest battle you've faced in your life?

Big Idea:

Don't focus on your "giant"; focus on your God who is bigger than any giant you may face.

Key Scriptures:

2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."

1 Samuel 17:4-7

"A champion named Goliath, who was from Gath, came out of the Philistine camp. He was over nine feet tall. He had a bronze helmet on his head and wore a coat of scale armor of bronze weighing 125 pounds; on his legs he wore bronze greaves, and a bronze javelin was slung on his back. His spear shaft was like a weaver's rod, and its iron point weighed fifteen pounds. His shield bearer

went ahead of him."

1 Samuel 17:10-11

"Then the Philistine said, "This day I defy the ranks of Israel! Give me a man and let us fight each other." On hearing the Philistine's words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified."

1 Samuel 17:23

"As (David) was talking with (his brothers), Goliath, the Philistine champion from Gath, stepped out from his lines and shouted his usual defiance, and David heard it."

1 Samuel 17:26b

"Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?"

1 Samuel 17:33

"Saul replied, "You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a boy, and he has been a fighting man from his youth."

1 Samuel 17:37

"[And David said] The LORD

who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine."

1 Samuel 17:45-46

"David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the LORD will hand you over to me, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head. Today I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel."

Discussion:

1. Read 1 Samuel 17:4-7, 10-11, 23 and 26b. Discuss the difference between Saul and all the Israelites' response to Goliath's threats versus David's response to Goliath's threats.
2. What truth made David fearless?
3. What lies left Saul and his army shaking in their boots?
4. What lies do you struggle with believing? What is the truth that can help you recognize those lies?
5. Read 1 Samuel 17:33, 37.

Discuss how, despite Saul's naysaying, David focused on his God stories.

6. What are some of your God stories? Tell others in your group about the time God's victory, love, and/or presence was real in your life.
7. Read 1 Samuel 17:45-46. David didn't compare the giant to himself, he compared the giant to God. What is your focus on, the giant or God? How does that play out in your life?
8. What are some things you KNOW about God but need to BELIEVE about God?

Wrapping It Up:

David's victory was not his victory, it was God's. Through it he showed the entire nation what can happen when one person is willing to let everyone know that there is a God who reigns in their life and in the world. As you close, pray for the courage to live with the same fearlessness and understanding of the truth that David did.

Memory Verse:

"...and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel."

1 Samuel 17:46b

Prayer Focus:

Pray for our upcoming Easter services at the Tyson on April 9, and those all over the world, "that the whole world will know that there is a God" in Siouxland, and in the world. And that many will come to know Christ as their Savior, and experience spiritual transformation as a result.



NOTES:

Top 10 Tips for Leading a Small Group

1. Establish a welcoming, accepting, and safe environment.
 - Take time to prepare.
 - Make sure to give a warm enthusiastic greeting to each person.
 - Verbally communicate the environment that you hope to create.
 - Ephesians 4:1-3
2. On the opening night of your group you need to have some intentional discussions centered around these questions:
 - What is the purpose of our group?
 - What is the vision for our group?
 - What are your expectations?
 - What do you hope to gain from this group experience?
 - What are some things we value as a group?
 - What are some healthy guidelines we need to have in place?
Review and sign a group agreement.
3. Be authentic. Spend time sharing your life stories in order to get to know each other on a deeper level.
4. Find a good balance between:
 - Truth and grace/Bible study and life
 - Encouraging and challenging one another
 - Giving and receiving feedback from each other
5. Ask good questions to stimulate good discussion. Use open ended questions and follow up questions.
6. Hang out together, do things socially, eat together and have fun together!
7. Develop a missional lifestyle, find a service project to do together in the community.
8. Raise up new leadership by rotating facilitation of the group.
9. Share the responsibilities in order to increase individual commitment and ownership of the group.
10. Pray for your group and for each other!

Find ways to celebrate what God is doing in your group! Who else could you invite to join you in order that their life may be impacted by what God is doing in your group?

Group Agreement

OUR PURPOSE

To transform our spiritual lives by cultivating our spiritual health in a healthy small group community. In addition, we: _____

OUR VALUES

Group Attendance: To give priority to the group meeting. We will call or email if we will be late or absent.

Safe Environment: To help create a safe place where people can be heard and feel loved. (Please, no quick answers, snap judgments, or simple fixes.)

Respect Differences: To be gentle and gracious to people with different spiritual maturity, personal opinions, temperaments, or imperfections. We are all works in progress.

Confidentiality: To keep anything that is shared strictly confidential and within the group, and to avoid sharing improper information about those outside the group.

Encouragement for Growth: To be not just takers but givers of life. We want to spiritually multiply our life by serving others with our God-given gifts.

Welcome for Newcomers: To keep an open chair and share Jesus' dream of finding a shepherd for every sheep.

Shared Ownership: To remember that every member is a minister and to ensure that each attender will share a small team role or responsibility over time.

Rotating Hosts/Leaders and Homes: To encourage different people to host the group in their homes, and to rotate the responsibility of facilitating each meeting.

OUR EXPECTATIONS

- Refreshments/mealtimes _____
- Childcare _____
- When we will meet (day of week) _____
- Where we will meet (place) _____
- We will begin at (time) _____ and end at _____
- We will do our best to have some or all of us attend a worship service together.
- Our primary worship service time will be _____
- Date of this agreement _____
- Date we will review this agreement again _____
- Who (other than the leader) will review this agreement at the end of this study _____

DEON, SHADRACH,
MESCHACH, ABEDNEGO,
BENAIAH, JONATHAN,
DAVID AND GOLIATH,
GIDEON, SHADRACH,
MESCHACH, ABEDNEGO,
BENAIAH, JONATHAN,
DAVID AND GOLIATH



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