

MONSTERS

Study Guide

FEAR

When I was very young I had invited a friend over to hang out and play in the backyard with me. We were in the small sandbox my parents had made me, GI Joes in hand, having an amazing Saturday afternoon for your typical ten year olds.

As we sat there, making up war stories, backgrounds for our different figures, and preparing for the great sand war of 97' my brother approached to tell us of news he had just been made aware of that very morning. Apparently a crazed serial killer was on the loose. He had been spotted multiple times in the area jumping off of the local trains and hunting for his next victim in the houses near by. We unfortunately lived a few houses away from a set of train tracks, so my brother advised us to keep our ears perked for the train horn. If we heard it we needed to be on the watch. The serial killer near if we heard it.

An hour or so passed before another train came by blaring its horn. We heard it, and while we had little to no faith in my brothers story my friend and I still kept our eyes peeled just in case.

What we did not know was that my brother had something bigger planned than a spooky story. He intended to prank us both and hopefully see us race inside terrified. He sat in front of our house hidden by the landscaping the entire hour dressed in a long overcoat and very realistic mask that portrayed an ugly, crazed old man. So when he finally heard the train come he rose to action, limping his way around the house back towards my friend and I growling and howling the entire way.

I saw the mask and knew it was a prank. He had shown me his new mask a few days prior and so when he got close enough to hear he was also close enough to identify so I had no doubt this was all a ruse.

My friend was not so lucky. He was scared. Terrified would be more accurate. He was frozen in place by his fear and even after I walked up to my brother and pulled off the mask he was still so overwhelmed that he could not move. Apparently for days after this anytime my friend, who lived down the street closer to the train tracks, heard the train whistle he would run inside and hide, afraid of the train hopping serial killer. Fear had gotten the best of him.

We all have monsters we live with. Sometimes it's fear, shame, or bitterness. Yours may be different, but we all have them. We all live with them monsters in our life that, sometimes despite the knowledge that we should do something about them, we still let them wreak havoc in our life and influence our decisions. We have monsters under our bed the scare the mess out of us and end up having way to much control and sway in our life.

Over the next 5 weeks we're going to be looking at those monsters. We're going to, with the guidance of scripture, individual study, group questions, and the working of God's Spirit through his word, turn on the lights, lift up the covers, look under our beds, and face these monsters head on.

**“The scariest monsters are the ones that lurk within our souls.”
Edgar Allen Poe.**

Fear

We've all been afraid. Maybe for you that fear was fear of consequences, a fear of the unknown, or a fear that things may never change. Circumstances may vary, but we do all know how it feels to be afraid. When we want to act, even sometimes knowing the right thing to do, fear can hold us back. When we want to believe or we want to have faith, fear can whisper lies that work their way in through the cracks. Fear is something, that unchecked, can take drastic hold onto our lives and keep us from finding and living the life God prepared for us. So today we talk about the facts and truth that confront fear and bring our hearts back to faith.

Deuteronomy 31:6

We must face and confront our fears.

Fight or flight and face or freeze reactions.

Our culture created a perpetual state of stress induced fear.

Isaiah 41:10

30+ occasions "fear not" is in scripture.

Are you letting fear of faith drive your decisions?

We are not facing our fears alone

We do not have to fight our fear alone.

God is with us

The church is with us

Exodus 13:21-22

Psalm 23:4

You will not be forsaken

Remembered vs reminded

People show up and leave, God is there.

Matthew 27:46 "my god, my god, why have you forsaken me.

He was forsaken so we wouldn't have to be.

May you charge forward BOLDLY, knowing He is with you.

Reading Plan

Date	Verse	Gospel text	Psalms
Monday	2 Timothy 1:17	John 1:1-18	Psalm 1
Tuesday	Psalm 34:4	John 1:19-28	Psalm 2
Wednesday	Psalm 56:3-4	John 1:29-34	Psalm 3
Thursday	Psalm 11:10	John 1:35-42	Psalm 4
Friday	Isaiah 12:2	John 1:43-51	Psalm 5
Saturday	Hebrews 13:6	John 2: 1-12	Psalm 6
Sunday	Isaiah 41:13	John 2:13-22	Psalm 7

Community Group Questions

Read Deuteronomy 31:6

In this passage God is asking Joshua to speak out of his comfort zone and take on a huge challenge. In light of this very scary task put before Joshua, God tells him to be strong and courageous.

1. When has God asked you to do something scary?
2. Why do you think it's important to have strength and courage in moments like these? Where do you think those things come from?
3. God then tells Joshua not to fear his enemies because God is with him. What comfort can come from knowing that God is with is in the scary things he calls us to do?
4. God is not physically with Jacob in this passages, but yet he promises that he is there. In what ways do you think God is "with us" even though he physically isn't with us?
5. Lastly, God promises Joshua that he would not leave or forsake him. How can we walk more confidently knowing that God remembers us and won't ever forget about us and our struggles?

Write your thoughts and reflections on the passage below in the space provided.

1 John 4:18

Proverbs 29:25

Psalms 56:3-4

Psalms 27:1

Romans 8:15

John 14:27

1 Peter 3:14

