

Message Discussion Guide COURAGE THAT CONQUERS

The Church at Brook Hills

Dr. David Platt

March 21, 2010

Joshua 1:1-9

This guide is to help you facilitate discussion with your Small Group. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering and owning the truths of God's Word. There may be questions you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on their relationship with God. Your role is to facilitate this experience not to complete the discussion guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid teaching task list.

Connect . . .

Use one or both of the following options to introduce the discussion time to follow.

Option 1

Ask members of your group to share about a time when they chose to be courageous—perhaps a time when they faced down a long-held fear. What was the source of their courage? What happened? What spiritual lessons can be drawn from such an incident?

Today we learn about courage that conquers. Christ and His Word are the source of our courage as we face spiritual opposition in India, Birmingham, and beyond.

Option 2

Anyone who has ever watched TV knows there are a lot of nice-sounding offers and money-back guarantees out there. Ask members of your group to describe a time when they put their trust in a promise or guarantee of any kind (advertiser, company, friend, parents, teacher, boss, co-worker, etc). How it did turn out? What determines the ultimate trustworthiness of a promise or guarantee?

Today we'll learn about promises of God that give us courage in the face of spiritual opposition. Christ will be glorified among all nations, even among those people who currently seem most hostile to Him.

Review the Message . . .

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The Radical Experiment...

- To pray for the entire world.
- To read through the entire Word.
- To spend our time in another context.
- To commit our lives to a multiplying community.
- To sacrifice our money for a specific purpose.
 - As individuals/families, to free our resources to give to the church.
 - As a church, to spend our resources on urgent spiritual and physical need in the world.
 - Locally in inner-city Birmingham.
 - Globally in India.

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- Radical Experiment Budget 2010: \$1,491,645.
 - Locally: \$384,364
 - Globally: \$1,107,281 .
- The Global Radical Experiment...
 - India...
 - 1.1 billion people.
 - 41% of the world's poor.
 - Northern India...
 - Over 600 million people.
 - Vast lostness: Less than 0.5% evangelical Christian.
 - Varied persecution : From Hindu nationalists and militant Muslims.
 - The Initiative...
 - Engage hundreds of villages with the Gospel for the first time.
 - Train thousands of indigenous church leaders.
 - Provide tens of thousands with food, water, and/or medical care through local churches.
 - Give millions access to the Bible in their own language.

Discussion

- Some statistics to think about and discuss as a small group from David's message:
 - There are more people living below the poverty line in India than there are people altogether in the United States.
 - In Dharavi slum, just one of many urban slums in India, there are one million people living in an area half the size of Brook Highland.
 - In that slum, there are 100,000 street children. And 200,000 people living with HIVAIDS.
- What were the reasons Pastor David provided to support the giving of \$1.1 million to this area of the world? What are the urgent physical and spiritual needs? What makes Northern India especially significant?
- Have you ever been to an area where only 0.5% or less of the people are evangelical Christians? How would this make you feel? Think about it: In a room full of 600 people, only 3 would be evangelicals. Now consider the number of Christians and churches in the Birmingham area. Discuss.
- How do you think native Indian Christians feel and act in a country with so few believers? Based on the videos of "Lahki" (new believer) and Pastor Sanjo and the stories Pastor David told, do you think Indian Christians are courageous? Do they seem afraid to share their faith, plant churches, and serve the poor? Where do you think their courage comes from?
- Did the video about "Lakhi" (the woman who benefited from the child survival program) encourage your group? How can stories like this spur us on to give?

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Application

- Read the potential outcomes of Radical Experiment giving in India (message notes and back of bulletin), food, medical care, training of leaders, access to the Bible in their language, etc. Do these outcomes inspire you to sacrifice your money, comfort, time, and convenience? Why or why not?
- Give your group time to share (or brainstorm) ways they are freeing resources to help those in need in India.
- How can your group stay encouraged for the Radical Experiment throughout this year?
- How should stories of Indian believers and lives changed by the gospel encourage us in the Birmingham area on a daily basis? How might they affect our attitudes, our fears, our boldness, our values, our priorities?

Courage in Joshua...

- He must trust divine promises.
 - God had given him the land.
 - God had guaranteed him the land.
- He must follow divine commands.
 - God's Word must be on His mind.
 - God's Word must be in His mouth.
- He must depend on divine presence.
 - From the perspective of the world, Joshua should be scared to death.
 - But with the presence of God, Joshua could be sure of victory.
- He must live for divine glory.
 - God gave him the land in a way that only God could get the glory.

Discussion

- Read Joshua 1:1-9. Underline God's commands to be strong and courageous.
- Do you think Joshua was fearful of the challenge before him? Why or why not?
- Did God explain how the Israelites would win every battle? Why not?
- Look at verse 5. Why is it significant that this verse comes before God's command to be courageous?
- What else does God command Joshua to do in verses 7-8?
- Read Joshua 24:1-13. Who is the hero? Who gets the glory?

Application

- Can your fear become an opportunity for God to display His power and gain glory? If so, how?

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- How do we sometimes wait on God for explanations and details before moving forward? To what extent could this show our lack of faith? On the other hand, is caution always a fault?
- Do we sometimes feel a tension between boldness and wisdom in our personal lives? Can this be resolved? If so, how? Can we be strong and courageous and wise? Who is the source of both courage and wisdom? How does the Word of God serve as our guide for both?
- How do the world's methods and strategies often contradict the way of the Word? (Briefly compare Joshua chapters 6 and 7.) How does this sometimes affect even our church culture in America? Does God want us to rely on *our* strategies and plans for the church or on His power? How do we do that?
- How do God's commands to Joshua still apply to our lives today?
- How can these verses encourage us in the Radical Experiment?
- How can these verses affect the way we go about the Radical Experiment both individually and as a faith family?

Courage from Jesus...

- Let us _____ claim _____ the divine promise.
 - God has given Him _____ authority _____ over all peoples.
 - God has guaranteed us _____ success _____ among all peoples.
- Let us _____ obey _____ the divine command.
 - May the Gospel be on our _____ lips _____!
 - May the Gospel be in our _____ lives _____!
- Let us _____ experience _____ the divine presence.
 - From the perspective of the world, we should _____ play it safe _____.
 - But with the presence of God, we can _____ risk it all _____.
- Let us _____ spread _____ the divine glory.
 - God, give us the _____ nations _____, and do it in such a way that only You get the glory.

Discussion

- Read Matthew 28:18-20.
- How far does Jesus' authority extend (physically/geographically and spiritually)? What and whom has Jesus already defeated?
- How far does the Great Commission extend?
- Since we know some from every people group will believe (Revelation 5 and 7), how does this encourage us? How can this make us strong and courageous? How can this inspire our giving?
- How is God with us today? Will He ever abandon His children? Compare His presence with Moses and Joshua to His presence with us today.

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Application

- How should the situation in Northern India, the record of Joshua, and the Great Commission affect our daily lives? What convicts us? What encourages us? What promises can we hold on to? What commands are we expected to obey?
- Why does the world say “Play it safe”? Why does Jesus ask us to come follow Him, and to lose our lives for His sake?
- Ask individuals to share one way in which they believe God is calling them to be strong and courageous.
- Based on the message notes and videos, spend some time in prayer for the lost and needy of Northern India.