



Week Two – Enter It

The goal of this study is to understand how important encouragement is to walking in faith and fulfilling your destiny and how to gain encouragement from God.

CONNECT

- What is one way you encourage yourself when facing an obstacle?

WORD

“After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses’ aide: Moses my servant is dead. Now then you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them - to the Israelites. I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates - all the Hittite counter to the Great Sea on the west. No one will be able to stand up against you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them. Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”

Joshua 1:1-9 (NIV)

THOUGHT

Joshua had been commanded by God to lead the Israelites to the land God promised their forefathers. Before he crossed over, God gave him some words of encouragement and instruction. That message inspired faith and courage in him to enter the promise God had given him and his people. That spirit of faith and boldness is a prerequisite to living out the promises and plans God has for our lives.

You might emphasize here how faith is essential to not only our walk with God, but to all of life, and how encouragement is essential to growing and maintaining faith. The scripture says that the righteous will live by faith (Romans 1:17), and that without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb.11:6), but the truth is, without faith, business would fail to function – negotiations would break down and contracts would be useless without trust. Marriages would crumble if spouses were unable to believe in each other and trust each other. Government would be unable to function without the trust of the people. Discouragement destroys faith and the ability to function. Encouragement causes faith and human relationships of every type to flourish. Imagine what would happen to innovation and invention if encouragement and faith were removed?

DISCUSSION

1. If you were Joshua, what would you need God to tell you to make you feel confident about leading the Israelites to their promised land?

If the group is slow to engage here, you might encourage people to put themselves in Joshua's shoes. All you've known is slavery and wandering about in the wilderness waiting for people to die. Now you are about to enter a land willed with Giants and impossibly fortified cities. What could encourage him to rally the Israelites to move forward? What would motivate you if you were faced with seemingly insurmountable obstacles to an endeavor?

2. God told Joshua to be strong and courageous because he would lead the people to inherit the land he promised them. Is there anything you feel that God is calling you to do that requires courage and strength?

3. What is your biggest fear regarding a calling or the life goals you would like to accomplish in your life? What is one promise of God you can stand on to face that fear?

This is a great question for group interaction. If you are having trouble getting people to share a fear with regards to their calling or a life goals, you might step it back and ask people to share a life goal or calling. Then ask 'now what is the biggest fear you have regarding the calling or life goal you just shared?' As people share their fears, invite the rest of the group to suggest promises of God (from scripture) that might address that fear.

4. What does it mean to you to be "strong and courageous?"

5. Why was meditating on the Book of the Law a prerequisite to Joshua being successful in whatever he did?

The point you want to bring people to is that whatever we fill our mind with, will determine the outcomes of our lives. Filling our minds with God's promises and God's instructions for living will lead to success in life because God made us, and made everything (Colossians 1:16) and desires the best for us because of his love for us (Matthew 7:11, Isaiah 30:18). The more we read his word, the more we will understand this and trust this to be true and the more we will seek to know God and his ways...the ways that lead to success.

6. Where are you struggling in obedience to God that is keeping you from receiving the promises and destiny God has for your life?

God is well capable of keeping any promise he has made or will make. He made the universe and holds it all together, nothing is too hard for him, even what is impossible for us (Genesis 18:14, Matthew 19:26). God assures us that he will be faithful to and fulfill every promise he has spoken (Isaiah 55:11, Philippians 1:6). In fact, the scriptures promise us that God will work in us and through us to accomplish his purposes and live fruitful lives, fulfilling his destiny for us (Philippians 2:13, 2 Thessalonians 1:11). This point might be a good one to introduce the gospel, because sometimes, our inability to obey God stems from our lack of trust in him which in turn stems from our lack of relationship with him, coupled with an overwhelming sense of our own faults and failures (sins). The two reasons why relationships with other people break down is that we don't know them well enough to trust them or we know ourselves too well to trust ourselves. This also applies to God. We don't know him well enough to trust his power or his motives, and even if we do trust his power and motives, we may know ourselves too well to trust that we are worthy or able to avail ourselves of God's intentions or abilities. That's why God sent Jesus, to die for our sins so we need never again worry about our shortcomings, and to demonstrate the depth of God's love for us by laying down his life (John 15:13). Through salvation, we invite God into our lives so that we can grow to trust his power and purposes.

PERSONAL APPLICATION

- Take a moment this week to write out some of the promises of God that encourage you to trust Him.
- Reach out to someone you know this week who needs to be encouraged to overcome their fear regarding the plans God has for their life.

PRAYER

- Pray for God to bring people around you that will encourage you to believe what God has for you.
- Ask God to show you who you can encourage this week.

- Ask God to help you to trust him with areas of your life you are most afraid of.


