

Topic: Fear

Title: 'Let God help you face your fears.'

Purpose of the meeting: to understand that God doesn't always spare us from the things we are afraid of, but He understands and is with us.



INTRO

Game – 'Sit down if you are afraid of...'

Everyone stands, and when they hear you say something they are afraid of, they sit down (common fears: spiders, heights, darkness, dogs, bad grades, horror movies, roller coasters, violent crime, speaking in front of people, the police, etc.). The winner is the one who is still standing at the end.

Video clip - Watch the first 15 minutes of the movie, 'What About Bob?' This comedy is about a man who is afraid of absolutely everything and the psychologist who tries to help him.

QUESTIONS

To assist the leader, possible answers are provided after each question. The purpose of the discussion is for the students to express their thoughts. Discussion leaders should share their ideas only in the conclusion.

1. What were you afraid of when you were little?
Being alone, dogs, the dark, monsters under the bed
2. Now that you are older, what kind of things are you afraid of?
Death, failure, cancer, being laughed at
3. What makes these things scary?
Pain, sadness, uncontrollable/unpredictable, would make you feel alone; shame
4. What do you do when you start to feel afraid?
I try to hide my fear; I pray; I pull away from the situation; I fight back
5. What did Dr. Marvin mean when he told Bob to take 'baby steps?' Was that good advice?
Only think about the next small step, something little you can actively do. Yes, it would help someone not feel so overwhelmed by all their fears at once; it would help a person not be paralyzed by their fear to think of just one thing to do.

6. Is it possible to overcome fear? How?

Through experience and familiarity with the thing you are afraid of; verses of the Bible; prayer; knowing how God has helped you (or others like you) in the past; by equipping yourself (ex. like learning self-defense)

7. Is fear ever good? When?

When it keeps us from doing something really dangerous or foolish; when it provides adrenaline to get out of a bad situation

8. When is fear bad?

When it keeps us from trying our best; when it limits our relationships; when it keeps us from good experiences; when it changes our personality.

9. The Bible says that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. What does it mean to 'fear God,' and why does that lead to wisdom?

We should have real respect for God; we should know it's wise not to go against His commandments, maybe it's a little bit like electricity – a very good power that helps us, but nothing we should take lightly.

10. Where does fear come from?

Our body preparing to take action; a sense of danger – real or just in our mind; an association with a past experience; something we know is bad from movies or other people; shame

WRAP-UP

1. Every person has fears.

What makes one person afraid may not be scary at all to someone else.

One survey of high school students revealed five common causes of fear: fear of failure, fear of the future, fear of rejection, fear of God, and fear of death.

2. God helps us get through what scares us.

God doesn't usually take away our fear, but He helps us get through what scares us.

(You could tell the story of David and Goliath here.)

In this story, the Israelite army was terrified of Goliath, but David had faith in God, like a child's faith in his father. David compared the size and strength of his problem to the greatness and power of God and realized that he could face Goliath with God's help.

Let's examine five common reasons for fear and see how God can help in each situation:

1. Fear of failure

God gives us wisdom and direction, and while we might not be successful in everything, He will help us be successful in what matters to him. Listen to what God said to Joshua as Joshua took over for Moses as the leader of Israel:

"Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; 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." Joshua 1:8 (NIV)

2. Fear of the future

God is not surprised by anything that happens. He is timeless and already present in whatever our future brings.

3. Fear of rejection

God accepts us. The Bible says that He loves us, even as sinners:

"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8, NIV)

4. Fear of God

The fear of God can be healthy or unhealthy.

A healthy fear of God respects His holiness, His perfect wisdom, His sovereignty over the world and our lives.

An unhealthy fear worries that He doesn't love us, or is ready to pounce on us if we do anything wrong. This is not true. He understands our weaknesses and He loves us. (Hebrews 4:15)

5. Fear of death

God conquered death when He raised Jesus Christ from the dead and He offers us eternal life. (John 3:16)

It's natural to feel apprehensive about the process of dying. This is an experience everyone only has once. But we do know that our lives continue after death and that Jesus will be alive and present with us right through to the other side.

3. Learning the right attitude toward fear

We are right to fear God, to respectfully acknowledge His holiness and His right to be the Lord. He has also given us the gift of fear to help us in truly dangerous situations.

But God wants us to trust Him and look for His help when our fears overcome our emotions, or when they keep us from doing good and important things in life.