

SESSION TWO

Fear Must Fall

Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.

ISAIAH 43:1-3



Orientation

In May 2016, *The Atlantic* magazine ran a cover story called “The Secret Shame of Middle-Class Americans.” The cover photo showed a man with a paper bag over his head. The article said nearly half of all Americans would have trouble coming up with \$400 in an emergency. The author admitted that despite his relatively successful writing career, he was one of those people.

The author went on to talk about the anxiety he has lived with for years because of his precarious financial condition. “I know what it is like to dread going to the mailbox, because there will always be new bills to pay but seldom a check with which to pay them.”¹ Fear—and the shame of hiding it—have been his constant companions.

Again and again in the Bible we are told *not to fear*. The repetition is necessary because fear and its cousins—worry, stress, and terror—are bigger in our world and our individual realities than any other giant we face. Just as Goliath taunted the Israelites day after day, the giant of fear taunts us each day, telling us that terrible things are going to happen to us and there’s nothing we can do about them.

Yet as we learned in session one, the giant of fear is dead, though it can still be deadly. Jesus’ resurrection shows us that God has power *even over death itself* and there is nothing that we will ever face that he cannot overcome. We show the world that we serve an all-powerful God when we refuse to give in to fear, when we choose to trust that Jesus has overthrown this giant. In this session, we’ll learn concrete steps we can take to develop a deep trust in Jesus.

Welcome and Checking In

Go around the group and invite everyone to answer one of the following questions:

- *How well do you sleep? What are some fears that keep you awake at night?*

or

- *What were you afraid of as a child?*

Last week you were invited to participate in the “Between Sessions” section of the study.

- Did you do one of the activities? If so, which one? If not, why not?
- What are some of the things you wrote down in reflection?
- What did you learn by engaging in these activities?

Hearing the Word

Read aloud in the group the following passage from 1 Samuel 17:10–16. As before, listen for any fresh insights as this portion of the David and Goliath story is read.

¹⁰ Then the Philistine said, “This day I defy the armies of Israel! Give me a man and let us fight each other.” ¹¹ On hearing the Philistine’s words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified.

¹² Now David was the son of an Ephrathite named Jesse, who was from Bethlehem in Judah. Jesse had eight sons, and in Saul’s time he was very old. ¹³ Jesse’s three oldest sons had followed Saul to the war: The firstborn was Eliab; the second, Abinadab; and the third, Shammah.

¹⁴ David was the youngest. The three oldest followed Saul,

¹⁵ but David went back and forth from Saul to tend his father's sheep at Bethlehem.

¹⁶ For forty days the Philistine came forward every morning and evening and took his stand.

In groups of two or three, share your answers to the following questions:

What was one thing that stood out to you from the Scripture, and why?

What affect do you think Goliath's words had on the Israelites after hearing his taunts every morning and night for forty days?

Why do you think they refused to act?

Watch the Video

Play the video segment for session two. Use the following outline to record any thoughts or concepts that stand out to you.

Notes

In the Bible, there are 365 verses that say "fear not." That's one verse on fear for every day of the year. There are so many verses on fear because we are a fearful people.

Goliath's taunts worked their way into the Israelites' minds and kept them in fear. We have to ask what message has likewise worked its way into our minds and left us feeling terrorized.

Perhaps we are fearful because of our conditioning. We grew up in a household of fear, and now it is just a way of life for us.

We could be fearful because we are concealing something. We fear that people will discover our secret and learn about "the real me."

We could be fearful because we are controlling. We like things to work a certain way—and when that doesn't happen we give in to fear.

Jesus steps into the valley of our fear and says, "Let me be in charge of your life." In the process, he deals with the things that are causing you to fear.

Fear and faith cannot occupy our minds at the same time. Worship and worry simply cannot occupy the same space.

To deal with the giant of fear, we must name it and then put it into the hands of Jesus—and trust that he will take care of it for us.

Group Discussion

Take a few minutes with your group members to discuss what you just watched and explore these concepts in Scripture.

1. The opposite of fear isn't courage. It's faith. What does faith in Jesus involve when we're up against the giant of fear? What do we need to believe? What do we need to do?
2. What's wrong with concealing our fears from others? And if concealment is a problem, why do we do it?

