

Keeping Spiritually Fit



God longs for us to trust him, to water-walk in faith and grow to love him more. He wants to replace our fear with faith. But if he is to work effectively in our lives, we have to face our fears honestly. Think about anything that causes you to feel fearful. How has that fear affected your life? Identify steps you can take to begin trusting God more in this area. Look for opportunities to 'feel the fear and do it anyway!'

Out and About This Week



Joseph was careful not to take the glory but to point Pharaoh to God.

We can share with those around us what God is like. People will often watch us closely when we go through challenging times, it gives us the opportunity to talk about the difference being a Christian makes. The peace and hope we have in Jesus.

Prayer For Today



Heavenly Father, I want to honour you in every area of my life. Help me not to give up, not to allow the difficulties I face to become an excuse to compromise. Give me the courage and wisdom to obey you even under pressure. Amen.

Based on 'If You Want To Walk On Water, You've Got To Get Out Of The Boat' – John Ortberg

Sunday 28th January 2018

Genesis 41v1a, v8-28 Acts 16v16-34 'Challenge and Trust'

Many people whose stories are recorded in the Bible chose to take a step of faith and trust God through difficult situations rather than succumb to fear and give up. Through the lives of Joseph, Paul and Silas, today's readings remind us that the Lord is with us whatever we face.

'It is hard enough to get out of the boat when the wind is calm and the water's smooth. But in life that is rarely the case. Sooner or later the storm strikes– in your marriage, work, ministry, finances or health. It is in the act of facing the storm that you discover what lies inside you and decide what lies before you... Storms have a way of teaching what nothing else can' - John Ortberg



Verse to Remember



Deuteronomy 31v6:

'Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.'



Homegroups (or private study)

Genesis 41v1a, v8-28

Icebreaker: Have difficult storms in your life caused you to become more resilient, or more fearful?

- When you are confronted with difficult situations, what kind of temptations do you face?
- Because of the lies of Potiphar's wife, Joseph was in prison for years. How do we know that Joseph continued to walk with God even when he was unjustly imprisoned? (Look back to Genesis 39v20-23)
- After the cupbearer was released, two years passed before he remembered Joseph. Imagine, for a moment, how you would have responded if you had been Joseph. How might these circumstances have affected your walk with God? Read Genesis 41v14-16, describe Joseph's walk with God.
- Joseph was resilient and found meaning and purpose in his life, even when the challenges just kept coming. What can we do to maintain our focus on God and keep on walking when storms engulf us?
- Why would Ananias have been reluctant to do what God was asking him?
- What do you think makes a person resilient and able to grow through difficult situations?
- Read Genesis 50v15-21. What are Joseph's conclusions as he looks back on his life?
- Share together what you have learnt about God through the difficult times of life.
- From our New Testament reading, Acts 16v16-34, discuss how Paul and Silas responded during suffering.
- Pray together for those who are persecuted and imprisoned around the world for their faith in Jesus Christ.

Extra Reading



In the Bible we find 366 commands from God not to be afraid. These are not empty, wishful-thinking commands; they are backed up by the power, character, and love of God. What do the following verses reveal about choosing to trust God rather than fearing the challenges we face?

Psalm 23v4

Psalm 27v1

Isaiah 43v1-4

Hebrews 13v5-6

Encouraging One Another



Often God uses the 'storms' we have experienced to give us empathy with others who are suffering in similar ways. What have your life experiences been? How can you be a blessing now to others in our community who need support?

My Quiet Times With God



Think about who God is and how he has revealed himself to you in the past. Perhaps you could list some of the answers to prayer you saw in 2017. Turn this into a time of praise to God. You could use music, art, prayer or perhaps one of the great psalms of praise e.g. Psalm 103.