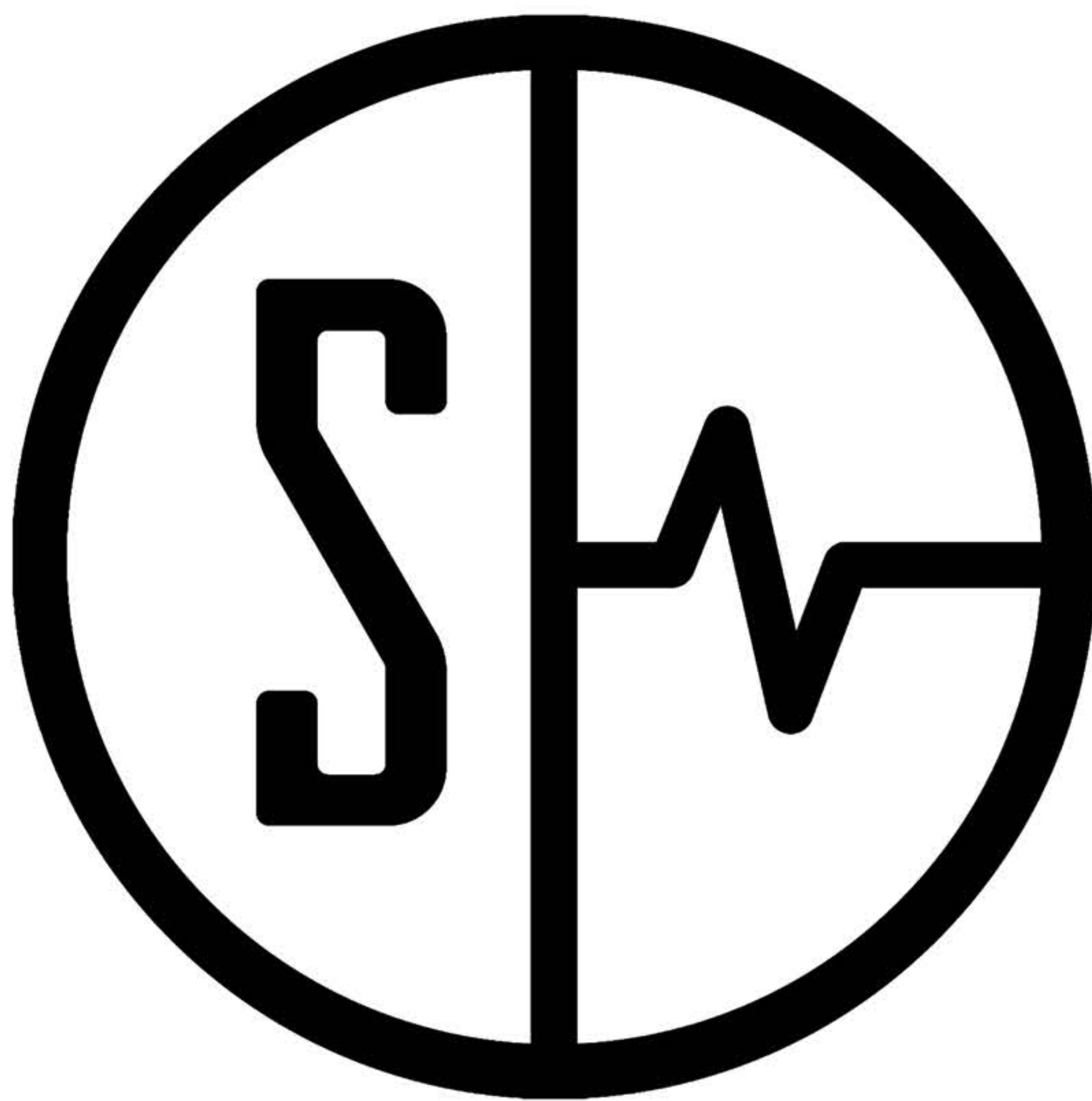


Soul Exercises



Faith and Fear

VOLUME III

WELCOME

About Faith and Fear

It's pretty easy to spot the opposite of something. For example: The opposite of light is dark. The opposite of good is bad. The opposite of tall is short. The opposite of faith is what?

The opposite of faith isn't doubt - it's fear. We fear the outcome of something when we do not have faith that it will work out the way we want it to. It may be hard for most people to admit, but fear is a driving factor in how many people live their lives. It affects decisions, relationships with other people, our futures, and our perception of God. This is how Satan wants us to live - in fear that God will not follow through on his promises for us. The temptation to be afraid is one of the greatest tests of faith. Not only does it hinder our relationship with God, but it keeps us from living a full life. How do we learn to live lives of faith rather than lives of fear?

Over the next six weeks, you will discover how to combat fear by studying the promises of God. When we search Scripture, we learn that God is full of promises: He overcomes, cares, provides, delivers, reveals, and controls so we do not have to. In the Bible there are countless stories of people just like us putting their faith before their fear, and great things happen. Through these stories, we learn that we can have faith because He has proven to be faithful. By comparing and contrasting reactions of real people in real situations, you will learn that fear can defeat, but faith can help you overcome!

Let's take a look at the **books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Joel, and Malachi**.

WRITTEN TO:

The nation of Israel

WRITTEN BY:

Ezra (Ezra/Nehemiah),
Joel, Malachi

TYPE OF WRITING:

History (Ezra/Nehemiah),
Prophecy (Joel/Malachi)

The books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Joel, and Malachi

Ezra and Nehemiah can read as Part 1 & 2 of the same book. They tell the story of the return of God's people (the nation of Israel) to their homeland after many were captured and forced to leave. God's restoration of His people is clearly evident under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah. Joel and Malachi are prophets who warned God's people of His righteous judgment.

TRAINING PLANS

It is important for you to choose which plan works best for you and your desired level of commitment. Read through the four plans and decide which plan you will commit to for the next six weeks, then write it in at the bottom.

Plan 1 Study 1-5x week

Read & engage with daily Scripture(s)

Plan 2 Read 5x week

Complete Plan 1 each day + read listed chapter(s)

Plan 3 Pray 5x week

Complete Plan 2 each day + pray through prayer guide

Plan 4 Add Spiritual Disciplines

Complete Plan 3 + choose option(s) from the list below

Spiritual Disciplines Options

1. **MEMORIZE weekly “Memory Verse”**

Memorizing verse(s) & reciting in group each week.

2. **GIVE to your church**

Giving weekly through tithes/offering and/or time serving others.

3. **JOURNAL your thoughts**

Writing & reflecting each week in space provided in guide.

4. **FAST for 12 or 24 hours 1x/week**

Abstaining from food each week for either 12 or 24 consecutive hours.

MY PLAN:

WEEKLY PLAN

Below is your six week plan for this guide. Once you have determined your training plan (previous page), you will be able to navigate through each day easily. Use this page as a way to remember when you have completed your plan for the day by checking off, circling, or crossing it out.

WEEK 1: *Power - God Overcomes*

DAY 1 DAY 2 DAY 3 DAY 4 DAY 5

WEEK 2: *Protection - God Overcomes*

DAY 1 DAY 2 DAY 3 DAY 4 DAY 5

WEEK 3: *Provision - God Provides*

DAY 1 DAY 2 DAY 3 DAY 4 DAY 5

WEEK 4: *Promises - God Delivers*

DAY 1 DAY 2 DAY 3 DAY 4 DAY 5

WEEK 5: *Perspective - God Reveals*

DAY 1 DAY 2 DAY 3 DAY 4 DAY 5

WEEK 6: *Providence - God Controls*

DAY 1 DAY 2 DAY 3 DAY 4 DAY 5

Week 1

Power - God Overcomes

Day 1

Plan 1 • Study 1 Samuel 17:45-49

Plan 2 • Read Ezra 1

David's vocabulary was filled with faith that God would win this battle. Write out every word that he used in these verses that showed his faith in God.

Day 2

Plan 1 • Study 1 Samuel 17:8-11, 20-24

Plan 2 • Read Ezra 2

How would I describe the Israelites' reaction to Goliath? What makes me doubt that God will overcome any "giant" in my life?

Week 1

Power - God Overcomes

Plan 3 • Pray

Spend some time in prayer this week. The passage and truth are based on this week's theme. Try to center your time in prayer on what you are learning in your daily exercises. You can pray through one or two focuses a day.

Passage Hebrews 1:11

Truth God is asking me to have eyes of faith, not eyes of fear.

I am *listening* to You:

What are You teaching me in the Bible?

What are You teaching me with my friends?

What are You teaching me at home?

What are You teaching me in group?

What are you teaching me about myself?

I am *asking* You:

About my family...

About my friends...

About my country...

About my church...

About my school/work...

About the world...

Week 1

Power - God Overcomes

Plan 4 • Act

Consider adding additional spiritual disciplines to your time with God. Spiritual disciplines help us grow closer to God on a daily basis. In Plan 4, you can choose to do as many of these as you would like throughout the guide.

Memorize Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

Give

Record who the gift was given to and the amount given.

Fast

Record the date and length you fasted for as well as how you felt.

Journal

Record what God has taught you, how you are feeling, or some of your favorite moments from small group this week.

Day 3

Plan 1 • Study Luke 7:1-8

Plan 2 • Read Ezra 3

What clues are in this passage that show me the faith of the centurion?
What clues can be seen in my life that God will come through for me?

Day 4

Plan 1 • Study Luke 7:9-10

Plan 2 • Read Ezra 4

What risks did the centurion take to reach out for Jesus' help? What might have made him afraid of taking these risks?

Day 5

Plan 1 • Study Hebrews 10:35-11:1

Plan 2 • Read Ezra 5

Describe how faith and confidence go together in this passage.

Week 2

Protection - God Overcomes

Day 1

Plan 1 • Study Luke 8:22-25

Plan 2 • Read Ezra 6

How much do I truly trust God to protect me from life's storms, even when I am in the middle of one? Who or what do I naturally turn to?

Day 2

Plan 1 • Study Mark 4:35-41

Plan 2 • Read Ezra 7

What am I afraid of in my life? What thing, relationship, or situation do I believe God cannot protect me from?

Week 2

Protection - God Overcomes

Plan 3 • Pray

Spend some time in prayer this week. The passage and truth are based on this week's theme. Try to center your time in prayer on what you are learning in your daily exercises. You can pray through one or two focuses a day.

Passage Exodus 14:31

Truth To fear the Lord (out of love and reverence) is different than fearing the things of this world.

I am *listening* to You:

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What are You teaching me with my friends?

What are You teaching me at home?

What are You teaching me in group?

What are you teaching me about myself?

I am *asking* You:

About my family...

About my friends...

About my country...

About my church...

About my school/work...

About the world...

Week 2

Protection - God Overcomes

Plan 4 • Act

Consider adding additional spiritual disciplines to your time with God. Spiritual disciplines help us grow closer to God on a daily basis. In Plan 4, you can choose to do as many of these as you would like throughout the guide.

Memorize Exodus 14:31

And when the Israelites saw the mighty hand of the Lord displayed against the Egyptians, the people feared the Lord and put their trust in him and in Moses his servant.

Give

Record who the gift was given to and the amount given.

Fast

Record the date and length you fasted for as well as how you felt.

Journal

Record what God has taught you, how you are feeling, or some of your favorite moments from small group this week.

Day 3

Plan 1 • Study Exodus 14:1-20

Plan 2 • Read Ezra 8

How would it have felt to be Moses, trusting God for protection? How can I commit to trusting God even when my enemies are trying to attack?

Day 4

Plan 1 • Study Exodus 14:21-31

Plan 2 • Read Ezra 9

What do I think the people were thinking when they were walking between the two walls of water? How can I keep walking between my “walls of water”, despite my fears?

Day 5

Plan 1 • Study Ezra 8:21-23

Plan 2 • Read Ezra 10

When have I had enough faith in God’s protection to act, despite my own fears about the situation?

Week 3

Provision - God Provides

Day 1

Plan 1 • Study Leviticus 19:9-10; Ruth 2:1-7

Plan 2 • Read Nehemiah 1

Here is a law God gave to help people in need. What does this law say about the connection between work and provision?

Day 2

Plan 1 • Study Ruth 1:6-22

Plan 2 • Read Nehemiah 2

What did these women return to Bethlehem with more of - faith, fears, resources, or expectations? What parts of my life do I have faith in, and where do I have fear?

Week 3

Provision - God Provides

Plan 3 • Pray

Spend some time in prayer this week. The passage and truth are based on this week's theme. Try to center your time in prayer on what you are learning in your daily exercises. You can pray through one or two focuses a day.

Passage Philippians 4:19

Truth God will meet all of my needs, no matter what the world around me looks like in this moment!

I am *listening* to You:

What are You teaching me in the Bible?

What are You teaching me with my friends?

What are You teaching me at home?

What are You teaching me in group?

What are you teaching me about myself?

I am *asking* You:

About my family...

About my friends...

About my country...

About my church...

About my school/work...

About the world...

Week 3

Provision - God Provides

Plan 4 • Act

Consider adding additional spiritual disciplines to your time with God. Spiritual disciplines help us grow closer to God on a daily basis. In Plan 4, you can choose to do as many of these as you would like throughout the guide.

Memorize Philippians 4:19

And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

Give

Record who the gift was given to and the amount given.

Fast

Record the date and length you fasted for as well as how you felt.

Journal

Record what God has taught you, how you are feeling, or some of your favorite moments from small group this week.

Day 3

Plan 1 • Study John 21:1-6

Plan 2 • Read Nehemiah 3

Why was faith required for the men to throw out their nets one more time? Where in my life do I need to have faith to trust God one more time?

Day 4

Plan 1 • Study John 21:7-13

Plan 2 • Read Nehemiah 4

What things are natural and what are supernatural in this story? What causes me to fear obedience to God?

Day 5

Plan 1 • Study Philippians 4:19

Plan 2 • Read Nehemiah 5

What might still cause me to believe I won't have what I need, even when I know this promise?

Week 4

Promises - God Delivers

Day 1

Plan 1 • Study Matthew 1:18-25

Plan 2 • Read Nehemiah 6

What 2-3 descriptive words would I use to describe Joseph's faith for believing God's promise? What words would I use to describe someone I know who has great faith in God?

Day 2

Plan 1 • Study Luke 1:26-38

Plan 2 • Read Nehemiah 7

Mary was told not to be afraid even though she was troubled by the promise from the angel. Why do I think Mary was afraid by what the angel told her?

Week 4

Promises - God Delivers

Plan 3 • Pray

Spend some time in prayer this week. The passage and truth are based on this week's theme. Try to center your time in prayer on what you are learning in your daily exercises. You can pray through one or two focuses a day.

Passage 1 John 4:18

Truth Fear of the world does not match up with fear of the Lord. When I rest in God's perfect love, there is no fear of what might happen to me on this earth.

I am *listening* to You:

What are You teaching me in the Bible?

What are You teaching me with my friends?

What are You teaching me at home?

What are You teaching me in group?

What are you teaching me about myself?

I am *asking* You:

About my family...

About my friends...

About my country...

About my church...

About my school/work...

About the world...

Week 4

Promises - God Delivers

Plan 4 • Act

Consider adding additional spiritual disciplines to your time with God. Spiritual disciplines help us grow closer to God on a daily basis. In Plan 4, you can choose to do as many of these as you would like throughout the guide.

Memorize 1 John 4:18

There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

Give

Record who the gift was given to and the amount given.

Fast

Record the date and length you fasted for as well as how you felt.

Journal

Record what God has taught you, how you are feeling, or some of your favorite moments from small group this week.

Day 3

Plan 1 • Study Genesis 15:1-6

Plan 2 • Read Nehemiah 8

After receiving a promise that was impossible to believe, what was Abram's response before it even happened? How would I respond to an impossible promise from God?

Day 4

Plan 1 • Study Genesis 18:1-15

Plan 2 • Read Nehemiah 9

Sarah was afraid. What was her response in v. 15? How do I respond when I'm afraid?

Day 5

Plan 1 • Study 1 John 4:17-19

Plan 2 • Read Nehemiah 10

Based on these verses, what are some differences between love and fear?

Week 5

Perspective - God Reveals

Day 1

Plan 1 • Study 2 Kings 6:9-10

Plan 2 • Read Nehemiah 11

The king paid attention to what Elisha warned. What people has God put into my life that I can trust?

Day 2

Plan 1 • Study 2 Kings 6:11-17

Plan 2 • Read Nehemiah 12

How were the servants able to see the Elisha was truly a prophet of God, yet still fear the Arameans?

Week 5

Perspective - God Reveals

Plan 3 • Pray

Spend some time in prayer this week. The passage and truth are based on this week's theme. Try to center your time in prayer on what you are learning in your daily exercises. You can pray through one or two focuses a day.

Passage Isaiah 55:8

Truth My thoughts and fears are focused on what is around me. God's plans are above me - I should be focused upward on Him.

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What are You teaching me with my friends?

What are You teaching me at home?

What are You teaching me in group?

What are you teaching me about myself?

I am *asking* You:

About my family...

About my friends...

About my country...

About my church...

About my school/work...

About the world...

Week 5

Perspective - God Reveals

Plan 4 • Act

Consider adding additional spiritual disciplines to your time with God. Spiritual disciplines help us grow closer to God on a daily basis. In Plan 4, you can choose to do as many of these as you would like throughout the guide.

Memorize

 Isaiah 55:8

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord.

Give

Record who the gift was given to and the amount given.

Fast

Record the date and length you fasted for as well as how you felt.

Journal

Record what God has taught you, how you are feeling, or some of your favorite moments from small group this week.

Day 3

Plan 1 • Study Matthew 14:22-29

Plan 2 • Read Nehemiah 13

The disciples identified that it was Jesus walking on the water. Why do I think Peter stepped out of the boat only after Jesus called to him?

Day 4

Plan 1 • Study Matthew 14:30

Plan 2 • Read Joel 1

Where was Peter's focus when he walked in faith? What causes me to sometimes lose focus in my life with God?

Day 5

Plan 1 • Study Isaiah 55:8

Plan 2 • Read Joel 2

What are 2-3 ways that I think differently than God? How can this be changed?

Week 6

Providence - God Controls

Day 1

Plan 1 • Study Numbers 13:1-3, 21-30

Plan 2 • Read Joel 3

Verse 28 tells us that the people that lived in the land the spies saw were powerful. Why did it take great faith to say what Caleb said?

Day 2

Plan 1 • Study Numbers 13:31-14:4

Plan 2 • Read Malachi 1

How did their fear of the other spies influence the people of Israel? Where can I see my fear affecting others around me?

Week 6

Providence - God Controls

Plan 3 • Pray

Spend some time in prayer this week. The passage and truth are based on this week's theme. Try to center your time in prayer on what you are learning in your daily exercises. You can pray through one or two focuses a day.

Passage Philippians 1:29

Truth Our identity in Christ should define our outlook on life and our present situations, not our identity in this world.

I am *listening* to You:

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What are You teaching me with my friends?

What are You teaching me at home?

What are You teaching me in group?

What are you teaching me about myself?

I am *asking* You:

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About my friends...

About my country...

About my church...

About my school/work...

About the world...

Week 6

Providence - God Controls

Plan 4 • Act

Consider adding additional spiritual disciplines to your time with God. Spiritual disciplines help us grow closer to God on a daily basis. In Plan 4, you can choose to do as many of these as you would like throughout the guide.

Memorize Philippians 1:29

For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer with him...

Give

Record who the gift was given to and the amount given.

Fast

Record the date and length you fasted for as well as how you felt.

Journal

Record what God has taught you, how you are feeling, or some of your favorite moments from small group this week.

Day 3

Plan 1 • Study John 18:33-37

Plan 2 • Read Malachi 2

Jesus put his faith in the Father and chose not to fear death. What are 2-3 things that Jesus could have done instead of going to the Cross?

Day 4

Plan 1 • Study Matthew 27:15-26

Plan 2 • Read Malachi 3

After his wife warned him, Pilate still allowed his fear of the crowd to persuade him to do what he knew was wrong. How often do others make me afraid of doing what is right?

Day 5

Plan 1 • Study Philippians 1:27-30

Plan 2 • Read Malachi 4

Paul, the author, instructs the Philippians to stand together and not be afraid. Who in my life surrounds me and helps me strength my faith in God?

Week 6

Final Reflection

You have reached the end of the Faith and Fear guide. Do you have any reflections, answers to prayer, or next steps to take as a result of this guide? How has the Word of God come alive to you over the past six weeks? Record your thoughts here and consider sharing them with your group.



GUIDE
COMPLETE

