

Small Group Discussion Guide

Strength and Courage

July 12, 2026

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Jesus plainly told us to anticipate difficult circumstances. Yet, I always seem to be surprised at difficulty, surprised and agitated. When my car is out of gas at an inconvenient time, when I have a cold and my voice does not work well, or when we are in the midst of construction and some regulation threatens our progress. My surprise and dismay is even deeper when the intrusions are more lasting ... serious illness or death threatens, employment issues bring financial challenges, family systems are strained by life choices.

1 John 3:13 (NIV)

Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you.

John 14:27 (NIV)

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. **Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.**

1. What expressions of ungodliness or hatred toward Biblical values have you seen which surprised you?
2. What are the most troubling/frightening threats to faith which you are challenged by?

Our Bible reading plan is directing us through Joshua. He is a pivotal character in the unfolding of God's purposes for His people. Joshua spent most of his life as Moses' aide d'camp. Joshua began his life in the slave quarters of Egypt and his final assignment is as general of the tribes of Israel as they enter their promised inheritance. The instructions given to Joshua inform our own journey!

Deuteronomy 31:7–8 (NIV)

Then Moses summoned Joshua and said to him in the presence of all Israel, “**Be strong and courageous**, for you must go with this people into the land that the Lord swore to their forefathers to give them, and you must divide it among them as their inheritance. ⁸The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; **he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.**”

Matthew 28:20 (NIV)

and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely **I am with you always, to the very end of the age.**”

Matthew 14:27 (NIV)

But Jesus immediately said to them: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.”

3. What were the primary instructions given to Joshua? Why would he be afraid or discouraged?
4. What circumstances cause you fear or discouragement?
5. What is most helpful when you are weary and discouraged?
6. Who is the most encouraging person you know? How do they instill courage?
7. Ultimately, God is our source of strength and courage. Satan and his cohorts seek to frighten and discourage. We must choose to resist Satan and his challenges and take courage from God’s presence and promises.
 - ❖ What passage of scripture has been a source of encouragement for you?

Closing Proclamation,

read the following passage aloud as a declaration of strength and courage.

Psalm 56:3–4 (NIV)

³When I am afraid, I will trust in you.

⁴In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I will not be afraid.

What can mortal man do to me?

Psalm 91:2 (NIV)

² I will say of the Lord, “He is my refuge and my fortress,
my God, in whom I trust.”

Psalm 91:14–16 (NIV)

¹⁴ “Because he loves me,” says the Lord, “I will rescue him;
I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name.

¹⁵ He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble,
I will deliver him and honor him.

¹⁶ With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation.”

Isaiah 12:2 (NIV)

² Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid.

The Lord, the Lord, is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation.”