Harvester Christian Church

Life Groups | **PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY**

ACTS | Powered by the Spirit | Spirit Powered Courage

**WEEK 12 – ACTS 18-28**

Courage, by definition, is the ability to do something that frightens you. It is not the absence of fear, but the ability to move forward in the midst of fear. The presence of fear is not proof that one lacks faith in God, but courageous faith calls us to move forward to accomplish God’s purposes even when fear is present within us. Our theme for this week is **Spirit Powered Courage**.

In the remaining chapters of the book of Acts our primary focus is the Apostle Paul. There is a lot of reading to do this week but it only amounts to a chapter or two each day. **Pray for wisdom and guidance and then read Acts 18-28**. As you do, write down some examples of Paul’s courage.

Fear is often the line God’s people must cross in order to see His power. Many times in the Bible we see God do something miraculous for His people, but only after they take a courageous step of faith. Think about Joshua leading God’s people into the Promised Land (Joshua 3). They had to cross the Jordan when it was at flood stage. The priests who carried the Ark of the Covenant were told to “go stand in the river” (3:8). We read about God temporarily stopping the flow of the river so they could safely cross on dry ground, but only after the feet of the priests “touched the water’s edge” (3:14-17).

* Why do you think God wanted them to step into the flood-swollen river before he performed His miracle?
* Write down any other examples you can think of in the Bible of God showing up in a powerful way after His people took a courageous step of obedience.

In the remaining chapters of Acts, Paul is marching into an unknown, scary future, but with courage.

* Read Acts 20:22-24
  + What two things is the Holy Spirit doing here?
  + What is Paul’s #1 ambition?
* Read Acts 21:10-14
  + What does the prophet Agabus say will happen to Paul in Jerusalem?
  + What does Paul say he is ready to do?

As promised, Paul is arrested when he arrives in Jerusalem (21:33). His arrest, however, results in several opportunities for him to share his testimony. In fact, this is the most prominent feature of the last several chapters of the book of Acts. Paul courageously tells his story in Jerusalem before large crowds (ch. 22) and then before the Sanhedrin (ch. 23). He does the same before several prominent government officials after being transferred to Caesarea (ch. 24-26).

* In what way can this be seen as an example of what Paul wrote in Romans 8:28?

God calls us to be people of courage. Having courage means moving ahead even when fear is present within us. To discover more places in the Bible where courage is called for, try going to **BibleGateway.Com** and simply typing the word “courage” in the search engine at the top. Notice there are two full pages of references. Pick out a few that you find to be the most relevant to your life and make note of them in the space below.

**Weekly Challenge**

Find some time this week to be alone in a quiet place. Spend 30 minutes thinking about ways in which fear has affected you and held you back in life or in your walk with the Lord. Write down your answers to these questions:

What am I afraid of?

Where did this fear come from?

What might I be missing out on when I allow the fear to keep me idle?

What would it look like for me to be courageous in these situations?

Two weeks ago we discussed our need to be ready to share our faith at all times, not knowing when an opportunity will be presented by God. Last week we discussed the basics of how to have a spiritual conversation with someone who doesn’t know the Lord. Who in your life is God calling you to share with this week?

**Group Discussion**

Was there anything from this week’s reading you wanted to talk about?

Please share an example of when you wanted to do something but held back because of fear.

Please share an example of someone you know who lives courageously.

Jim Hightower once said, “The opposite of courage is not cowardice, it’s conformity. Even a dead fish can go with the flow.” In what ways do you think our courage as Christians should lead us to go against the flow in our world today?

The Bible teaches that our courage is powered by the Spirit (see 2 Timothy 1:7). In what specific way is God’s Spirit calling you to trust Him and take a courageous step of faith?