



*The #1 catalyst for spiritual growth is reading and reflecting on the Bible.
Use these questions for personal study or as part of a community group experience.*

Goal

God has amazing things in store for us, but are we ready to take hold of them? Explore what happens when we get *Bold*. This journey will help you unpack the Sunday messages and discover where God may be calling you to take a step of faith.

At the beginning of each gathering take a few minutes to connect with one another and get updated on the week. Then the discussion questions will begin with a few reflection notes about the message and progress into a discussion of the biblical text. Finally, there is a concluding prayer, which can be read aloud in the group after having discussed prayer requests from those attending.

Introduction

02/19/2017

God, being bold, calls his followers to be bold. Our greatest means for connecting with God and drawing on his boldness is through prayer. Are you praying boldly? What does bold prayer sound like?

Discussion Questions

1. Last week's discussion challenged you to consider a step of faith that God might be challenging you to take. Have you identified an area of your faith where you would like to experience more boldness? Or have already begun taking steps to pursue this boldness?
2. How does this past week's message help or inform your pursuit of bold faith?
3. The response of the apostles to persecution is prayer. What does your response in hard times usually look like?
4. Take a few minutes to write down in one or two sentences what prayer is? Then take turns sharing your ideas.

Read aloud Acts 4:23-31.

Background to the Text: Peter and John were taken captive by the Sanhedrin for the purpose of silencing their message about Jesus. They were released without charge or punishment "because all the people (witnesses) were praising God for [the miraculous healing of a crippled man]." The apostles are no doubt relieved by their release and immediately report their encounter to the other followers. While grateful for having not suffered harm, their attention turns to the future. Jesus had warned his followers that they would face persecution (Matthew 5:10-12; Matthew 10:22; Mark 13:9-13; Luke 6:22-23; John 15:18-19). Knowing that bold faith would provoke greater persecution, they set out to pray. They pray not for a break from persecution but for boldness in the face of it.



5. Having read this passage, how do they address God?
6. After addressing God, they remind God of something found in Psalm 2. How does remembering or recalling these initial elements help the person praying?
7. In the Lord's prayer, there is a different address found in the initial verses (Matthew 6:9-13, "Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be your name"). But both are great ways to start a prayer. Why is starting with an address like these important? What effect does it have on your faith or on the remainder of your prayer?
8. In your prayers, how could finding your own version of these initial verses strengthen your own faith and prayer life?
9. How each person begins their prayer is unique. What things or experiences help guide you as you pray? How do you develop an approach to prayer?
10. Prayer intimidates a lot of people—especially corporate or praying aloud—so a prayer of boldness might seem doubly challenging. If you could identify one next step, even a small one, that would make your prayer more meaningful or bold, what would that be?
11. Take a moment to ask others in the group, where have you found encouragement or help when learning to pray?

Concluding Thoughts

Reading prayers in the Bible can be great template for understanding prayer in your own life. However, the best way to grow spiritually is to begin praying. Many of you are likely doing this in some form or fashion. The challenge before you is to be more intentional with your prayers, more regular, or more God focused. You are encouraged to try writing down your prayers, privately praying your prayers aloud, signing up for a daily prayer email or connecting with a friend to pray together. These things will help increase your confidence, experience and deepen your relationship with God, which is the ultimate goal.

Prayer Requests

Take a few minutes to go around the room and ask for prayers. Write these down as they are being shared. Additionally, challenge people to begin praying about the step of boldness God may be calling them to during this series. Finally, pray together. You can pray the prayer below or your own prayer that incorporates the requests represented in the group.



Closing Prayer

God, you boldly perform wonders, miracles, and uphold the god-fearing. Thank you that you boldly reached out to your creation in order to establish and restore our relationship. Help me, Lord, to more regularly communicate with you. Teach me what it means to be in step with what you want to accomplish through my prayer. Deepen my faith and strengthen my trust in you that my prayer would become bold and reflect the bold God to whom I am praying. Thank you for being a powerful and in control. In Jesus' name, I pray, Amen.