

Pastor's Class...Sunday, May 9, 2010...10:45am...Parlor

Gathering...Anybody New?...Prayer Time with Celebrations and Concerns

If You Want to Walk on Water, You've Got to Get Out of the Boat

By John Ortberg A Six-Week Journey on Learning to Trust God

Session Four: "Facing Our Challenges, Conquering Our Fears"

"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....Storms have a way of teaching what nothing else can."

INTRODUCTION—Show brief DVD introduction from John Ortberg based on Matthew 14:22-26 and water-walking.

QUESTIONS FOR SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

1. What are your expectations when you launch into a new adventure with God? What role do obstacles & challenges play in your walk with God?
2. Are there benefits to being fearful? In what ways is fear detrimental?
3. Do you believe that God deliberately asks us to do things that expose us to harm & can cause us to be afraid? Why? Why not?

VIDEO PRESENTATION

- THINGS TO LISTEN & LOOK FOR: (1) The wind & other distractions.
- (2) Resilience in the face of trauma. (3) God's command: "Don't be afraid!"
- (4) When things don't turn out as we'd planned.

GROUP DISCUSSION (continued)

3. 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?

4. John Ortberg writes, "Growth happens when you seek or exert control where you are able to rather than giving up in difficult circumstances. It happens when you decide to be wholly faithful in a situation that you do not like and cannot understand. It happens when you keep walking even though you see the wind. Then you discover that, somehow, you are not alone. As he was with Joseph, the Lord is also with you."

What encouragement does this offer you? Why?

The High Price of Fear

Fear motivates us to take action and remove ourselves from whatever is threatening us. Fear readies our body to flee, hide, or fight. Fear can help protect us from harm. When fear rather than trust becomes our solution to difficult situations, however, fear exacts a devastatingly high price. Consider the following drawbacks of fear:

- Fear can strike when it is not helpful or wanted.
- Fear can be paralyzing instead of motivating.
- Fear can cease to be sporadic and become habitual worry.
- Fear threatens to keep us from trusting and obeying God.
- Fear that causes us to avoid a difficult situation instead of facing it head on and taking action kills personal growth. When we take the easy way out, we feel badly about ourselves because we learn that we can't cope with life's greatest challenges.
- Living in fear keeps us from experiencing our God-given potential.
- Living in fear destroys our joy and robs us of life's delights.
- Living in fear causes us to focus on the negative.
- Living in fear creates a loss of intimacy between us and other people. We become afraid to say what we think or feel, afraid of the pain of conflict.
- Living in fear causes us to believe that God can't, or won't, take care of us.
- Fear limits hopes, dreams, and callings.

Next Week:
Session Five
called "Good
News For
Cave Dwellers"

CLOSING PRAYER