LIVING WITH GOD'S COURAGE

Jesus Calling Bible Study Series

Volume 1: Experiencing God's Presence

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Volume 7: Dwelling in God's Peace (summer 2017)

Volume 8: Putting Jesus First (summer 2017)



JESUS CALLING BIBLE STUDY SERIES

LIVING WITH GOD'S COURAGE

EIGHT SESSIONS

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with Karen Lee-Thorp



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COURAGE TO OBEY THE LORD'S INSTRUCTIONS

CONSIDER IT

God's instructions for our lives often take us out of our comfort zone and into a place where we need to rely on Him to get the job done. We follow Him not just into the green pastures but also through the valley of the shadow of death (see Psalm 23). Fear is a natural response to such times of risk, and it is only through courage that we can press forward and obey God even when there are good reasons to be afraid. In this first session, we'll put ourselves into the shoes of the Israelites in the Bible and look at the risk God asked them to take to secure the Promised Land. We will look at the people's fears and reactions and see that the courage to obey God is firmly founded in the promises of God.

1. What thoughts and images come to mind when you hear the word
"courage"? What sorts of individuals or professions do you think of?
$oldsymbol{2}$. Do you relate to the idea of needing courage in your life? Why or why not?

EXPERIENCE IT

"Do not be afraid, for I am with you. Hear Me saying *Peace*, *be still* to your restless heart. No matter what happens, *I will never leave you or forsake you*. Let this assurance soak into your mind and heart, until you overflow with Joy. *Though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea*, you need not fear!

"The media relentlessly proclaim bad news: for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. A steady diet of their fare will sicken you. Instead of focusing on fickle, ever-changing news broadcasts, tune in to the living Word—the One who is always the same. Let Scripture saturate your mind and heart, and you will walk steadily along the path of Life. Even though you don't know what will happen tomorrow, you can be absolutely sure of your ultimate destination. *I hold you by your right hand, and afterward I will take you into Glory.*"

—From Jesus Calling, April 20

3 . Jesus calmed a storm by saying, "Peace, be still" (Mark 4:39 NKJV), to the wind and waves. How easy is it for you to be at peace in your heart? What helps you? What gets in the way?

4. How does tuning into the Word of God give us courage in the midst of the media's constant barrage of bad news?

"Be willing to go out on a limb with Me. If that is where I am leading you, it is the safest place to be. Your desire to live a risk-free life is a form of unbelief. Your longing to live close to Me is at odds with your attempts to minimize risk. You are approaching a crossroads in your journey. In order to follow Me wholeheartedly, you must relinquish your tendency to play it safe.

"Let Me lead you step by step through this day. If your primary focus is on Me, you can walk along perilous paths without being afraid. Eventually, you will learn to relax and enjoy the adventure of our journey together. As long as you stay close to Me, My sovereign Presence protects you wherever you go."

5. When has Jesus asked you to "go out on a limb" with Him? What was

—From Jesus Calling, December 9

the result?
$oldsymbol{6}$. Do you tend to play it safe, or are you fairly comfortable with taking risks?
What motivates you to take risks that line up with God's leading?

STUDY IT

Read aloud the following passage from Deuteronomy 31:1–8. God had called Moses to confront Pharaoh and lead the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt. Moses had gone out on a limb and obeyed God, but when the people refused to conquer the Promised Land, he was forced to wander with them for forty years in the desert. The events in this passage take place toward the end of this time, when the people were finally ready to enter the Promised Land. God had appointed Joshua to lead the invasion, and Moses, nearing the end of his life, was offering them some final words of instruction.

¹ Then Moses went out and spoke these words to all Israel: ² "I am now a hundred and twenty years old and I am no longer able to lead you. The LORD has said to me, 'You shall not cross the Jordan.' ³ The LORD your God himself will cross over ahead of you. He will destroy these nations before you, and you will take possession of their land. Joshua also will cross over ahead of you, as the LORD said. ⁴ And the LORD will do to them what he did to Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites, whom he destroyed along with their land. ⁵ The LORD will deliver them to you, and you must do to them all that I have commanded you. ⁶ Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you."

⁷Then 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 ancestors 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."

Courage to Obey the Lord's Instructions

10. Take two minutes of silence to reread the passage, looking for a phrase, or even one word that stands out as something Jesus may w focus on in your life. If you're meeting with a group, the leader will of time. At the end of two minutes, you may share your word or phr the group if you wish.	ant you to keep track
11. Read the passage aloud again. Take another two minutes of sil prayerfully considering what response God might want you to mak you have read in His Word. If you're meeting with a group, the lead again keep track of time. At the end of two minutes, you may share to you in the silence if you wish.	e to what er will
12. What was it like for you to sit in silence with the passage? Did in like this help you understand it better than before?	soaking it

13. If you're meeting with a group, how can the members pray for you? If you're using this study on your own, what would you like to say to God right now?	е

LIVE IT

At the end of each session you'll find suggested Scripture readings for spending time alone with God during five days of the coming week. This week, the theme of each reading will focus on how you can be courageous when God asks you to take a leap of faith with Him. Read each passage slowly, pausing to think about what is being said. Rather than approaching this as an assignment to complete, think of it as an opportunity to meet with the One who loves you most. Use any of the questions that are helpful.

Day 1	
Read Deuteronomy 31:23. What does God tell Joshua to do?	

Courage to Obey the Lord's Instructions

hat promise does God give him?	
Deuteronomy 31:6-7, Moses had instructed the people to "be strong and	
ourageous" because the Lord promised to be with them. Why do you thin	k
God repeats this instruction and promise to Joshua in verse 23?	
Ooes the repetition help you? If so, how?	

Day 2

tead Psalm 89:1–4. What reasons for courage does the psalmist offer?	
Iow would you define faithfulness?	
Why is faithfulness a quality of God that you should value highly?	

Courage to Obey the Lord's Instructions

When have you experienced God's faithfulness toward you personally?
Use these verses as a springboard for your own prayer to God, praising Him for who He is and what He does.
Day 3
Read Psalm 89:5–8. The psalmist speaks of God's faithfulness two more times in this passage. Why do you think the biblical writer repeatedly spoke of this characteristic of God?
The psalmist also says there is no one like God anywhere (see verse 6). Why is
that a reason for every son or daughter of God to have courage?

When you think of God as mighty, how does that affect you? When you think of God as being "surrounded" by faithfulness, how does that affect you? Choose one of the qualities of God depicted in these verses and praise Him for it.
Choose one of the qualities of God depicted in these verses and praise
Day 4 Read Psalm 89:9–13. How does the psalmist depict God's power?

Courage to Obey the Lord's Instructions

Vhere do you wn life?	see God's power at work in the world around you and in your
wn nge.	
Vhere do you	long to see more of God's power?

Day 5

Read Psalm 89:14–18. Why are you grateful for God's righteousness and iustice?	
When have you been aware of God's Presence with you this week?	
How will you rely on God as your strength today?	

Courage to Obey the Lord's Instructions

What gives you courage right now?			

Today, thank God for His commitment to justice, for His Presence, and for His Strength.





COURAGE TO CONFRONT A STRONGER FORCE

CONSIDER IT

Sometimes we look at a challenge before us and know we lack the strength to do what God is asking of us. The challenge is big... and we are small. We see this happen often to the men and women in the Bible as well. In fact, it happens so frequently that it seems to be a pattern God delights in! He does this so it will be obvious that He deserves the credit if something good happens, not us. In this session, we'll look closely at a familiar Bible story to see what courage we can gain from the Lord to face the challenges that are before us.

. When have you encountered a challenge that felt too big for you, either in our childhood or adulthood?	
. Did you meet the challenge? Did you try but not quite make it? Did you ack away and not try? Explain.	

EXPERIENCE IT

"Trust Me and don't be afraid, for I am your Strength and Song. Think what it means to have Me as your Strength. I spoke the universe into existence;

Courage to Confront a Stronger Force

My Power is absolutely unlimited! Human weakness, consecrated to Me, is like a magnet, drawing My Power into your neediness. However, fear can block the flow of My Strength into you. Instead of trying to fight your fears, concentrate on trusting Me. When you relate to Me in confident trust, there is no limit to how much I can strengthen you.

"Remember that I am also your Song. I want you to share My Joy, living in conscious awareness of My Presence. Rejoice as we journey together toward heaven; join Me in singing My Song."

—From Jesus Calling, March 21

3. Have you ever experienced fear blocking the flow of God's Strength into		
ou? Why do you suppose fear can do this in a person?		
4. Why does it work better to concentrate on trusting in God rather than		
trying to fight your fears?		

"I am a mighty God. *Nothing is too difficult for Me*. I have chosen to use weak ones like you to accomplish My purposes. Your weakness is designed to open you up to My Power. Therefore, do not fear your limitations or measure the day's demands against your strength. What I require of you is to stay connected to Me, living in trusting dependence

on My limitless resources. When you face unexpected demands, there is no need to panic. Remember that *I am with you*. Talk with Me, and listen while I talk you through each challenging situation.

"I am not a careless God. When I allow difficulties to come into your life, I equip you fully to handle them. Relax in My Presence, trusting in My Strength."

—From Jesus Calling, May 14

5. What should you do when faced with difficulties? What shouldn't you do?
What does the Bible say God will do for His children?
6. Describe your usual response to difficulties. How is it like and unlike what
has been discussed so far?

STUDY IT

Read aloud the following passage from 1 Samuel 17:1–50. As you read, note that the Israelites were at war with the Philistines for control of the Promised Land. Saul was Israel's king, but he wasn't always obedient to God. The Philistine named Goliath was more than nine feet tall, and he was calling the Israelites to engage in a custom in which the overall battle

Courage to Confront a Stronger Force

was decided in a contest between each side's strongest warrior. The story of young David and the intimidating Goliath is long but vividly told, so you might want to take turns reading aloud in the group.

¹ Now the Philistines gathered their forces for war and assembled at Sokoh in Judah. . . . ³ The Philistines occupied one hill and the Israelites another, with the valley between them.

⁴ A champion named Goliath, who was from Gath, came out of the Philistine camp. His height was six cubits and a span. ⁵ He had a bronze helmet on his head and wore a coat of scale armor of bronze weighing five thousand shekels; ⁶ on his legs he wore bronze greaves, and a bronze javelin was slung on his back. ⁷ His spear shaft was like a weaver's rod, and its iron point weighed six hundred shekels. His shield bearer went ahead of him.

⁸ Goliath stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, "Why do you come out and line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not the servants of Saul? Choose a man and have him come down to me. ⁹ If he is able to fight and kill me, we will become your subjects; but if I overcome him and kill him, you will become our subjects and serve us." ¹⁰ Then the Philistine said, "This day I defy the armies of Israel! Give me a man and let us fight each other." ¹¹ On hearing the Philistine's words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified.

¹² Now David was the son of an Ephrathite named Jesse, who was from Bethlehem in Judah. Jesse had eight sons, and in Saul's time he was very old. ¹³ Jesse's three oldest sons had followed Saul to the war: The firstborn was Eliab; the second, Abinadab; and the third, Shammah. ¹⁴ David was the youngest. The three oldest followed Saul, ¹⁵ but David went back and forth from Saul to tend his father's sheep at Bethlehem.

¹⁶ For forty days the Philistine came forward every morning and evening and took his stand.

¹⁷ Now Jesse said to his son David, "Take this ephah of roasted grain and these ten loaves of bread for your brothers and hurry to their camp. ¹⁸ Take along these ten cheeses to the commander of their unit. See how your brothers are and bring back some assurance from them. ¹⁹ They are

with Saul and all the men of Israel in the Valley of Elah, fighting against the Philistines."

²⁰ Early in the morning David left the flock in the care of a shepherd, loaded up and set out, as Jesse had directed. He reached the camp as the army was going out to its battle positions, shouting the war cry. ²¹ Israel and the Philistines were drawing up their lines facing each other. ²² David left his things with the keeper of supplies, ran to the battle lines and asked his brothers how they were. ²³ As he was talking with them, Goliath, the Philistine champion from Gath, stepped out from his lines and shouted his usual defiance, and David heard it. ²⁴ Whenever the Israelites saw the man, they all fled from him in great fear.

²⁵ Now the Israelites had been saying, "Do you see how this man keeps coming out? He comes out to defy Israel. The king will give great wealth to the man who kills him. He will also give him his daughter in marriage and will exempt his family from taxes in Israel."

²⁶ David asked the men standing near him, "What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and removes this disgrace from Israel? Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?"

²⁷ They repeated to him what they had been saying and told him, "This is what will be done for the man who kills him."

²⁸ When Eliab, David's oldest brother, heard him speaking with the men, he burned with anger at him and asked, "Why have you come down here? And with whom did you leave those few sheep in the wilderness? I know how conceited you are and how wicked your heart is; you came down only to watch the battle."

²⁹ "Now what have I done?" said David. "Can't I even speak?" ³⁰ He then turned away to someone else and brought up the same matter, and the men answered him as before. ³¹ What David said was overheard and reported to Saul, and Saul sent for him.

³² David said to Saul, "Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him."

 $^{\rm 33}$ Saul replied, "You are not able to go out against this Philistine and

fight him; you are only a young man, and he has been a warrior from his youth."

³⁴ But David said to Saul, "Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, ³⁵ I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. ³⁶ Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. ³⁷ The LORD who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine."

Saul said to David, "Go, and the LORD be with you."

³⁸ Then Saul dressed David in his own tunic. He put a coat of armor on him and a bronze helmet on his head. ³⁹ David fastened on his sword over the tunic and tried walking around, because he was not used to them.

"I cannot go in these," he said to Saul, "because I am not used to them." So he took them off. ⁴⁰ Then he took his staff in his hand, chose five smooth stones from the stream, put them in the pouch of his shepherd's bag and, with his sling in his hand, approached the Philistine.

⁴¹ Meanwhile, the Philistine, with his shield bearer in front of him, kept coming closer to David. ⁴² He looked David over and saw that he was little more than a boy, glowing with health and handsome, and he despised him. ⁴³ He said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. ⁴⁴ "Come here," he said, "and I'll give your flesh to the birds and the wild animals!"

⁴⁵ David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. ⁴⁶ This day the Lord will deliver you into my hands, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head. This very day I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds and the wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. ⁴⁷ All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give all of you into our hands."

⁴⁸ As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him. ⁴⁹ Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell facedown on the ground.

 50 So David triumphed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone; without a sword in his hand he struck down the Philistine and killed him.

7. What gave Goliath his courage in battle? In whom or what was he apparently trusting?	
3 . What gave David courage in this fight? What does he say about his source of courage in verses 34–37 and 45–47?	S
9. Why does God often choose to work through an "ordinary" person—omeone who isn't obviously the strongest one in an area of endeavor (see verse 47)?	

Courage to Confront a Stronger Force

10. The story of David and Goliath has inspired many generations of Christians with courage. Why is this the case? What is it about this stories so motivating?	y that
11. Take two minutes of silence to reread 1 Samuel 17:45–47, looking for sentence, phrase, or even one word that stands out as something Jesus want you to focus on in your life. If you're meeting with a group, the least will keep track of time. At the end of two minutes, you may share your to phrase with the group if you wish.	ıay der
12. Read verses 45–47 aloud again. Take another two minutes of silence prayerfully considering what response God might want you to make to you have read in His Word. If you're meeting with a group, the leader wagain keep track of time. At the end of two minutes, you may share what to you in the silence if you wish.	what ill

13. If you're meeting with a group, how can the members pray for you? If you're using this study on your own, what would you like to say to God right now?		

LIVE IT

The theme of this week's daily Scripture readings is having courage in the midst of weakness. Read each passage slowly, pausing to think about what is being said. Rather than approaching this as an assignment to complete, think of it as an opportunity to meet with the One who loves you most. Use any of the questions that are helpful.

Day 1

Read 2 Corinthians 12:6–10. We don't know the nature of Paul's thorn in the flesh, but what does he say here about its function in his life?		

Courage to Confront a Stronger Force

	aknesses do you have? Co	an you imagine b	oasting about the	n? Why
vhy not?				
low are	your weaknesses bringin	g glory to God?		

Day 2

Read Luke 1:26–38. In verse 37, the angel tells Mary, "Nothing will be mpossible with God" (ESV), or according to another translation, "No word from God will ever fail" (NIV). How does this story illustrate the angel's words?		
What is the seemingly impossible thing that God is promising to Mary in this story?		
What are some of the things that God has promised to you?		

Courage to Confront a Stronger Force

What will you be brave enough to do today, knowing that nothing is impossible for God?	
Praise God for the many times He does seemingly impossible things!	
Day 3	
Read Isaiah 12:2–6. What reason does Isaiah offer in this passage for not being afraid?	
What reasons does he offer for having joy?	
what reasons does he offer for having joy:	

SSION 2
w does joy contribute to courage?
hy is it important to "make known among the nations" what God has done
rse 4)?
ay this passage aloud to God and let it foster joy—and courage-
thin you.
ay 4
ad 2 Timothy 1:5–8. What do you think it means to "fan into flame the gift
God" (verse 6)? How is this related to courage?

Courage to Confront a Stronger Force

What	loes the writer mean when he states, "the wicked flee though no c
pursues	
What is	s it about wickedness that can lead to cowardice?
In what	t ways does this proverb encourage you? Explain.
	God for giving you every reason to be bold as you strive to thonors Him.



COURAGE TO SAY NO TO FALSE GODS

CONSIDER IT

We know that God is jealous for our love (see Exodus 20:5), and He hates it when our loyalty goes to anything—people, possessions, pleasures—other than Him. Sometimes, though, there's an earthly price to be paid for not putting a person or a job first. We risk losing that person's approval or risk losing that job. At those times, it takes real courage to say, "No, God comes first. God's agenda for my life comes first. I will not bow down to this just because someone has the power to make my life miserable if I don't." In this session, we're going to look at the story of three young men who made this very choice.

$oldsymbol{1}$. Have you ever known someone who acted like he or she wanted to be put in		
the place of God? If so, how did that person make this desire known?		
2 . How did you respond to that person? What did it cost you to put God first?		

EXPERIENCE IT

"Your needs and My riches are a perfect fit. I never meant for you to be self-sufficient. Instead, I designed you to need Me not only for daily

Courage to Say No to False Gods

bread but also for fulfillment of deep yearnings. I carefully crafted your longings and feelings of incompleteness, to point you to Me. Therefore, do not try to bury or deny these feelings. Beware also of trying to pacify these longings with lesser gods: people, possessions, power.

"Come to Me in all your neediness, with defenses down and with desire to be blessed. As you spend time in My Presence, your deepest longings are fulfilled. Rejoice in your neediness, which enables you to find intimate completion in Me."

—From Jesus Calling, December 8

3. Are you aware of feeling incomplete? If so, how do you typically deal with		
that feeling? If not, what things in your life make you feel complete?		
A		
$oldsymbol{4}$. How easy is it for you to go to God with all your neediness? What helps you do that? What gets in the way?		

"I want you to be all Mine. I am weaning you from other dependencies. Your security rests in Me alone—not in other people, not in circumstances. Depending only on Me may feel like walking on a tightrope, but there is a safety net underneath: *the everlasting arms*. So don't be afraid of falling. Instead, look ahead to Me. I am always before you,

beckoning you on—one step at a time. Neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, can separate you from My loving Presence."

—From Jesus Calling, January 21

5. What are some of the things you tend to depend on other than God? How can you eliminate any of these unhealthy dependencies in your life?

6. Why does depending on God require courage?

STUDY IT

Read aloud the following passage from Daniel 3:1–23. As you read, note that God had previously allowed King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon to conquer His chosen nation, Judah, and take the Jews into captivity. Among the captives was a group of well-born Jewish young men whom Nebuchadnezzar educated in Babylon and assigned to work in the empire's bureaucracy. Three of these young men were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They faced continual challenges to remain faithful to God while serving in a foreign government that expected them to worship pagan gods. One incident is described in this passage.

¹ King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, sixty cubits high and six cubits wide, and set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. ² He then summoned the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials to come to the dedication of the image he had set up. ³ So the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials assembled for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up, and they stood before it.

⁴ Then the herald loudly proclaimed, "Nations and peoples of every language, this is what you are commanded to do: ⁵ As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. ⁶ Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace."

⁷ Therefore, as soon as they heard the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp and all kinds of music, all the nations and peoples of every language fell down and worshiped the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

⁸ At this time some astrologers came forward and denounced the Jews. ⁹ They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "May the king live forever! ¹⁰ Your Majesty has issued a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music must fall down and worship the image of gold, ¹¹ and that whoever does not fall down and worship will be thrown into a blazing furnace. ¹² But there are some Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon—Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—who pay no attention to you, Your Majesty. They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up."

¹³ Furious with rage, Nebuchadnezzar summoned Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. So these men were brought before the king, ¹⁴ and Nebuchadnezzar said to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up? ¹⁵ Now when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither,

lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, if you are ready to fall down and worship the image I made, very good. But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?"

¹⁶ Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, "King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. ¹⁷ If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand. ¹⁸ But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."

¹⁹ Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and his attitude toward them changed. He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual ²⁰ and commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace. ²¹ So these men, wearing their robes, trousers, turbans and other clothes, were bound and thrown into the blazing furnace. ²² The king's command was so urgent and the furnace so hot that the flames of the fire killed the soldiers who took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, ²³ and these three men, firmly tied, fell into the blazing furnace.

. How ala Snaarach, Mesnach, and Abeanego demonstrate courage in
his passage?
the pulcouge.

Courage to Say No to False Gods

8. Why did it matter to God what Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego chose to do in this situation? Why couldn't they just go through the motions of falling down before the golden image while secretly worshiping God in their hearts?
9. Look closely at what the three young men said to the king: "King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand. But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up" (verses 16–18). What did they
affirm about God?

10. This story has a happy ending (see Daniel 3:24–30), but the three young men were prepared for it not to end this way. Even today when God's people are persecuted for their faith, they face the very real possibility of tragedy. Why is it important to have courage even when we don't know what the outcome of our choices will be?

11. Take two minutes of silence to reread Daniel 3:16–18, looking for a sentence, phrase, or even one word that stands out as something Jesus may want you to focus on in your life. If you're meeting with a group, the leader will keep track of time. At the end of two minutes, you may share your word or phrase with the group if you wish.

12. Read verses 16–18 aloud again. Take another two minutes of silence, prayerfully considering what response God might want you to make to what you have read in His Word. If you're meeting with a group, the leader will again keep track of time. At the end of two minutes, you may share what came to you in the silence if you wish.

13. If you're meeting with a group, how can the members pray for you? If you're using this study on your own, what would you like to say to God right now?
LIVE IT
For this week's daily Scripture readings, you will look at a longer passage, broken into smaller portions, in which Jesus exhorts His followers to go out on a mission with courage. Read each group of verses slowly, pausing to think about what is being said. Rather than approaching this as an assignment to complete, think of it as an opportunity to meet with the One who loves you most. Use any of the questions that are helpful.
Day 1
Read Matthew 10:16–20. What does it mean to be a sheep among wolves? Why would Jesus ever ask you to put yourself in such a position?

Session 3	
How can a person be as s same time?	shrewd as a snake and as innocent as a dove at the
Why didn't Jesus' followe when they were arrested	ers need to plan ahead of time what they would say and interrogated?
Can you imagine having would help you?	the courage to face this situation yourself? What
Offer yourself to God i	n prayer right now, expressing your willingness to

Day 2	
Read Matthew 10:21–23.	What situation is Jesus describing in these verses?

What does Jesus say espond emotionally		xpect in this wor	ld? How do you
What would help a p	verson have courage	in this situation	i ?
This kind of conflict countries today. Hov	_		ristians in other
Intercede for persection in the courage to			-

Day 3

Read Matthew 10:24–25. The Pharisees had claimed that Jesus was deriving His power from Beelzebul, which is another name for Satan (see Luke 11:15). What point is Jesus making about this in these verses?
Have you ever been insulted because of your faith? If so, how did you respond?
Should you treat it as normal if you are insulted for being a Christian? Why
or why not?

Courage to Say No to False Gods

How would the way you are treated because of your faith affect the way you deal with people who don't like you? Is it a bad sign if nobody is against you?
Why or why not?
Talk with God about the things people in the world don't like abou Christians. Ask Him to give you the courage to graciously stand up for
your beliefs.
Day 4
Read Matthew 10:26–31. When Jesus says, "There is nothing concealed that
will not be disclosed" (verse 26), He is referring to the fact that the truth of
the gospel will always be revealed in the end. How should this give Christ- followers the courage to proclaim His message?
jouowers the courage to proclaim 111s message:

What do you think of the statement, "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul"? Does it ever feel as if others have power to kill
your soul? How does it encourage you to know they really cannot if you have
given your life to Christ?
What does Jesus say you should fear? How does this make you bolder in
standing for Him?

What do Jesus' words about the sparrows say about the way God sees you? In what ways does this give you courage?

Today, thank God for valuing you as much as He does, and ask Him to reassure you that He is always with you so that you may be braver.

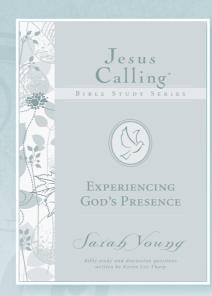
Day 5

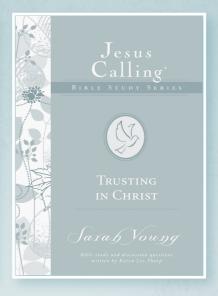
Read Matthew 10:32–39. How do Jesus' words in verses 32–33 parallel what happened with the three young men in Daniel 3?	
What does it m	ean to acknowledge God before others? How do you do this?
n what sense d	lid Jesus not come to bring peace? How can you have peace
nside you anyv	way?

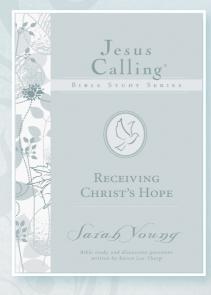
What does Jesus mean when He says, "Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it" (verse 39)? What are some of the ways that people often struggle fruitlessly to save their own lives?

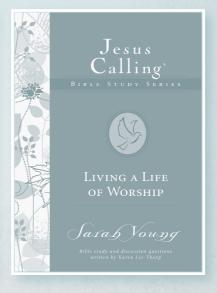
Seek the Lord's help in giving you the courage this week to acknowledge Jesus publicly.

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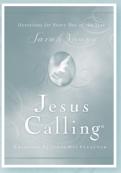




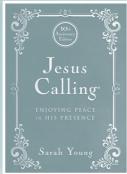




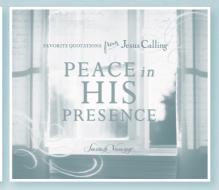
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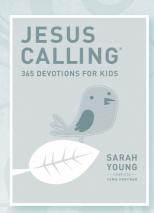
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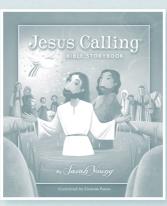
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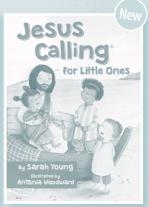
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