

FEARLESS—1 “Gideon”

Tailor the following questions to fit the needs of your group. Start with a BREAKING THE ICE question, then get real with two or three CONNECTING questions and end by challenging one another to TAKE IT HOME. For those who want to explore God’s Word further, use the DISCOVERY QUESTIONS.

KEY POINTS:

1) Two Fear Factors:

- Our lack of **trust** in God.
- Our wrong **beliefs** about ourselves.
- What has fear kept you from doing that God is calling you to do?

2) The Gideon: *When God uses an unsure, insecure, and fearful person to do the **impossible***

3) Gideon Truths:

- With God, His **strength** through your **weakness** is exactly enough.
- With God, the way **forward** is often **backwards**.

BREAKING THE ICE:

- What are some *success* philosophies that are popular today?
- Share a time when you experienced God’s strength through your weakness?

CONNECTING:

1. **Craig defined a “practical atheist” as a person who believes in God but lives as if God doesn’t exist. In what area of your life are you dangerously tempted to be a practical atheist?**
2. God saw Gideon as a mighty warrior. Gideon saw himself as weak and one of the least? **What are some wrong beliefs about yourself that God is helping you to overcome?** What does God say about you in His Word? What would it look like in your behavior if you believed what God says instead of your feelings, weaknesses or circumstances?
3. What promises did God make to Gideon? (see Judges 6:12,14,16,22) What does Gideon’s questions reveal about why he lacked trust in God? (6:13-15) What circumstances in your life make it difficult for you to trust God?
4. What battle are you facing today that gives you cause for concern? **What has fear kept you from doing that God wants you to do? What are you going to do about it?** What risks are you willing to make in order to experience God’s strength and sufficiency?
5. In what way was Gideon just an average guy with common fears and weaknesses? In what ways can you relate to Gideon? Where are you uncertain, cautious or afraid of God’s will or calling for your life? What are some of your negative absolutes? In what way are you feeling weak and outnumbered?

THE WAY FORWARD IS OFTEN BACKWARDS
YOU SERVE YOUR WAY AHEAD.
YOU FORGIVE YOUR WAY TO GREATNESS.
TO BECOME STRONG, YOU ARE WEAK.
TO BECOME BIG, YOU ARE SMALL.

TAKE IT HOME:

1. **What has fear kept you from doing that God is calling you to do?** Address your fears by honestly acknowledging to God your mistrust of Him. Be honest about any wrong beliefs about yourself and any negative absolutes that you have believed. Begin rejecting these thoughts and replacing them with what God says. Build up your faith in God by focusing on His promises, His character and His past faithfulness.
2. How has depending on your own sufficiency or focusing on your weaknesses, kept you from experiencing God’s strength? What risk does God want you to take in order to experience His strength through your weakness? When thinking or speaking of your weaknesses or your negative circumstances, end your thought with *but God . . .* Example: *I feel weak and inadequate but God is my adequacy* (2 Cor.3:5-6).

DISCOVERY QUESTIONS:

1. Read Judges 6.

- Prior to Gideon saving the day, what was the situation in Israel? (vv1-6) What did the oppressed and fearful Israelites do? (v7) How did God respond? (vv7-10) What did the Lord declare to Gideon? How did he respond? What questions did Gideon ask the Lord? What do Gideon’s questions reveal about his fears?
- Make a list of all the Lord’s declarations and promises to Gideon. Which of these promises apply to us today? How difficult is it for you to simply take God at His Word and trust His promises? Why is God’s word sometimes not enough to convince us to trust God?
- What fleeces (signs) did Gideon put out to test the Lord? When have you tried the “fleece” method of determining God’s will? What was the result? Like Gideon, were you tempted to do it again?
- In one night, Gideon tore down an alter to the false god, Baal, built another and made sacrifices to the true God. What role do you think this played in the defeat of the Midionites? What would you like to “tear down” in your life? What would you like to “build up” to the glory of God?

2. Read Judges chapter 7 through chapter 8 verse one.

- Why did God want to reduce the size of Gideon’s army? What significance does God’s method of selecting the 300 man army have? Why did God choose the men that lapped water? What was God trying to teach Gideon?
- Why did God have Gideon spy on the enemy’s camp? (vv9-12) How did God confirm for Gideon that he had truly heard from God? What means has God used to encourage and build up your faith?

VERSES FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Deuteronomy 6:13-19; Judges 6-8:1; Psalm 56:2-4; Isaiah 43:1-5; 2 Corinthians 3:5-6, 11:30,12:9-10; Ephesians 6:10; Philippians 4:13; 2 Timothy 1:7

FEARLESS—2

“Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego”

Tailor the following questions to fit the needs of your group. Start with a BREAKING THE ICE question, then get real with two or three CONNECTING questions and end by challenging one another to TAKE IT HOME. For those who want to explore God’s Word further, use the DISCOVERY QUESTIONS.

KEY POINTS:

When your faith is tested by fire:

- 1) Obey God’s **commands** instead of man’s **expectations**.
- 2) Believe God’s truth instead of the **facts**.
- 3) Believe God, don’t just believe **in** God.

FAITH THAT IS TESTED
IS FAITH THAT CAN BE
TRUSTED!

BREAKING THE ICE:

- Who is someone you admire for standing up for what they believe?
- What do you admire most about the three men in this story?

CONNECTING:

1. **What “fiery trials” have you endured that strengthened your faith?** Why does God use trials to purify or strengthen our faith in Him? What other purposes does God have for *fiery trials*?
2. **In what areas of life are you most tempted to follow people’s expectations instead of God’s commands?** In what areas are you tempted to compromise your convictions? (at work, at home, with finances, with friends, etc.) How can we gain the faith and courage to not compromise? Pray for one another to have the courage and faith like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.
3. **What is the difference between believing *in* God and believing God?** What are you ***believing God for***? Which is more difficult for you: obeying God’s commands, believing God’s truth, trusting God’s plan? How do each of these relate to *believing* God as opposed to just believing *in* God?
4. What has been your closest brush with death or disaster? How did God reveal His presence with you during this time? What are you believing God for, regardless of the outcome? How can we continue to trust God even “if He does not” rescue us from the painful circumstances of life? (see Hebrews 13:5-6)
5. Can your faith handle the fire? What would most test your faith in God? (Loss of a spouse or child? Persecution? Rejection? Loss of health or possessions? Something else?) How can we develop the kind of faith that will enable us to stand strong when facing *fiery trials*?
6. Share a time when you stood up for Christ instead of bowing down to man. In what area of your life do you feel God may be calling you to take a stand? How can we, as a LifeGroup, stand with you and pray for you?

TAKE IT HOME:

1. What fear has kept you from standing up for Christ? Honestly acknowledge this fear to God and ask Him to help you overcome any unbelief. What truth about God do you need to remember when you’re afraid? Faith is not the absence of fear but the inner confidence that God is with you and for you, no matter what!
2. In what area of your life are you being tempted to compromise your convictions and/or rationalize disobedience? Make a list of the facts, as you know them, and then above this list write what is true about God. Jesus said that “truth sets us free” not the facts. Ask the Lord to remind you of the *truth* each time you are tempted to make decisions based only on the *facts*.

DISCOVERY QUESTIONS:

1. **Read Daniel chapter 3.** The theme of the book of Daniel is God’s sovereignty over the kingdoms of men (2:21; 5:21)
 - What did Nebuchadnezzar declare about Daniel’s God in chapter 2:45-47? Why do you think the king later built a golden statue and commanded that it be worshiped? What were the consequences when someone disobeyed the king’s order? Who told the king that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to bow down to the golden image? What do you think was their motive?
 - What was Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego’s response to the king’s command (16-18)? What would you do if you had the choice of bowing before an image of gold or getting thrown into a fiery furnace? What would you be willing to risk in order to remain faithful to the Lord? How fireproof is your faith?
 - What miracles did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego experience as a result of their faith and obedience? Who joined them in the fiery furnace? What impact did this make on Nebuchadnezzar? (vv 27-30) How did God use this *fiery trial* to display His sovereignty and power?
2. **Read 1 Peter 1:6-9, 3:13-18, 4:1-2, 12-14.**
 - What did Peter say we may have to suffer and why? (1: 6-7) What is the outcome of our faith once it has been tested? How can we know that our faith is genuine? (1:8-9)
 - What do you fear most about suffering? How can suffering for doing right be a blessing? What does our response to unjust suffering reveal to others? (3:14-15) How prepared are you to explain your hope in Christ? How does suffering cause us to cease from sin? (4:1-2) Why should we not be surprised by the fiery trials we go through? (4:12-13)

VERSES FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Psalm 91:9-11; Isaiah 43:1-5a, 50:10; Hebrews 10:38-39, 11:6, 32-39, 12:2; James 1:2, 13, 2:17; 1 Peter 1:6-9, 4:1-14; James 2:17-24

FEARLESS—3 “Benaiah”

Tailor the following questions to fit the needs of your group. Start with a BREAKING THE ICE question, then get real with two or three CONNECTING questions and end by challenging one another to TAKE IT HOME. For those who want to explore God’s Word further, use the DISCOVERY QUESTIONS.

KEY POINTS:

- 1) Who was Benaiah? He was:
 - One of the top **five** soldiers in Israel.
 - A **General** in the Israeli army
 - **Captain** of King David’s bodyguards.
 - Benaiah was a lion **killer!**
- 2) Lion chasers know that the **bigger** their God is the **smaller** lions become.
- 3) Lion chasers understand that playing it **safe** is **risky**.

WHAT LION DO YOU NEED TO CHASE?

- NORMAL PEOPLE RARELY FACE THEIR FEARS!
- NORMAL PEOPLE DON'T CHASE LIONS!?
- NORMAL PEOPLE DIE WITH REGRETS.
- DON'T WANT TO BE NORMAL . . .
EXTRAORDINARY PEOPLE CHASE LIONS!

BREAKING THE ICE:

- On a scale of 1 (play it safe) to 10 (risk it all) how much of a daredevil were you as a kid?
- What is the riskiest thing you have ever done?

CONNECTING:

1. **What is the lion you need to chase and conquer?** How did you develop this fear? What attribute or truth about God do you need to focus, in order to conquer your lion? **To chase your lion, you’ll have to take a “first step.” What is the first step you need to take to conquer your fear?**
2. **Our God is the Indescribable One. Though none of us have words to explain His goodness, try. Who is God to you? “My God is . . .”** If this is who we truly believe God is, why are we afraid of the lions in our life?
3. When is taking a risk foolish and when is it honoring to God? Where in your life are you playing it safe? What are you trying to protect? If we are to experience God for who He truly is, we must take risks. What risk are you willing to take in order to trust Christ as your only source of power and life? (see Philippians 3: 8-10) What doubts do you need to overcome?
4. In the near future, over what battle would you like God to cause you to be victorious? Do you feel like you are fighting any battles all by yourself? In what way can we, as a LifeGroup, provide reinforcements?
5. If your funeral was this week, how would others describe your relationship and service to your King? For what do you want to be remembered? What kind of spiritual legacy do you want to leave your children or grandchildren? In what areas of your life would your family say you were “fearless”?

TAKE IT HOME:

1. Name your lion(s) and face your fears. Honestly acknowledge your fears to God and ask Him to help you overcome any unbelief. What truth about God do you need to focus on this week? Each time you are confronted by your lion, shift the focus of your thoughts to how big and awesome your God is and watch your lion shrink.
2. Where in your life have you been playing it safe? What first steps are you willing to take this week? What do you need to risk, long term, in order to accomplish God’s purpose in this area? Ask your LifeGroup to pray for you as you take your first steps towards conquering your fears.
3. Write your own psalm describing how big your God is to you, personally. You might incorporate some of your favorite promises. For example: “My God is always faithful. He will never, ever leave me or forsake me.” (Hebrews 13:5b) “My God is powerful and mighty. Nothing is too difficult for Him.” (Jeremiah 32:17)

DISCOVERY QUESTIONS:

1. **Read about other mighty heroes of faith in Hebrews 11:1-3, 6-12, 32-39.**
 - What is faith according to Hebrews 11:1 and 6? Why is faith so important to God? What does God tell us about the creation of the world? (v 3) How are we to understand or accept what we cannot see? What role does faith play in our relationship with God? (v 6)
 - List each hero, the risk he/she took, and the victory experienced. What did they believe about God? Put yourself in their shoes. What fears would you need to overcome in order to trust in God as they did?
 - How does this passage disprove the idea that faith always leads to earthly blessing? (vv 35-38) What truth about God do you need to believe in order to trust Him and take risks even if you don’t receive an earthly reward or blessing? Why does the author of Hebrews say that “the world was not worthy of” the heroes of faith mentioned in Hebrews 11:38?
2. **Read about Benaiah in 2 Samuel 23:20-23.**
 - Besides killing a lion, what other heroic deeds did Benaiah accomplish? God had called Benaiah to be a soldier and to serve King David. What do you think made Benaiah a great soldier and leader?
 - What has God called you to do, in service to your King Jesus? What is the scariest or most difficult aspect in what God has called you to do? What lion(s) do you need to chase and conquer in order to become all God has created you to be?

VERSES FOR FURTHER STUDY:

John 14:27; 2 Timothy 1:7; Hebrews 11; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18, 5:7; Romans 8:15, 37; Psalm 3:3-6; 56:1-4, 91; Deuteronomy 31:6; Isaiah 12; Daniel 6, 10:19

FEARLESS—4 “Fear of Not Enough”

Tailor the following questions to fit the needs of your group. Start with a BREAKING THE ICE question, then get real with two or three CONNECTING questions and end by challenging one another to TAKE IT HOME. For those who want to explore God’s Word further, use the DISCOVERY QUESTIONS.

KEY POINTS:

- 1) Scarcity is rooted in the fear that:
 - There’s never **enough**.
 - I can’t risk letting go of _____.
- 2) Living out of abundance starts with:
 - **Knowing God** as my unlimited supply
 - Knowing who **I am** in Him
 - Knowing what **He can do** through me.
 - Pick **risky** fights
 - Live a recklessly **selfless** life

MARK 8:35
FOR WHOEVER WANTS TO SAVE
HIS LIFE WILL LOSE IT,
BUT WHOEVER LOSES HIS LIFE FOR ME
AND FOR THE GOSPEL WILL SAVE IT.

BREAKING THE ICE:

- Growing up, what was there “never enough” of in your home?
- As an adult, what do you fear running out of the most?

CONNECTING:

1. **Fear of “never enough”**: How does the “fear of not enough” affect a person’s life in harmful ways? Where does this fear come from? Share one thing that you are afraid God will not supply for you? In what ways has the “fear of not enough” led you to disobey God. How is this fear currently affecting you? What would it look like for you to live free of this fear?
2. **The fear of “letting go”** leads to controlling, manipulative behavior. Who or what do you most try to control and why? What would it look like to let go and live out of God’s abundance? On whom do you depend more than God to meet your relational need for love? How would depending on God’s unlimited supply of love improve your relationships?
3. **Living out of abundance**: Describe what it might look like for you to live out of abundance. What do you struggle with more: believing God is your unlimited supply, believing what God says about you or believing that God will work through you? Of what has God promised us an unlimited supply? How does living out of God’s abundance free us from the fear of *not enough* and of *letting go*? How would truly believing who we are in Christ and fully trusting Him to live through us, free us to live fearless and selfless lives?
4. **Pick risky fights**: When facing conflict, are you more likely to *fight* or *take flight*? How can we recognize the battles God wants us to fight? What type of “fights” should we try to avoid? From which battles are you currently running? What fears keep us from entering into battle? According to Ephesians 6:10, where is the real battle fought and who is our enemy? In whose strength are we to fight? Who is God wanting you to fight for?

5. **Live recklessly selfless lives**: Who do you know that lives a recklessly selfless life? How can we become more selfless? What does it look like to “lose our life for Christ’s sake”? If you, like Nathan, were only concerned with God’s glory and not your own, how would your life be different (at home, work, school)?

TAKE IT HOME:

1. Recognize the areas of your life that are controlled by the fear of not enough. It might be the fear of not having enough of something (i.e., money, time, recognition, love, etc). Or maybe it’s the fear of not measuring up in some way (I am not good enough, smart enough, talented enough, etc.) Take responsibility for your unbelief and begin living out of Christ’s abundance by depending on God’s word instead of your emotions and external circumstances. Renew your mind with God’s truth and believe what He says about you.
2. Ask the Lord to show you the fight He wants you to pick. Face the risk involved and trust in Christ to live through you. Look beneath the obvious external appearances and identify your spiritual enemy. Ask the Lord to show you how to take authority over the enemy and exercise the power He has already given you.
3. Acknowledge to the Lord the ways you have been seeking to save your life (soul) instead of pursuing Christ and His kingdom. Ask Him to free you of any fears or unbelief that would prevent your full surrender to and trust in Him. Receive the Lord’s unconditional love and complete forgiveness.

DISCOVERY QUESTIONS:

Read about Saul’s demise in 1 Samuel 15.

- In verse 3, what exactly does the Lord command Saul to do? What have the Amalekites done to deserve such severe punishment (see Deut. 25:17-19)? Why do you think God told Saul to kill even the children and animals? What do you think motivated Saul to disobey God? (vv 9,19-20, 24)
- How did Saul view himself before becoming King? (v.17) What would lead you to think that Saul may have struggled with the “fear of not enough”? Do you think Saul depended more on God or on his “mighty men” to obtain victory? (see 1 Samuel 14:52)
- What was Saul’s response to Samuel’s indictment? How does Saul respond to Samuel’s first rebuke (vv.14-15)? To his second rebuke (vv.17-21)? To the third rebuke (vv. 22-24)? In what ways did Saul try to use religious activity to cover up his sin? What role did fear play in Saul’s disobedience?
- What can we learn from Samuel about confronting sin? When have you hid your sinful motives behind a spiritual front? In what areas of your life are you presently denying or rationalizing your disobedience to God?

VERSES FOR FURTHER STUDY:

1 Samuel 14, 20; Matthew 6:31-34; Romans 8:14-17; 1 Corinthians 3:21-23; Ephesians 1:3, 6:10-18; Philippians 4:19