

SCRIPTURES FOR 3/26/06 LIFEGROUP LESSON

Matthew 6:19-21

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

2 Timothy 2:14 (the Message)

Repeat these basic essentials over and over to God's people. Warn them before God against pious nitpicking, which chips away at the faith. It just wears everyone out.

Proverbs 26:20-21

When you run out of wood, the fire goes out; when the gossip ends, the quarrel dies down. A quarrelsome person in a dispute is like kerosene thrown on a fire.

Matthew 6:30

If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

Psalm 146:3-4

Do not put your trust in princes, in mortal men, who cannot save.
When their spirit departs, they return to the ground; on that very day their plans come to nothing.

Psalm 119:85-87

The arrogant dig pitfalls for me, contrary to your law.
All your commands are trustworthy; help me, for men persecute me without cause.
They almost wiped me from the earth, but I have not forsaken your precepts.

Hebrews 12:1-3

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Matthew 17:20b

"I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."

Luke 18:16-17

"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will not enter it."

<p>NOTE TO LEADER: There is a lot of material here. Familiarize yourself with it so you know which stuff you are most comfortable with and what you will cut if you get short on time. Try to keep the lesson/discussion 20-30 minutes in length. Good luck and let me know if you have any questions. - Ed</p>

NOTE TO LEADERS: All items in *italics* are for your information and not designed to be read aloud.

INTRODUCTION:

This week, we closed our discussion of building block #3: FAITH. Jeff opened with the question, “How far will your faith carry you?” and then he outlined the common stumbling blocks to an active faith.

THE STRUGGLES

As we seek to walk by faith, not by (*sight*), how will we deal with challenges? Before we answer that, let’s look at why people struggle with struggle with their faith.

EMOTIONAL STRUGGLES

In what ways have emotional struggles, like health, family, finances, or circumstances, impacted your ability to act on your faith?

Have someone read Matthew 6:19-21.

DOCTRINAL STRUGGLES

Have you ever had to defend your faith in the face of open hostility? Ridicule? How did it come out?

What are some areas that Christians argue about, doctrinally?

Read 2 Timothy 2:14 from The Message, above.

TRADITION STRUGGLES

What role do you think tradition plays in our worship – not just corporate worship, but all our worship?

Have you ever seen or heard of a religious tradition (or rejection of a tradition) causing such a rift that believers stumbled in their faith as a result?

Read Proverbs 26:20-21 from The Message, above..

FEAR OF FAILURE

In “Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade”, Indy has to step out of a cave into thin air over a deep chasm based on someone’s instruction to “take a leap of faith”. It turns out there is a bridge that you can’t see from the cave opening and he does not fall.

Have you ever felt handicapped by fear, even when God’s instruction is clear?

Have someone read Matthew 6:30.

God wants the best for you, even during those times when it seems like He doesn’t care.

FAILURE OF A PROMINENT MENTOR

Have you ever been shaken by the failure of a trusted mentor or spiritual leader? How did you overcome it?

Have someone read Psalm 146:3-4.

INTIMIDATION

Has anyone ever made you feel small because they were more “knowledgeable” than you?

Are you ever afraid to speak up about spiritual things for fear that you will say something “wrong”?

Have someone read Psalm 119:85-87.

We must strive to have an atmosphere of openness and trust, where all questions are respected and all answers are fair game. We will never be able to grow if we close our minds.

THREE STEPS

Have someone read Hebrews 12:1-3.

SURRENDER – Throw off everything that hinders...

We are to prep for running the race by getting rid of our dead weight – things that hold us back – our baggage.

Is there something that you could cast off this week – some baggage that you are holding onto?

COURAGE – Run with perseverance...

We need to stick it out. The racetrack is laid out. Keep your eyes on the prize and just keep making progress.

Do you ever feel worn out – like it’s less about courage than stamina? How do you get through it?

VISION – Fix our eyes on Jesus...

Jesus had us in mind, so we need to keep Him in mind. He made it through the tough stuff to give us hope.

Read Matthew 17:20b, above.

Remember what Jeff said, “You can have a big problem or a big God, but you can’t have both.”

CONCLUSION

Have someone read Luke 18:16-17.

We must have a child-like faith, not a child-ish faith. Do not let preferences, agendas, guilt feelings, past failures and tragedies, and all of the other baggage keep you from running the race and falling into the Father’s arms. He WILL catch you.