



Remembering the Forgotten God Leader Guide Session 2: What are You Afraid of?

Group Discussion:

Fear is an excellent motivator. Every American is taught from an early age to denounce fear. Our heroes are tough and fearless. We actually believe that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself. But let's face it: We're all far more affected by fear than we'd like to let on.

1. Think about a time in your life when you were afraid (whether the fear was irrational or legitimate). How did you feel? How did you respond?
2. Why do you think it is so easy to become defensive and fearful of change when it comes to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit?

It's natural to develop specific views about the Holy Spirit. But unfortunately, we typically develop stereotypes about the other camp. While some aspects of these stereotypes are based on fact, most of the time they are exaggerated at best and unfounded at worst. When all we know about the other position is based on stereotypes, it breeds fear. It is this kind of fear that keeps us stationary. We're afraid to move from our position because we don't want to become "like them."

3. Try to figure out where you're at with this. Which camp (if any) do you most identify with regarding your established views of the Holy Spirit, and what fears and stereotypes do you have of the other camp?
4. Being as honest as possible, do you think those fears would keep you from changing your views and practices, even if you found that the Scriptures teach that your views are misguided? Why or why not?

If you're not afraid of becoming like the other camp, there are other kinds of fears that keep us from what God has for us. Most of us have experienced a time when we asked God to do something, but He did not come through in the way we expected. Maybe you're afraid that if you ask God for the Holy Spirit, nothing will happen. I'm sure that more of us are guilty of this than are willing to admit it. You read the Bible and don't see any reason why God couldn't do today what He did then. But you don't see the miraculous in your everyday life, so you're afraid that if you ask God for His Spirit, you'll be disappointed.

Journey CHURCH

Pastor James Greer

James@jcpineville.com

www.jcpineville.com



5. If you are motivated by a fear that God won't act when you ask Him to, what does that say about your view of God?

Ignorance can be bliss. If we don't know exactly what God wants us to do, we can maintain our current lifestyle and still manage a perception of godliness.

6. Imagine that the Holy Spirit took complete control of your life and showed you exactly what He wanted to do. Why might the thought of actually following the Holy Spirit be scary? Have you ever found yourself fearful of this? If so, describe what you thought and did.

Read Luke 18:18-30. The ruler in this story had been going about his life in peace. Apparently, he was really striving to keep God's commandments. He seems to have been sincere in asking Jesus about the path to eternal life. He was confident in his efforts. But (as we often find) Jesus' answer required more than he was prepared to give.

7. Why do you think the ruler was so surprised when Jesus told him to sell his possessions and give to the poor? What do you think he was expecting Jesus to say?
8. What did Jesus mean when He said "follow me" (v.22)? Do you think the ruler understood what Jesus meant by this? Why or why not?

Just like the blackjack game mentioned in the video, Jesus acknowledges that it's more difficult to follow when a lot is at stake: "How difficult it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" (Luke 18:24). It's easier to go "all in" when we don't have much. In America, not many of us fall into that category.

9. Try to put yourself in the ruler's position. He was a wealthy man, yet he came to Jesus to learn what he should do. Picture yourself coming to Jesus and asking His Spirit to lead you in the right direction. Do you have any thoughts about what He might ask you to do?
10. Would you be willing to follow, no matter what that might mean? Why do you say that?
11. Read Ephesians 4:30. Write down a few aspects of your life that you think may grieve the Holy Spirit and hinder His work in and through you. Once you've written them down, stop and pray. Repent of those things and ask the Spirit to give you the strength to put those things to death.

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In Luke 11, Jesus teaches His disciples how to pray. He tells them to ask, and it will be given to them; to seek, and they will find; to knock and the door will be opened (v.9). He says that every human father knows how to give good gifts to his children. And then He draws a powerful conclusion; “If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” (v.13)

12. Spend some time in prayer. Ask God to remove your fears about following the Holy Spirit. Ask God to give you the Holy Spirit. Pray that the Spirit would show you what He wants you to do and pray that God would give you the strength and the heart to follow wherever He might lead.