

Overcoming our Fears

Read Matt 14-25-28

1. Peter took a big risk here, and suffered the consequences. As he sank, he lost face and faith. But none of the other disciples got out of the boat. It's easy to criticize Peter from the comfort of the boat. Do you criticise people for doing things that you don't know a lot about? Give some examples?
2. Theodore Roosevelt said, "*It's not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena.*" Name some people who get in the arena and get unfairly criticised, by people who couldn't do what they are doing?
3. Anything we do for the first time is scary! - Each give an example of a fear that you have had to help a person to overcome (may be even yourself)?
4. God has a habit of bringing us face-to-face with our fears. *What are some fears that you have had concerning your Christian walk?*
5. "Some of our **scariest experiences** are also our greatest" eg Bungy jumping. *Go around the group and each give an example*
6. The cure for the "fear of failure" isn't success – it's actually failure. The cure for the fear of rejection isn't acceptance – it's rejection. Immunisation exposes the body to a small amount of a disease and builds up immunity. As we're exposed to small quantities of whatever we're afraid of, we build up immunity. Discuss
7. According to psychologists, we're born with only 2 fears. The fear of falling and the fear of loud noises. That means that every other fear is learned and so it can be unlearned. God brings us face-to-face with our fears and helps us unlearn them. Discuss
8. **1 John 4:18** says, "Perfect love casts out all fear." Explain what that means or how it works.
9. A definition of faith is *the willingness to look foolish for Jesus*. In what ways have you exercised faith in this way?
10. Name other biblical characters who did what appeared to be ridiculous things in faith, but God proved faithful and came through for them?
11. Children are quick learners because they're not worried about making mistakes. Jesus said *Unless we become like little children we cannot enter the kingdom of heaven*. Part of becoming like little children is losing the inhibitions that keep us in the boat. What are some inhibitions that you need to lose?
12. There are two ways to play the game of life: we can play to win or play it safe. Playing it safe is risky! In Matt 16:25 Jesus said "*Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.*" Discuss what this means.
13. We don't want to have to look God in the eyes and tell Him that "*I was too scared, or too embarrassed, or too focused on my career, too afraid of risking friendships, too focused on having a good time, too afraid of affecting my business relationships*. Or too anything else that prevents us from seeking the truth and yielding to what we know deep down in our heart. What's your main excuse? What are you going to do about it?
14. Does anyone have a major fear that you would like someone in the group to pray for you about?