

LIFE Group Leader Handout

November 5, 2017

Strength--Courage--Decision

Pastor Matt Stokes

Scripture--Joshua 1:5-9

No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you. 6 Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them. 7 Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. 8 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. 9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

Main Idea--Rise up in the Strength and Courage that God Provides--Decide and Act

Joshua will fail--but failure can be the most powerful motivator

1. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you. Don't give up too soon.
2. When in this place of need--lean on His word
3. Strength combines with courage when we implement the plan. An idea does not implement itself. Decide and put it into action. It is not the good goal setter but the goal achiever who succeeds. Pay the price. We are the product on the sum of our actions--push through the fear.
4. What is God calling you to possess? Decision is not a preference, an option. To decide to to cut into the issue and push other options to the side and move in the chosen direction.

Application--

- What part of this message was most instructive to you in your current circumstances?
- Naming a debilitating fear moves us to overcome it. What fear situation is God calling you to attack with faith?
- What is God calling you to possess? Did you decide? Are you already taking actions?

TO TEXT OR NOT TO TEXT: THE QUESTION OF STAYING IN TOUCH

By Laura Magness

As a small group leader and/or member, you know the value of community. It's one of the pillars of any group ministry and a key component to church life. God designed His people to function best in community with Him and with others (Genesis 2), and His desire for us to have relationships with other believers who help us grow in our relationship with Him (Hebrews 10:23-25). The sheer volume of "one another" commands (59!) in the Bible help us know that relationships are important to the church and to your own spiritual growth. Relationships are one of the main reasons people come back to small groups week after week.

If relationships are so important, then why is it challenging to stay in touch outside of a group gathering? We hear about one another's burdens, pray for one another, laugh and cry together....and then we leave. Even the most well-intentioned groups have a hard time maintaining a connection the other six days of the week. The answer is simple--life gets in the way. The minute your group disperses, the rest of life's priorities and challenges flood back into your lives, and it's easy to forget to stay in touch. But that doesn't make it OK. To truly be invested in the spiritual growth of one another, staying connected throughout the week is a must. Here are a few ideas to help make that a habit, rather than a hurdle.

- 1. Text, text and text some more.** Text messaging can be the group leader's best asset, because our phones never leave our sides. If you need extra accountability to text your group members, assign them each a day of the week. It won't take long for the quick check-in to become a habitual part of your day. Your texts can be as brief as "praying for you" to as extensive as following up on specific concerns raised in your group gathering. And a simple text doesn't have to stop there. It can lead to lengthier conversations, coffee meeting, or a follow up phone call.
- 2. Plan social events.** Whether this is your gifting or not, fellowship opportunities outside of your official group time are a great way to help people feel more invested in one another's lives. Over time, these events will naturally lead to deeper relationships, greater spiritual accountability, and an increased level of connectedness. If planning get-togethers is outside of your wheelhouse, find someone in your group who loves to do it and let that person run with it!
- 3. Share the burden with your group members.** Encourage everyone to connect with someone else from the group during the week, whether that be through assigning prayer partners, scheduling one-on-ones, or getting a group message thread going. You want everyone in your group to understand how important it is to invest in one another and to feel a level of personal responsibility to do so. When they do, they are much more likely to remember to pray for one another's needs, and to share whatever burdens come up during the week.