



theme: Doubt #2 – Don't Shrink

materials: Obstacle Course, blindfolds, bibles, paper, pens

welcome

Before cell starts set up an obstacle course wherever you meet (use chairs, couches, laundry hampers, whatever you have at hand). Try to keep people from seeing it before they go through it. Get into pairs as people come in and have one member of the pair put on a blindfold. Bring the pairs to the obstacle course. The person who can see has to guide the blindfolded person through the obstacle course using only their voice. Once the partner has done it, switch over. (If you can do this outside, even better).

How did it feel to be lead around without being able to see? Did you ever doubt your partner's ability (or desire) to lead you safely through the obstacle course? Does trusting make you feel vulnerable? Who do you normally trust in your life? Who do you doubt, and why?

interact

Encourage one another's faith. Go around the cell and ask everyone to share how they see God at work in and through each person there. Spend some time first praying about each person so that what you share is not just from a human perspective, but from what God is revealing to the cell. Record these things for each person and give them to them afterwards. After you have shared about a person, thank God for them and for what God has done for them and through them.

read

Read through Hebrews 10:19 to 11:3 together.

What does it mean to "have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus"?

Do you have the confidence to boldly approach God in prayer? Are you ever afraid to approach God? Why, or why not?

Why would it be a "fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God"?

How can this fear be overcome?

Why is it important to keep meeting with each other, and to stir one another up for good works?

How do other believers help us to live for God? How can other believers help us overcome fear and doubt?

Have you had to face much persecution or opposition for being a Christian? How do you deal with this?

Does persecution ever cause you to doubt, or to lose confidence? Why or why not?

This passage talks about having endurance in faith, and not shrinking back. How can you work on your spiritual endurance so that you won't shrink back at persecution?

think

Try to arrange this week to meet up with other cell members at different times to pray for each other. Get together at school, in a park, somewhere you don't normally meet, and pray encouragement, good works, and endurance. Don't worry about who sees you or hears you, but don't make a show of it either. Let your intention be the strengthening of each other by Christ's blood to be better witnesses for his Kingdom.



live & pray

Find a way to spur another cell member this week on to a good work. In other words, figure out how to make it possible for him or her to do something good for someone else. One simple example would be to give him or her a little money of your own, and ask them to use it some way to bless someone else.

useful resources

Movie: *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* – especially for the scene when he walks out into thin air.
Book: *Prince Caspian*, by C.S. Lewis. Some great interplays between faith and doubt.
Book: *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, by Richard Foster

leader's guide

Verse 19 here is referring to the Holy of Holies, which in the Jewish tradition could only be entered once a year by the High Priest on behalf of the entire nation. The priest could only enter if the proper sacrifices were made, and he had been made spotless, or else he would die in the presence of the Living God. The author of Hebrews is saying that because of the sacrifice of Jesus, we all now have access to the Holy of Holies. We have been cleansed by his blood and made clean and holy, so we do not have to doubt our access to the throne of God. Often, though, we are still afraid to meet with God in prayer because of our guilty consciences. We know we have not been living as we ought, and so fear talking with a perfectly holy God. The author of Hebrews describes this as sinning deliberately, which actually denies the sacrifice of Jesus. This does bring judgment, and should, it seems, be a legitimate cause of fear.

How we live still does matter, as the sacrifice that has given us freedom to approach God is nothing less than the life of Christ. We don't want to be guilty of throwing this away.

So Jesus has made it possible for us – all of us – to approach the throne of grace with boldness. But we throw away this gift with our determination to live in sin and not freedom. The overcoming of fear comes with an acceptance of the perfect love of God, and a submission to living in obedience to Christ. And we are called to live this out together with other believers who can spur us on to good works and obedience and encourage us in our faith.

Other believers can also help us to live out our faith in the face of persecution. Persecution and opposition are promised – they should be expected as the norm, and not as unusual. Our response needs to be endurance and faithfulness, which is not to say that this will be easy. A community of believers can be very helpful here, but ultimately endurance comes from the presence of the Spirit of God. Practicing prayer, fasting, simplicity, and the other spiritual disciplines is extremely important in helping us to rely on God and not on our own strength.