

# COURAGE

Heavenly Virtues: **Courage** | Connection Group Discussion Guide | Week 2

## Connect (5 to 10 minutes)

***Come together to build relationships through fellowship and sharing about this week's worship.***

- Take a few minutes to share your thoughts about worship this week.
  - What aspects of worship did or did not connect with you?
  - What story or illustration made an impact on you?
- Share about one of your childhood heroes. What did you admire about him or her?

## Context (30 to 40 minutes)

***Dig deeper into the videos and scripture for this week through questions and discussion.***

***Watch the first half of the video for this session on your DVD or online.***

- How do you respond to the definition of courage as “the habit that enables a person to face difficulties well”? What would you add or change about this definition?
  - Do you see courage as a habit or as larger, individual brave acts? Why?
- Share about a difficult circumstance you have had to face in your life, recently or in the past.
  - In what ways did you face this challenge “well”?
  - What enabled you to live in courage and face these things well?
  - If this is a current situation you are facing, how do you hope God helps you to live in courage?

NOTES

## Read John 15:12-17

In the scripture right after this one, Jesus tells his followers that even when they love others the way Jesus instructs them to, the world will hate them for it. Christians in the first centuries of the church needed a lot of courage to face the world. How is life as a Christian different now? How is it the same?

- Where do you see Jesus laying down his life, or acting in courage, before he goes to the cross?
  - When has a friend or family member acted in this way for you? How did this impact you?
- After reading this passage, how do you think love and courage are related?
  - Where have you experienced or when have you lived out courage expressed through love in your life?
- Think for a moment about how fear impacts your life. What changes about you or your behavior when you are scared?
  - What are you afraid of at this point in your life?

- When have you fallen into the vice of cowardice?
- Did this action impact more people than just you? How have you sought to make this right?

**Watch the second half of the video for this session on your DVD or online.**

**Read Psalm 27:1-5**

Psalm 26 and 27 are psalms of God’s Temple in Jerusalem: the worshipers praise God and speak about God’s dwelling place on Earth. It is an important physical representation of God for the Israelite people and a source of joy and courage for them during difficult times..

NOTES

- How do you respond to the statement by Karen Swallow Prior that, “Courage is measured not by the risk it entails but by the good it preserves”?
  - Think back to the moments of courage your group discussed earlier. What good did you preserve with your actions?
- After considering this understanding of courage and watching the video, how would you describe a person who is rash?
  - Share about a time when you fell into the vice of rashness. Why do you think you acted in this way?
  - What good was not preserved by your actions?
  - What regrets did you feel after this happened, and how did you deal with them?
- The first verse of this psalm asks a simple question: “Whom shall I fear?” This can be a statement of faith or a statement of rash overconfidence.
  - In what situations do you think fear can be helpful?
  - What are some things that we should be afraid of, even when we have faith in God?

**Call (10 minutes)**

*We believe that God not only shows us who God is but invites us to participate in God’s ministry by answering unique calls in our own lives. Join together in discovering how we can actively respond to scripture and God’s presence.*

- Which of these two vices do you currently struggle with the most? Why?
  - How are you experiencing God’s forgiveness for this sin?
  - What is one thing you can do to avoid this temptation this week?
- We believe in our ability to live as virtuous people when we do the simple work of practicing virtues in our everyday lives. If you are participating in the “call to action” shared in our weekly worship services for this series, share with the group which action(s) you chose and why. (Please refer to the Call to Action handout for weekly calls to action.)

**Closing (5 minutes)**

*God calls us into community by sharing our joys and concerns together in prayer and supporting one another in our walks with Christ. As we share testimony and stories of our lives, let us listen to where God is working within our community and how we can build each other up in Christian love.*

- Share joys and concerns with one another.
- Close in prayer, either by inviting a group member to pray or by using the prayer provided below.

**Closing Prayer**

Courageous God, we thank You that You are always the reason we can be brave in the face of challenges or difficulties. We are sorry that we choose to be cowardly when fear can overtake our faith. We are sorry that sometimes we ignore fear and hurt others with our rashness. Help us to be courageous in our relationships and to follow the example Christ gives us in all things. Amen.