



Fear- March 22

Discussion Guide

Face the Issue:

This week, Brandon shared with us a very timely topic, fear.

We are all experiencing a brand new world of uncertainty and questions for which we do not have answers. As Brandon shared, this is the perfect recipe for fear.

We like to think that the opposite of fear is courage.

In *Growing Strong in the Seasons of Life*, Charles R. Swindoll wrote, "Courage is not limited to the battlefield or the Indianapolis 500 or bravely catching a thief in your house. The real tests of courage are much deeper and much quieter. They are the inner tests, like remaining faithful when nobody's looking, like enduring pain when the room is empty, like standing alone when you're misunderstood."

Eleanor Roosevelt once said, "You gain strength and confidence by every experience in which you really ... look fear in the face."

What do you think is the opposite of fear? Explain.

What emotions do you experience when you feel no fear at all?

Has there been a time that you felt brave and courageous? Were you really free from fear? Explain.

Into the Word:

So, biblically, what is the opposite of fear? There are many answers to this question. Three of these answers are faith, peace, and confidence. All three of these depend on our relationship with and trust in God.

Read Mark 4:40 and Psalm 34:1–11.

What do these verses tell you about how faith is the opposite of fear?

How would you define what it means to have faith in God?

Read Leviticus 26:6; Psalm 4:8; and Malachi 2:5

What do these verses tell you about how peace is the opposite of fear?

There is peace that is the opposite of conflict with another person, and there is inner peace that is the opposite of our inner conflict. Which kind do you feel you need most during this time of "Social distancing"?

Read Psalm 27:3; Proverbs 3:25–26; Isaiah 35:4; and 2 Corinthians 3:4–5.

Where does our confidence come from, according to these verses?

Apply The Word

The Christian Church is no stranger to pandemics. There have been many in its 2000 year history.

In fact, the early Church exploded in influence because of its response to these plagues. One of the most famous is known as the Plague of Cyprian. It happened in the third century in the Roman Empire. It's called the Plague of Cyprian because Saint Cyprian, the Bishop of Carthage, gave inspiring sermons to his congregations about ministering to people during this time and not being afraid.

The early Christians were so faithful in ministering that they influenced and reached many with the Gospel purely because of their acts of kindness in the face of fear.

The pagan Roman emperor, Julian, complained and ranted against the growing influence and numbers of followers of Christ. He wrote in a letter that the pagan Romans needed to match the Christians in virtue, blaming the recent growth of Christianity on their "benevolence to strangers, their care for the graves of the dead, and the pretended holiness of their lives." He wrote, "For it is a disgrace that . . . the impious Galilaeans [Christians] support not only their own poor but ours as well."

How we as followers of Christ face times like this can be a great witness to our faith. We have the opportunity to demonstrate our faith, peace, and confidence in how we interact with others in these uncertain times.

Choose one or two verses from this study guide to memorize. Make sure they are ones that help you overcome your fear when circumstances are difficult. Ask another person to listen to you say the verses in a week, so that you will be accountable to memorize them.

What are some ways that you can safely demonstrate your faith during these times of "social distancing"?