

life groups

NLC Weekly Sermon Study

Week of April 30, 2017
Sermon: Path—When It's All Uphill



NEW LIFE
CHURCH

Schedule

30 MIN Eat, Meet & Greet

15 MIN Ice Breaker Game: **Two Truths and a Dream**, (a variation of “Two Truths and a Lie”). Each person prepares three statements, two true, and one that is not true, yet something they dream was true. In any order, the person shares the three statements to the entire group. The object of the game is to figure out which statement is the dream. The rest of the group votes on each statement, and the person reveals which one is the dream. This interesting spin often leads to unexpected, fascinating results, as people often share touching dreams for their lives.

NOTE: Feel free to use as much or as little of the following study as you like, in whatever way flows most naturally for your group.

OPENING PRAYER

45–60 MIN PATH Part 2—Facing Your Giant

- The sermon from this weekend’s “Path” series discusses giants that show up on our path and how we can handle them. Let’s look at how this scripture says to handle difficult situations in our path before we look at an instance in David’s life:

TAKE TURNS READING JAMES 1:2-8

- Q1.** Why is James saying to not try to get out of a challenge prematurely?
- Q2.** If you’re being honest, what is your difficulty level of viewing a challenge as a “sheer gift?” (Be prepared to share a personal story. Try to be humorous, if you can!)

REVIEW 1 SAMUEL 17 (STORY OF DAVID & GOLIATH)

- David wasn’t even there to fight the giant! He was just there to bring bread and cheese to his brothers! However, this giant showed up on his path and threatened his people, so he had a choice to make.

THREE COMMON GIANTS YOU WILL FACE IN LIFE

1. FEAR

- Whether we are prepared or not, our daily walks can be interrupted with the threat of fear. Fear can present itself in many ways:
 - › Fear of the unknown
 - › Fear of failure
 - › Fear of who we are going to marry
 - › Fear due to finances
 - › Fear for our kids
 - › Health fears
- Check out this story in Numbers where Joshua and Caleb were ready to lead the Israelites on the path God desired, but fear held everyone else back.

TAKE TURNS READING NUMBER 13:27-32

- When God called Joshua and Caleb into the Promised Land, there were going to be giants along the path. Giants aren't bad. Giants teach you how to fight and have grit in your faith. Here are some truths about fear:
 - › Fear is the counterfeit to faith
 - › Fear holds us back, faith responds with action
 - › Fear will paralyze, faith will mobilize
- When we live in fear, we stop walking on the path the Lord has planned for our lives. We stop moving in faith and start settling in fear.

Q3. Share about a time you were moving in faith and were interrupted by fear. What was the result?

2. INADEQUACY

- Another giant that can interrupt our path and threaten our walk is not feeling adequate enough. Inadequacy is the lie-filled result of comparison. In our social media culture, it is easy to compare our bloopers to someone else's highlight reel.
- Most of the people that God used in the Bible expressed that they felt inadequate.
 - › Moses expressed, "I can't do this because I stutter.
 - › Peter said, "I can't do this because I'm just a fisherman."
 - › Gideon told God he couldn't do it because he was afraid.
 - › Jeremiah expressed that he was too young to do what God was asking.
- The interesting thing about comparison is that it can be

compartmentalized to where we can feel confident in our parenting but not in our finances; confident in our jobs but not in our faith.

Q4. Which aspects of your life do you feel confident in, and which ones do you feel inadequate in?

- What's encouraging is that we were never supposed to be adequate enough in anything! Christ is enough and everything we have is a gift from above.

1 COR 1:27 (MSG) "Take a good look, friends, at who you were when you got called into this life. I don't see many of 'the brightest and the best' among you, not many influential, not many from high-society families. Isn't it obvious that God deliberately chose men and women that the culture overlooks and exploits and abuses, chose these 'nobodies' to expose the hollow pretensions of the 'somebodies'? That makes it quite clear that none of you can get by with blowing your own horn before God. Everything that we have—right thinking and right living, a clean slate and a fresh start—comes from God by way of Jesus Christ."

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 12:9

3. REGRET

- Regret is pain in our past that threatens our future. This can pop up in our paths for any circumstance that reminds us of a previous pain.
- If you don't face this giant you will miss your greatest platform for ministry. Because the things in our life that have the most regret and pain attached, are the very things that have the most anointing to change someone's life. When you face this giant...this is where your pain becomes purpose.
- We find freedom from regret when we take that pain to Jesus and get his thoughts on the circumstance.
 - › Think of the painful experience tied to the regret.
 - › Ask Jesus where He is in that memory
 - › Ask God what lies you are believing in that memory (about self, about others, about God, about life, etc.)
 - › Ask the Holy Spirit what truths need to replace those lies in that memory.

Q5. Are there any painful regrets you have that you want to give to the Lord today?

- (Offer to pray through these individually with them after group. Contact the church if they need additional spiritual counseling.)

THREE THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN FACING GIANTS

1. The giants you avoid today will be waiting for you tomorrow.
 - We read in **1 Samuel 17:16** that Goliath was waiting to be fought—day in and day out—for forty days in front of the Israelite camp. No one wanted to fight him! If David had not fought Goliath that day, that giant would have just kept showing up—day in and day out.
 - Some of us have giants we *should* be facing but are avoiding, like:
 - › Confessing something to a friend
 - › Looking at that bank account
 - › Having that difficult conversation
 - › Marriage problems that need attention
 - When we avoid that giant, we can try to escape in movies/alcohol/unhealthy relationships/media to take our minds off of it. But once those distractions are over, those giants still exist.

2. Giants are never as big as they seem.

- After David conquered one giant, his men conquered **FOUR**. By conquering one, he showed his people that giants are **ABLE** to be conquered, and they defeated four. David led by example!

TAKE TURNS READING JOHN 14:12 & JOHN 16:33

Q6. In your own words, what is Jesus saying in those verses?

3. When you stand and face your giant, it gives others permission to do the same.

- Whether as parents, teachers, co-workers, friends, or siblings, if you do not face our giants, those you influence will not learn to face their giants. You either teach them fear or faith, based on your response to your giants.

Q7. Are there any giants in front of you, that you either acknowledge or avoid, that you want to face? (Leave room for discussion. Be prepared for prayer.)

- When you are willing to get honest and admit where you're weak, you are open to the grace of God.
- Let's walk out the path God has us on and face the giants in front of us...full of faith and the presence and power of God.

TAKE PRAYER REQUESTS & PRAY OVER NEEDS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Please refer to your service guide for campus-specific announcements.