

MON 8/16

- ✓ READ Hebrews 12:2
- ✓ THOUGHT Often our fears emerge from feelings of abandonment, insecurity, or unworthiness issues and we attempt to manage them in negative ways. Ultimately, Christ is the answer. Together we will discover some of Christ’s attributes that will provide comfort and direction.
- ✓ PRAYER Gracious God, I give thanks that through the life of Christ you have shown me great love. Help me look to you to calm my fears when I am struggling. Amen.

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TUES 8/17

- ✓ READ Ephesians 2:20-22
- ✓ THOUGHT Fear not! "As God’s household, you are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. The whole building is joined together in him, and it grows up into a temple that is dedicated to the Lord." There is shelter and safety inside this Holy Temple. We are all welcome through Christ.
- ✓ PRAYER God, as a child whom you love, I walk confidently with your presence and rest in your care. Amen.

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WED 8/18

- ✓ READ 1 Peter 2:25
- ✓ THOUGHT The Lord is our Shepherd. Do not be afraid! "You were lost sheep with no idea who you were or where you were going. Now you’re named and kept for good by the Shepherd of your souls." (The Message) The very fact that Christ has called each of us by name and keeps us "for good" answers our longing for worthiness.
- ✓ PRAYER Oh Lord, your love surrounds me in all my places of insecurity and I trust in you. Amen.

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THURS 8/19

- ✓ READ Revelation 1:8
- ✓ THOUGHT "I am the Alpha and Omega,' says the Lord God, "who is and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, symbolizing the eternal nature of the Almighty. As you inhale, remember, "Alpha and Omega" and as you exhale, "the Almighty One".
- ✓ PRAYER God, I rest here in your presence. I trust in your loving power and strength. Amen.

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FRI 8/20

- ✓ READ Psalms 18:2
- ✓ THOUGHT Fear not! "You are my rock, my stronghold, my freedom, Almighty One, the rock and foundation of my life." (Psalms for Praying) When real or imagined places of fear surround you, God is always present in you and around you, leading and guiding you.
- ✓ PRAYER Christ, lead me to places of freedom in your love. Amen.

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SAT 8/21

- ✓ READ 1 Timothy 4:10
- ✓ THOUGHT Do not fear. "This is why we work hard and continue to struggle, for our hope is in the living God who is the Savior of all people and particularly of all believers." We serve a risen Savior who cares for us deeply. Our hope lives in the risen Lord!
- ✓ PRAYER Christ, I choose to place my hope in you. Thank you for saving and sustaining me. Amen.

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GROUP GUIDE – FEAR

- ✓ **PRAYER** **God, we acknowledge that you are already here. May our hearts be open to your presence and direction. Amen.**

- ✓ **BIG IDEA** **Fear can paralyze and make us powerless to live transformed lives through God's great mercy and love. We will learn new understandings of God through scripture and imaginative prayer.**

- ✓ **READ** **Matthew 8:23-27**

- ✓ **DISCUSS**
 - The Bible offers inspiration and direction in all seasons of our lives. We've also been gifted with the power of prayer to come into a closer relationship with God. First, take a few minutes and silently pray that God will speak to your open heart and mind about your fears and God's ability to comfort you and guide you.
 - Read the scripture passage aloud again, focusing on the setting and the people involved. At this point, the disciples had already seen a number of miracles but they still became fearful when the storm began. Why? It is human nature. Fear and worry seems to be in our blood. Yet that is our old nature. We don't have to live as slaves to fear anymore. 1 Peter 5:7 says "Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you." Discuss ways we can practically apply this verse in our daily lives.
 - Come back and reread the scripture a third time. Close your eyes and sit silently for 2 minutes, noticing what words stand out to you. Yes, this can be difficult! What specific words that you read caught your attention? Share those words with the group. What are your typical responses or behaviors when you are afraid? What do you think would be Jesus' response to you in those moments?
 - Think of the primary fear you are facing in your life right now. How do you think Christ is encouraging or guiding you to deal with that fear?
 - Imagine what your life would be like if you lived without fear. How would that change your relationships?

- ✓ **Pray** **Almighty God, we thank you for the power and presence of Christ in our lives that liberates us from fear and allows us to live in freedom and service. Amen.**