

BOTTOM LINE:

God's truth is greater than fear's lies.

OBJECTIVE:

Kids will learn to focus on God's truth instead of fear's lies.

INTRO:

Do you know how many men play in the NBA every year? There are 30 teams in the NBA, and each team is only allowed to have 15 players. Can someone do the math really quick and tell me how many men get to play professional basketball in the NBA this year?

The answer is 450. 450 men from all across the US, from Canada, and around the world have the privilege to play in the NBA every season. Now thanks to injuries, sudden retirements, and other unforeseen circumstances, there will be more than that actually signing on and suiting up each year, but at any one given time, only 450 people can call themselves active basketball players.

The men who get to call themselves professional basketball players in the NBA are not afraid to get bumped around, to drive into the zone against a bigger man, or to take a clutch shot if they see the opening. With only 15 spots to fill on each team, no general manager is going to sign a player who is afraid to get in the game. Every team starts every season with the hopes of winning a national championship, and if a coach or GM senses even a little reluctance from a player to play his hardest, he may soon be out of the NBA looking for another job.

Fear isn't the only thing that can keep you out of the NBA, but it's one of the fastest ways to get cut from the team. Fear keeps people from taking risks in all aspects of life, not just the playing field. Fear keeps us from trying out for choir, the school musical, the academic team, and other activities we might enjoy.

Fear lies to us. It tells us we're not good enough. It tells us it's better not to try than to risk failing. It tells us we need to sit down, to stay quiet. It tells us that we will be rejected. God wants us to ignore fear's lies, especially when it comes to serving Him. God wants us to be bold and listen to Him, like a pair of spies we will meet in today's Bible story, Joshua and Caleb.

READ NUMBERS 13:26-14:4

²⁶ They came back to Moses and Aaron and the whole Israelite community at Kadesh in the Desert of Paran. There they reported to them and to the whole assembly and showed them the fruit of the land. ²⁷ They gave Moses this account: “We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is its fruit. ²⁸ But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large. We even saw descendants of Anak there. ²⁹ The Amalekites live in the Negev; the Hittites, Jebusites and Amorites live in the hill country; and the Canaanites live near the sea and along the Jordan.” ³⁰ Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, “We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it.”

³¹ But the men who had gone up with him said, “We can’t attack those people; they are stronger than we are.” ³² And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored. They said, “The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size. ³³ We saw the Nephilim there (the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim). We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them.”

The People Rebel

¹⁴ That night all the members of the community raised their voices and wept aloud. ² All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, “If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this wilderness! ³ Why is the LORD bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be taken as plunder. Wouldn’t it be better for us to go back to Egypt?” ⁴ And they said to each other, “We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt.”

MAIN POINT:

Long before these twelve spies set out on their mission, God had performed miracles to rescue the nation of Israel from slavery in Egypt. He had given them a promise that He would give them this land, and he had already demonstrated His power to do so. Yet when the ten spies came back with reports of terrible armies and huge giants, the people listened to their fears instead of God. There was no way they could beat these giants. They would die if they tried! They would have been better off staying in Egypt and living as slaves.

Only two men believed God’s promise. They were ready to ignore fear’s lies and lead Israel to victory. They would have to wait forty years for that opportunity. Fear cost the men and women who escaped from Egypt a chance to live in the Promised Land. Instead, God would give His promise to their children.

Fear can keep us from experiencing the promises of God. We need to ignore fear’s lies and take a risk, knowing that if we follow God, He will give us victory.

DRIVE IT HOME:

Do you want to take a guess how many of those 450 men in the NBA feel like they can’t be the one to take a game winning shot at the end of the game? I’m going to guess that number is

somewhere next to zero! When you get to the NBA, even the last man off the bench feels like he can be a hero. When those men were boys, playing basketball in the gym, in the driveway, or at the park, every one of them imagined they were in the NBA finals, down by one or two points, with just seconds to make that last shot. Not all of them will get the opportunity to take that shot, but every one of them would be ready in a heartbeat if their coach said, "This is your chance!"

Fear says, "You will miss. You will fail. You will lose." A basketball player's experience and confidence says, "I am ready. I'll take the shot."

Fear tells us, "Your friends will reject you. People will tell you to be quiet. Stick to playing sports, or singing, and whatever it is you do and keep your faith to yourself." If we keep our faith to ourselves, we are staying on the sidelines. We're missing our chance to share Jesus with others. We're missing our chance to receive God's promises.

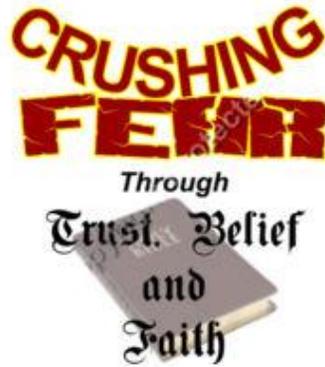
God doesn't promise people will always listen or accept us. As a matter of fact, he tells us we will face rejection. So did Jesus, and that didn't keep Jesus from playing His hardest. He got in the game at every opportunity. He crushed fear and risked everything so He could be our Savior. His followers crushed fear and spread the good news about Jesus so that we would one day have the chance to play the game. Now it's our turn. Let's ask God to crush out fear. Let's shut our ears to fear's lies, and let's get in the game. We won't win every battle during the game, but we know God's already sealed the victory.

CLOSE WITH A SIMPLE PRAYER:

Dear God,

Give us the courage to focus on you and get in the game.

In Jesus' name,
Amen



IN THE CAR:

When 12 men spied out the Promised Land, 10 came back full of fear. Only Caleb and Joshua had their eyes on God. Fear can keep us from trying new things or doing the things we know we should. When we focus on God and not on our fear, God gives us the courage to “get in the game.” Numbers 13:26-14:4, The 12 Spies

HANGING OUT:

Ask your kids if there’s something they are afraid to try. Talk with them about those fears, and see if you can help them to overcome their fear. Maybe it’s riding a bike without training wheels, or maybe inviting a friend to church.

AT DINNER:

Here are some great discussion starters:

- Why were ten of the spies who went into the Promised Land so afraid?
- Why were Caleb and Joshua brave enough to want to obey God and enter the Promised Land?
- How can we overcome the lies of fear and do something God has called us to do?

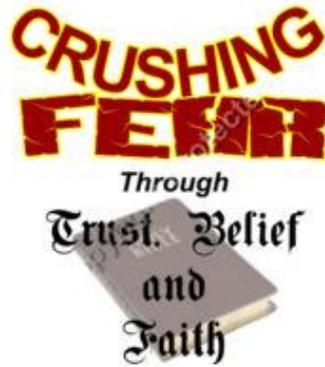
AT BEDTIME:

Quiz your child on this week's memory verse:

“There is no fear in love. Instead, perfect love drives away fear.” 1 John 4:18a (NIRV)

PARENT TIME:

Fear can keep us from doing God’s will. It can keep us on the sidelines. Ask God to give you and your kids a spirit of courage so you will not be afraid to get in the game.



OBJECT LESSON

ITEMS NEEDED:

An iPad with a game like Super Farm Heroes of Candy Crush

What's the surest way to make sure you never win a game of Candy Crush? Is it to not spend any money on the game? Is it to rush through our choices and crush candies at random? Is it making the wrong move at the start of the game?

The surest way to never win is to never play. If you're so afraid of losing that you never download or open the app, you'll never win. You'll always be on the sidelines watching other people play.

Some people are afraid of failure. Some people are afraid of risk. That cannot only keep you from playing a game like this, but from taking a chance and serving the Lord. Let's ask God to help us overcome our fears. Let God give you the courage to face rejection, disappointment, and even failure so He can get you in the game. God is counting on us to get in the game so that He can give us victory!