



Go and Occupy Ethan Fisher

Focus God is a promise-making and promise-keeping God. When God makes us a promise, the enemy will use fear, discouragement, and unbelief to try and keep us from walking in the fullness of that promise.

Fun What was your favorite memory or experience from this Christmas season?

Review Key Scriptures: Deuteronomy 1:20–35

1. Fear

The Israelites needed to see the promised land first, before they would believe. Twelve spies went into the promised land and explored it for 40 days. It was a sign of their unbelief and fear. The enemy uses fear to keep us from believing God's promises. We are to walk by faith, not by sight.

2. Discouragement

The people of Israel let discouragement steer them from God's promises. The spies came back with a fearful report and altered the destiny of the people. We need to be careful of who and what we listen to because discouragement distorts reality. We must remind ourselves of God's faithfulness.

3. Unbelief

Unbelief made the Israelites think God's gift of the promised land was something evil. A person who walks in unbelief will never look past life's difficulties. Unbelief can present itself as practical thinking, but the most practical thing we can do is trust the word of the living God. God calls us to intimacy with Him, not

activity. When we believe in His promises, we find rest.

Group Dynamics Idea Pastor Ethan Fisher shared the idea of making an “I Want to Quit” folder where you place words of hope, faith, and encouragement God has given you. Ask everyone to begin making an “I Want to Quit” folder for what they know God is calling them to do and/or for the faith walk they are on. Decide when everyone will complete their folders, then pick a group meeting when those who are comfortable can share what they put in their folders.

Discuss

1. Pastor Ethan Fisher said sight can often be the biggest enemy to our faith. How does focusing on our circumstances and the things around us make it difficult to have the faith we need?
2. Has there been a time in your life when you’ve stood in faith for something even though it was hard to see victory in the natural? What was the experience, and how did you keep your faith strong?
3. What is the difference between asking a question of God versus questioning God?
4. How has God helped you get through a season of discouragement? Why is it so important to be surrounded by other believers and encourage each other?
5. What are some promises God has given you or dreams He has put into your heart? How has the enemy used fear, discouragement, or unbelief to come against those dreams?
6. God wants us to trust Him even when we can’t see what the road ahead looks like. In what areas of your life do you need to have greater trust that God is in control?

Take Home

As we conclude, remember the following:

- Walk by faith, not by sight.
- When you feel discouraged, connect with other believers and focus on God’s promises.
- Don’t allow unbelief to steal God’s dream for your life.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank You for the promise of the Holy Spirit and Your promise that You will never forsake us. Please give us the faith and confidence to know You are always by our side. Help us to resist discouragement and unbelief, and strengthen us in our faith. We choose to walk by faith and not by sight. In Jesus' name, Amen.

New Leader Tip

As a leader, it is easy to get focused on the logistics of overseeing a group. Even though that is important, never forget the power of prayer. Prayer should be your starting place for everything. When you feel the burdens of the people in your group, pray. When you need wisdom and insight, pray. When you need anything at all, pray. Remember to stay in prayer as a leader.