

Courageous Living Study Session # 1

(Need name tags; Spirit of the Living God lyrics, TV/ DVD player, or projector with screen to show video clips, COURAGEOUS DVD, bring chain, Resolution Book, Bible, CCC)

Opening Song: Spirit Of The Living God

Opening Prayer: Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be

Today's Theme for first Session is "COURAGEOUS CALLING"

Opening Icebreaker: INTRODUCTION OF MEN: Name, Marital Status, Family Status, Occupation, etc.

Pandemic: disease outbreak that is on a much larger scale than expected and covers a large geographic area, often crossing international borders and broader scope than an epidemic and often more threatening

Right now being a courageous man / father / grandfather / priest / son / brother / uncle is facing pandemic proportions

Right now being a CATHOLIC MAN / FATHER / GRANDFATHER / PRIEST / SON / BROTHER / UNCLE is facing pandemic proportions

Only 20% of Catholics now attend mass on a regular basis (1 out of every 5)

This absence of or lack of involvement from Catholic men has drastic impacts to our communities and our world; Look at Chain; only as strong as its weakest link

The solution is getting back to or finding out for the first time how to be the man God has CALLED us to be. How to Listen to the call, and how to respond to that call.

Over the next 4 months and with God's help most importantly, we will be able to do just that!

Before we begin, we have some reminders:

BRING YOUR MATERIALS: Every month we encourage you to bring your Bibles, books (Resolution), and notebooks needed for successful participation in our groups. We also ask that you bring yourself and your willingness to be transformed by God's Holy Spirit.

CONFIDENTIALITY : one of the hallmarks of our Men of St. Joseph groups;

The goal is for all of us to share and open up about what is going on in our lives and how our hearts are changing. We can only do that if we are reminded that what's said here stays here. Not to wives, not to mothers, not to children, not to anyone!!!!

RESPECT: This group is about supporting one another and most often we think that support should come in the form of helping solve another's problem; this group is different... this group is about LISTENING MORE (James 1:19 says be quick to listen and slow to speak). Listening is a key to respect.

PREPARATION: If asked to... please make sure you prepare in advance; fully answer questions and put as much effort into this group as you hope to get out of it. Please attend each monthly meeting for not only your benefit but for the benefit of those whom you will be listening to, praying for, and supporting.

ACCOUNTABILITY: We are all to be accountable to one another, as noted in the movie, we are doubly accountable for now we are learning about how our God wants us to live and will hold us to a high standard.

Now to today's lesson!

COURAGEOUS CALLING

Have you ever heard the name Rafael Peralta? Corporal Adam Morrison of the United States Marine Corps certainly has. On November 15, 2004, Rafael Peralta—a member of Morrison's unit—saved his life and "every marine in that room."

Their unit had been cleansing Fallujah, Iraq, of terrorists "house by house" for seven days straight. That morning they entered a home and cleared the front rooms only to find a locked door on the left side. Sergeant Peralta opened the door to be met with gunfire from 3 terrorists with AK-47's. Peralta, alive but severely injured and lying on the floor in the doorway, noticed a grenade rolling toward him. He grabbed it and tucked it under his abdomen. When it exploded, he died, but the rest of his troop survived.

Peralta was a 25 year old Mexican immigrant who enlisted in the Marines the day he received his green card. Leaving his parents for Iraq, he signed up to serve on the front lines. His bedroom at home contained three items on its walls: a copy of the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and Peralta's certificate of graduation from boot camp.

His heroic act was foreshadowed by a note he wrote to his younger brother, saying, "Be proud of me, bro... and be proud of being an American." Those who know Rafael Peralta can indeed be proud.

It takes courage to enlist and sign up for front line duty in an ongoing war. It takes courage to risk and voluntarily end your life for others and the perseverance of the mission. On the military battlefield, freedom is at stake. On the spiritual battlefield, our families are at stake and in danger. Our homes are under intense pressure and will become casualties unless we each answer the call to stand and fight for them.

In Ephesians 5:25 – 26, St. Paul writes, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and handed himself over for her to sanctify her..."

(in this case we can substitute Man of God for Husbands and Church community / family for wives)

We are called to constantly die to ourselves, daily, for the benefit of those under our care. We are called to die in order to sanctify them or make them holy!!!

MOVIE CLIP # 1 (Courageous DVD 0:00 – 3:25): Carjacking

Small Group Discussion Questions 1: (10 Minutes)

- 1.) What were your thoughts while you watched that opening scene of the movie?
- 2.) Before you realized Nathan's Objective, did you find yourself agreeing with his actions, or were you hoping that he would give up.
- 3.) How did you feel once you realized what Nathan was fighting for? Would you call his actions courageous? Why or why not?

- 4.) Describe the most dangerous situation in which you ever found yourself. Would you react the same way now as you did then? Or looking back, do you wish you had responded differently? Was your safety all that was at stake, or was someone else involved?
- 5.) What scares you the most about the life stages of the children in your life? If you don't have kids, what concerns do you have about the possibility of one day being a parent or what concerns do you have for those you know who have children?
- 6.) What 3 things do you think most threaten your family today (domestic family or extended family)?
- 7.) What sacrifices are you willing to make so these threats don't harm or destroy it? How does courage help us make changes?

SCRIPTURE STUDY: Joshua 1: 1-9

Moses led the people out of slavery, in Egypt, into and through the desert for 40 years. Nearing the end of his life, Moses was to appoint Joshua as the new leader of the people who would take them into the promised land. Joshua was called by God and was filled with the spirit. God was commissioning him for even greater service:

Joshua 1: 1- 9 → What word or phrase speaks to your heart while listening to this reading?

(Choose a reader)

Divine Promise of Assistance.

1 After Moses, the servant of the LORD, had died, the LORD said to Moses' aide Joshua, son of Nun: **2** * Moses my servant is dead. So now, you and the whole people with you, prepare to cross the Jordan to the land that I will give the Israelites. **3** ^a Every place where you set foot I have given you, as I promised Moses. **4** * All the land of the Hittites, from the wilderness and the Lebanon east to the great river Euphrates and west to the Great Sea, will be your territory. ^b**5** No one can withstand you as long as you live. As I was with Moses, I will be with you: ^cI will not leave you nor forsake you. **6** Be strong and courageous, so that you may give this people possession of the land I swore to their ancestors that I would give them. **7** ^d Only be strong and courageous, being careful to observe the entire law which Moses my servant enjoined on you. Do not swerve from it either to the right or to the left, that you may succeed wherever you go. **8** Do not let this book of the law depart from your lips. Recite it by day and by night, ^e that you may carefully observe all that is written in it; then you will attain your goal; then you will succeed. **9** I command you: be strong and courageous! Do not fear nor be dismayed, for the LORD, your God, is with you wherever you go. ***The Word of The Lord.***

THANKS BE TO GOD

Small Group Discussion Questions 2: (10 minutes)

- 1.) In this Scripture passage, Notice how many times God uses the phrase "courageous." Why might Joshua have been afraid? Why is courage a key to being a strong leader?
- 2.) What did God promise Joshua in verses 3, 7, and 9? What did God require of Joshua in verses 6 – 9?
- 3.) What did God say was the key to success in verse 8?
- 4.) If you knew God was commanding you to do something, was going to bless you if you did it, and would always be with you helping you to succeed, would you be more courageous?

- 5.) How does this reading pertain to our lives? Who are we in this story? What is God calling us to?
- 6.) Is there something God has already told you to do for which you need to take courage, trust Him, and obey?

Saintly Calling: Each month we will focus on the life of a saint that ties into our teaching for the day. This saint was born in Italy, in 1182 with the name of Giovanni di Pietro di Bernadone. He was born to a rich merchant couple who imported luxurious fabrics. His parents thought he would also become a successful fabric merchant. Instead, he decided to join the second crusade and had a fancy suit of armor made for himself. He was very much into himself and his riches. While out in the war, he had a vision and the Lord was sending him back home. When he arrived there he faced the jeers of his neighbors, who thought of him as a coward. He was undeterred and turned away from the war to peace and vowed that he would await a further sign from God.

This saint did have another “calling” from God who told him to repair His church. He thought that God meant this literally so he began to rebuild the San Damiano church where he had been praying, piece by piece. But God meant that he was to rebuild the whole church... to rebuild the whole Catholic faith. He preached about humility, poverty, simplicity, and prayer to everyone, even the birds and the other animals. He started an order of Franciscan Friars that carries on his humble teachings and mission to this day. His name is.... Francis of Assisi

Catechism of The Catholic Church (CCC) Readings: I. The life of man - to know and love God

1 God, infinitely perfect and blessed in himself, in a plan of sheer goodness freely created man to make him share in his own blessed life. For this reason, at every time and in every place, God draws close to man. He **calls** man to seek him, to know him, to love him with all his strength. He **calls** together all men, scattered and divided by sin, into the unity of his family, the Church. To accomplish this, when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son as Redeemer and Saviour. In his Son and through him, he invites men to become, in the Holy Spirit, his adopted children and thus heirs of his blessed life.

2 So that this **call** should resound throughout the world, Christ sent forth the apostles he had chosen, commissioning them to proclaim the gospel: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age." Strengthened by this mission, the apostles "went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that attended it."

3 Those who with God's help have welcomed Christ's **call** and freely responded to it are urged on by love of Christ to proclaim the Good News everywhere in the world. This treasure, received from the apostles, has been faithfully guarded by their successors. All Christ's faithful are **called** to hand it on from generation to generation, by professing the faith, by living it in fraternal sharing, and by celebrating it in liturgy and prayer.

Large Group Discussion; final comments;

Next Meeting: _____

Next Steps:

Week 1: Scripture Study for Home

Live at Home Section

Appendix 6 and 7 from Resolution for Men Book,

Week 2: Read Introduction of Resolution for Men Book

Week 3: Read Chapter 1 of Resolution for Men book; privately answer Discussion Questions pg 251

Week 4: Read Chapter 2 of Resolution for Men book; privately answer Discussion Questions pg 251

Scripture Study for Home: Joshua 1: 12 – 18

- 1.) How did the response of the people of Israel toward Joshua confirm God's call in his life?
- 2.) What did the people of Israel promise to do? How did the requirements of God in Joshua's leadership translate to the lives of the people?
- 3.) Compare Joshua 1: 7-8 with Joshua 1: 16 – 18. What connections do you see?
- 4.) What calling do we need to be more obedient to in our lives? Faithful man of God? Husband? Father? Son? Brother? Friend? Worker?

LIVE IT AT HOME:

We are a people who value measurements in life. We get grades as children and seek merit raises as adults. Measurements are useful tools.

God's call to leadership for Joshua was also a call for him to commit to read and dwell on God's Word (Joshua 1:8). In this study you will be considering your personal commitment to God's Word. Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being *completely committed* and 1 being *walking far from God*, and answer, "Why did I give myself that rating?" This is for your own understanding and is not to be shared with anyone.

1 2 3 4 5 Courage To Follow God's Word 6 7 8 9 10

Why did I give myself that rating?

1 2 3 4 5 Obedience to God's Word 6 7 8 9 10

Why did I give myself that rating?

1 2 3 4 5 Meditation On / Reading Of Scripture 6 7 8 9 10

Why did I give myself that rating?

1 2 3 4 5 Success As A Follower Of Christ 6 7 8 9 10

Why did I give myself that rating?

*What kind of commitment to Christ do my children or family see in me?
What kind of sacrifices am I making to help my family obey God?*

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BRING YOUR MATERIALS:

RESPECT:

ACCOUNTABILITY:

CONFIDENTIALITY :

PREPARATION:

COURAGEOUS CALLING

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Small Group Discussion Questions 2:

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