

(This is written to give you good things to enjoy, because look again at what Paul told Timothy (1 Tim 6:17-18)! I think he was thinking of us at the time: **17 Instruct those who are rich in the present age not to be conceited and not to put their hope in the uncertainty of wealth, but in God, WHO RICHLY PROVIDES ALL THINGS TO ENJOY. 18 Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, and to be generous and ready to share...**) The following ice breaker is just a starter for your group. The message comes after the second bar. Please enjoy!)

CROWD BREAKER Have you ever been skiing? Share a story, or say what skiing does for you? What is your favorite sport, winter or summer? Take a moment to pray for Ukraine.

Note: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our hearts...and guide our discussions. **PLEASE PRE-READ THESE NOTES AND CHOOSE THE DIRECTION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR GROUP. The purpose is to unite, not divide; to proclaim fearlessly the freedom the gospel brings. Any part of these notes might be appropriate as a crowd breaker for your own group. The goal is to create memories from Sunday that will serve for a long time. BE COGNIZANT OF YOUR GROUP'S TIME AND BE SENSITIVE! Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study. This study is also a great devotion, taken slowly through the week.**

Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions raised by Charlie's message from this Sunday. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **The purpose is to minister to one another.**

Let's look first at the Psalm Charlie chose:

Psalm 34: **1** I will bless the LORD at all times.

His praise will always be on my lips.

Charlie says, "Not just on Sundays...always." **How does that work? Do you have a technique that you find yourself using?**

2 My soul boasts in the LORD;

let the oppressed hear and rejoice. **Do you have a testimony you can share, where you were in a conversation, and your testimony made another rejoice?**

3 Magnify the LORD with me;

let us exalt His name together. **What do you do when you magnify something? Have you ever magnified your problems? What happens when God becomes bigger than the problems?**

41 sought the LORD, and He answered me;
He delivered me from all my fears. **What does this testimony do for you? Why did the psalmist seek the Lord in the first place? How does magnifying God in the face of the fears seem like a reasonable suggestion?**

Think of Charlie's testimony of skiing. How can one look down a steep mountain slope, not even able to see the mountainside from the top of the run, and feel no fear? How do you get to that point? What are the different factors involved?

Look up Mark 5:35 When that evening came, He said to His disciples, "Let us cross to the other side." **36** After they had dismissed the crowd, they took Jesus with them, since He was already in the boat. And there were other boats with Him.

37 Soon a violent windstorm came up, and the waves were breaking over the boat, so that it was being swamped. **38** But Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on the cushion. So they woke Him and said, "Teacher, don't You care that we are perishing?"

39 Then Jesus got up and rebuked the wind and the sea. "Silence!" He commanded. "Be still!" And the wind died down, and it was perfectly calm.

40 "Why are you so afraid?" He asked. "Do you still have no faith?"

41 Overwhelmed with fear, they asked one another, "Who is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?" **Why didn't the calming of the storm calm their fears? Is this now a different fear? What are they afraid of now? Why did Jesus ask why they were so afraid? (What had he said to them in verse 35? What confidence could they reasonably have?) Did Jesus expect them to still the storm?**

Look up psalm 107:27 They reeled and staggered like drunkards,
and all their skill was useless.

28 Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble,
and He brought them out of their distress.

29 He calmed the storm to a whisper,
and the waves of the sea were hushed.

30 They rejoiced in the silence,
and He guided them to the harbor they desired. **Is it possible that Jesus had foreseen this moment? How often had the disciples sung this song together in synagogue or in even in the boats at night?**

Charlie says, "Fear is sometimes rooted in the known, and sometimes in the unknown?"

Where was the fear of the disciples rooted?

Recite Psalm 23 together: What do you know about walking through the Valley of the Shadow of Death? Why will you fear no evil? What's another good reason for the disciples not to fear? Was God with them? How would they know this?

Charlie asks, "How does your fear govern your life?" **Can you answer him? Tell of a moment of great fear you've experienced. What did you do?**

Charlie says, "Your fear ends as your faith increases. There's now doubt about it."

How does that work? Look up Isaiah 41: 10. ¹⁰Do not fear, for I am with you;

do not be afraid, for I am your God.

I will strengthen you; I will surely help you;

I will uphold you with My right hand of righteousness

How does this help?

Charlie asks, "What do you do when fear overwhelms? Just let Jesus Christ walk with you. But how do you do that? How do you grab His hand? You pray. You root yourself solidly in His Word." **How do you do that?** "You simply worship." **How do you do that?**

"If you're in fear don't be afraid to grab a worship song and just let it go." **Any testimonies?**

What did you think as Charlie retold the story of his own bout with cancer? Any testimonies? What if you had to take a test every three months?

Look up Matthew 9: 24 So Jesus went with him, and a large crowd followed and pressed around Him. ²⁵And a woman was there who had suffered from bleeding for twelve years. ²⁶She had borne much agony under the care of many physicians and had spent all she had, but to no avail. Instead, her condition had only grown worse. **Have you ever heard of this happening today? Why did she spend everything she had on physicians? (This is an important question. Please be careful. What did she desire more than her life's savings? Is it OK to want to be healed?)**

²⁷When the woman heard about Jesus, she came up through the crowd behind Him and touched His cloak. ²⁸For she kept saying, "If only I touch His garments, I will be healed." ²⁹Immediately her bleeding stopped, and she sensed in her body that she was healed of her affliction. **What do you think inspired the woman? Does Psalm 34 apply here? Why did she seek the Lord in the first place? How does faith come? Why did she "keep on saying" it? What was the result of her confession? What exactly did Jesus do to contribute to her healing? What is the only thing she did? Can it be that simple?**

30At once Jesus was aware that power had gone out from Him. Turning to the crowd, He asked, "Who touched My garments?" **Why did Jesus ask the question? Again, what did Jesus do to contribute to her healing?**

31His disciples answered, "You can see the crowd pressing in on You, and yet You ask, 'Who touched Me?'"

32But He kept looking around to see who had done this. **33**Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him trembling in fear, and she told Him the whole truth. **Why could He not just find her?**

34"Daughter," said Jesus, "your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be free of your affliction." **What healed the woman? (Scribes note: A Jewish woman with an issue of blood for twelve years is unclean and restricted from society for the length of her issue of blood. Notice her courage.) What effect do you think it had on the woman when Jesus called her "Daughter?" Think of their relative ages. What do Jesus' words add? Why is it encouraging to know that faith drew healing from Jesus before He even moved toward her? How does she become His daughter? How does that help you pray?**

How important is it to not be a slave to fear? Are you afraid to share your faith? Look up John 14:25-27: 25All this I have spoken to you while I am still with you. **26**But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have told you. **27**Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled; do not be afraid. **How do we procure this peace? What is the cost? What do you do when your heart is troubled? Why is this a good word to turn to?**

Where is your heart when worship is happening? Do you ever get distracted? How can you overcome that distraction? Does worship help you? How?
