

# FEARLESS CONVERSATION™

IS GOD IN  
CONTROL OF  
MY LIFE?

DISCUSSIONS FROM JOSHUA,  
RUTH, AND ESTHER

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

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Loveland, CO

**Group**  
Real. Bold. Love.



## Group resources really work!

This Group resource incorporates our R.E.A.L. approach to ministry. It reinforces a growing friendship with Jesus, encourages long-term learning, and results in life transformation, because it's:

**Relational**—Learner-to-learner interaction enhances learning and builds Christian friendships.

**Experiential**—What learners experience through discussion and action sticks with them up to 9 times longer than what they simply hear or read.

**Applicable**—The aim of Christian education is to equip learners to be both hearers and doers of God's Word.

**Learner-based**—Learners understand and retain more when the learning process takes into consideration how they learn best.

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## Fearless Conversation: Is God in Control of My Life?

Discussions from Joshua, Ruth, and Esther

### Participant Guide

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Fearless Conversation adult Sunday school curriculum is created by the amazing adult ministry team at Group. Contributing writers for this quarter are:

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10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

22 21 20 19 18 17 16 15

# CONTENTS

<b>Lesson 1:</b> Does God expect <i>me</i> to be strong and courageous? (Joshua 1:1-9)	7
<b>Lesson 2:</b> Why are imperfect people part of God's plan? (Joshua 2:1-21)	13
<b>Lesson 3:</b> Why does God's plan seem so complicated? (Joshua 6:1-21)	20
<b>Lesson 4:</b> How does my sin impact others? (Joshua 7:1, 19-26)	28
<b>Lesson 5:</b> How can we live with integrity in a world that doesn't? (Joshua 9:3-21)	35
<b>Lesson 6:</b> Why would God protect lawbreakers? (Joshua 20:1-9)	42
<b>Lesson 7:</b> How do my relationships affect my walk with God? (Joshua 23:6-16)	49
<b>Lesson 8:</b> Why does God use tragedy as part of his plan? (Ruth 1:6-18)	55
<b>Lesson 9:</b> Are my actions alone enough to let others know I'm a Christian? (Ruth 2:1-13)	63
<b>Lesson 10:</b> What is a redeemer, and what does this have to do with me today? (Ruth 4:1-12)	70
<b>Lesson 11:</b> When is it okay to hide my faith? (Esther 2:8-20)	77
<b>Lesson 12:</b> How far should I go to right a wrong? (Esther 4:8-17)	83
<b>Lesson 13:</b> How do I know God is in control? (Esther 7)	90

# HERE'S WHAT A LESSON LOOKS LIKE

**Your leader will guide each lesson through four sections:**

## GREETING

Make new friends and start the conversation as the topic of the week is introduced.

## GROUNDING

This is where you read the Scripture for the week. The Bible content is always provided here in the participant guide. After hearing God's Word read aloud, you'll have the opportunity to follow the inductive study method of writing down first responses, questions, thoughts, or ideas that are sparked by the Bible reading.

## GRAPPLING

Here's where the conversation deepens. You'll find questions that are intentionally challenging to answer. These won't have easy answers and you won't have a fill-in-the-blank option. Everyone will wrestle with the questions that the lesson provides, as well as their own questions that they're wondering about. The leader will ask God to guide the conversation—and you can join in that prayer! Remember to treat others with respect during these conversations, even if you don't agree with them. Listen first. Speak second.



# GROWING

Here's where the personal application comes in. You'll have the chance to reflect on what God's Word, as shared in this lesson, means to you for your own life and determine what your personal response is.

**Throughout each lesson you'll also find two other helps:**

## **BEHIND THE SCENES**

These sections of commentary and notes from Bible scholars will give you additional context into history, language, culture, and other relevant information. You can read these sections ahead of time or during the lesson—whichever works best for you.

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## **GOING DEEPER**

These tips will help you be a great conversationalist. They remind you how to keep a conversation going, how to be a better listener, and how to be respectful even if you don't agree with someone.

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## **FINAL TIP:**

Have a sense of divine anticipation. Approach each class with a heart full of anticipation over what God might do that day. God is alive and present with you and your class. Always prepare by praying, asking God to help you see his hand at work in the conversation. Trust God to show up and show you and others in the class exactly where he wants the conversation to go!

## **LESSON 2: WHY ARE IMPERFECT PEOPLE PART OF GOD'S PLAN?**

### **GREETING**

**You have run out of gas on a deserted road. A stranger has offered to drive to a gas station 10 minutes away and bring back some gas for your car. If you had no other choice, which of the following persons would you most likely agree to let them help you?**

- A. A greasy-haired, bling-wearing used-car salesman**
- B. A meth-addled woman of uncertain age**
- C. A pot-bellied, cigar-smoking U.S. Congressman**
- D. A profanity-spewing goth girl covered with tattoos and piercings**
- E. A bearded, swarthy man speaking with a heavy foreign accent**

# G R O U N D I N G

## BEHIND THE SCENES

Jericho was a city-state in Canaan with its own king. The city covered an area of about 8 or 9 acres. Based on evidence found, some archaeologists believe the city had double walls about 15 feet apart protecting the city.

### God's Word: Joshua 2:1-21

<sup>1</sup>Then Joshua son of Nun secretly sent two spies from Shittim. "Go, look over the land," he said, "especially Jericho." So they went and entered the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there.

<sup>2</sup>The king of Jericho was told, "Look, some of the Israelites have come here tonight to spy out the land."<sup>3</sup> So the king of Jericho sent this message to Rahab: "Bring out the men who came to you and entered your house, because they have come to spy out the whole land."

<sup>4</sup>But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. She said, "Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they had come from."<sup>5</sup> At dusk, when it was time to close the city gate, they left. I don't know which way they went. Go after them quickly. You may catch up with them."<sup>6</sup> (But she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them under the stalks of flax she had laid out on the roof.)<sup>7</sup> So the men set out in pursuit of the spies on the road that leads to the fords of the Jordan, and as soon as the pursuers had gone out, the gate was shut.

<sup>8</sup>Before the spies lay down for the night, she went up on the roof<sup>9</sup> and said to them, "I know that the Lord has given you this land and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you."<sup>10</sup> We have heard how the Lord dried



up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed. <sup>11</sup> When we heard of it, our hearts melted in fear and everyone's courage failed because of you, for the Lord your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below.

<sup>12</sup> "Now then, please swear to me by the Lord that you will show kindness to my family, because I have shown kindness to you. Give me a sure sign <sup>13</sup> that you will spare the lives of my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them—and that you will save us from death."

<sup>14</sup> "Our lives for your lives!" the men assured her. "If you don't tell what we are doing, we will treat you kindly and faithfully when the Lord gives us the land."

<sup>15</sup> So she let them down by a rope through the window, for the house she lived in was part of the city wall. <sup>16</sup> She said to them, "Go to the hills so the pursuers will not find you. Hide yourselves there three days until they return, and then go on your way."

<sup>17</sup> Now the men had said to her, "This oath you made us swear will not be binding on us <sup>18</sup> unless, when we enter the land, you have tied this scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you have brought your father and mother, your brothers and all your family into your house. <sup>19</sup> If any of them go outside your house into the street, their blood will be on their own heads; we will not be responsible. As for those who are in the house with you, their blood will be on our head if a hand is laid on them. <sup>20</sup> But if you tell what we are doing, we will be released from the oath you made us swear."

<sup>21</sup> "Agreed," she replied. "Let it be as you say."

So she sent them away, and they departed. And she tied the scarlet cord in the window.

## What questions do you have? What caught your attention?

Write down those initial thoughts and questions here.

### BEHIND THE SCENES

The Hebrew word in the book of Joshua used to describe Rahab could mean “innkeeper.” But in the New Testament, the writers of James 2:25 and Hebrews 11:31 use the Greek word that explicitly means “prostitute.”

Rahab could have been a common prostitute or a prostitute in the fertility cult, which was an important aspect of Canaanite religion. Whatever the precise nature of her occupation, two strange men could enter her household without looking as conspicuous as they would at other households.

## GRAPPLING

### GOING DEEPER

Be sensitive to the various backgrounds of the people in your group. Some may have very different experiences from you, but God just may use them to teach you something big!

**The Israelite spies received help from a surprising source. What do you think is most scandalous about Rahab? Her gender? (Female in a male-centric culture.) Her occupation? (Prostitute.) Her ethnic identity? (Canaanite.) Her society's religious practices? (Worship of the pagan god Baal.) Others?**

**Rahab is praised in Hebrews 11 for her great faith. What did Rahab say in Joshua 2 to make the spies trust her and justify her place in the Hebrews' list of heroes of the faith?**

**Rahab is praised in James 2 for her acts of faith. What did Rahab do in Joshua 2 to make the spies trust her and justify James' mention of her?**

## **BEHIND THE SCENES**

Hebrews 11 is known as the Faith Hall of Fame, listing people throughout the Bible who have shown great faith in God. Rahab is one of those listed—one of only two women! (The other is Sarah, the wife of Abraham, who is the father of the Israelite people.)

In James 2:25, Rahab is mentioned as an example of someone whose faith is proven by her deeds. The other person in this chapter praised for great faith is Abraham. James says that both were considered righteous because of their faith that led to deeds.

**Why do you think Rahab helped the Israelites? What clues in the passage tell you this?**

**What does Joshua 2 say to you about how God works through people to accomplish his purposes in the world?**

INTERESTING THOUGHTS SPARKED BY OTHERS  
IN MY GROUP:

## BEHIND THE SCENES

In Matthew 1:5 we read something pretty amazing. In the list of Jesus' genealogy, Rahab is listed as an ancestor of Jesus! Rahab is the grandmother of Boaz—the great and honorable man we read of in the book of Ruth who was the great-grandfather of King David! Joseph, Jesus' earthly father, came from the lineage of David.



# GROWING

**Who are our “Rahabs” today? Who are people—Christian or not—through whom God is working?**

Write your ideas here.

**Put yourself in Rahab’s place and in the Israelite spies’ place.  
What does Joshua 2 say to you about your role in God’s mission?**

- **As Rahab, what does this story tell you about God’s willingness to accept and use anyone, regardless of background, who wants to serve God?**

Record those ideas here.

- **As the Israelite spies, what have you learned about recognizing God’s grace at work in the world through people you don’t expect—and accepting them?**

Write your thoughts here.