**Live in Community**

Small Group Study

**Volume Overview**

**Believe Boldly**

Be on guard. Stand firm in the faith. Be courageous. Be strong. And do everything with love. ([1 Corinthians 16:13–14](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Co16.13-14))

*The gospel message is shocking to many, shocking because of its implications. God has made himself known to us and promised to place His Spirit into our heart. We have been given direct access to Him. The Bible encourages us to come to Him with boldness. Our boldness in approaching Him is not from our words or our achievements. Instead, it’s based on God’s promises. So we ask, remembering His power and faithfulness. And we encourage those around us to do the same. Believe boldly.*

**Session Overview**

**Ask God**

**Biblical Encounter:** Blind Bartimaeus Calls to Jesus for Healing ([Mark 10:46–52](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mk10.46-52))

**Outcome:** Boldly petition God even if others object or discourage you.

*In this session, we’ll explore a blind man’s life-changing experience to consider what it means to believe boldly. The longer we walk with God, the more we realize that He’s faithful and trustworthy. As we read what happened in the Bible and experience what He does in our own heart and life, our faith is strengthened. In time, we learn we can believe boldly even when faced with discouragement from others.*

|  |
| --- |
| First time leading *Live* for Adults? Check out the [Facilitator Guide](https://0b769b0ed3569ef9d18b-f88d8272f61086866d50d048b43ef630.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/sites/biblengagementproject/Listen_Facilitator_Guide.pdf). |

To access session content and videos from a computer, visit: [BibleEngagementProject.com/downloads](https://bibleengagementproject.com/downloads)

**Engage**

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**Are you the kind of person who loves or hates to be the center of attention? |

Many people find it difficult to be the center of attention. Some people love it when all eyes turn on them, but most people feel pretty uncomfortable and hope to get out of the situation as quickly as possible. Even worse is when the attention being given is negative, and we find ourself on the opposite side of an opinion than those around us hold. It’s encouraging to know that God can help us grow strong in our faith even when we’re dealing with opposition. We can become people who can withstand discouragement. We can learn to be courageous and strong, and to stand firm in our faith.

**Watch**

As we watch this video, think about your answer to this question: Do you find it easy or difficult to admit to Jesus that you need something from Him?



|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**Do you find it easy or difficult to admit to Jesus that you need something from Him? |

**Consider What the Bible Says**

Imagine being blind in a time and a culture without technology or social resources. Life would be very difficult and supporting yourself or a family would be nearly impossible. It would be a miracle to encounter Someone who could do something about your situation and turn your circumstances around.

**Did You Know?**

|  |
| --- |
| *In the first century, it was not uncommon in Jewish communities for people to call out to their powerful God for healing. Many faithful men of God, referred to as the sages of Israel, were active in powerful and effective healing ministry in the first century. This created an atmosphere that paved the way for people to feel comfortable in crying out to Jesus, Peter, Paul, and others so that God’s wonder could serve as a testament to their preaching and teachings.* |

**Living With the Impossible**

Read [Mark 10:46](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mk10.46).

Bartimaeus was sitting by the roadside on the way out of the city of Jericho. He likely did this every single day. He was blind and lived in a time and place that made his situation seem impossible. There was no braille, computer-assisting devices, or advanced optometry—nothing to make his life better or easier. His difficulty impacted every area of his life. He sat and hoped that people would be generous as they passed by, just so he could live. He’d learned to live with an impossible situation, trying to make the best of it, like so many people do today. We live with illness, broken relationships, discouragement, and destructive ways of thinking, just trying to make the best of it. We can easily settle into thinking life will never change.

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**How can impossible situations impact our daily life similar to what Bartimaeus experienced because he was blind? |

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**What would you do if you were in his situation and knew Jesus was nearby? |

**Bartimaeus Called to Jesus**

Read [Mark 10:47–48](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mk10.47-48).

Bartimaeus sat outside the city of Jericho, which long before had been a part of a seemingly impossible situation for his whole nation ([Joshua 6](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jos6)). Perhaps he had heard that story and remembered what an incredible thing God did back then. Maybe he had heard other stories from the past about the great power of God. He had probably already heard about Jesus, because as soon as Jesus came near, Bartimaeus began trying to get His attention. He didn’t just calmly ask; he began shouting at Jesus for help and mercy.

When the people around him heard Bartimaeus’s shouts, they told him to be quiet. Sometimes people around us are comfortable with the status quo. They don’t want anyone to make a scene or to be too extreme about Jesus. But Bartimaeus must have heard what Jesus had said and done. Bartimaeus knew that if someone might help his impossible situation change, Jesus was the one. He wasn’t about to miss his chance, no matter what others did or said. He called out to Jesus, and Jesus heard him.

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**If you had been Bartimaeus, what do you think you might have done when everyone told you to be quiet? |

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**How can we keep our focus on Jesus when others make it difficult? |

Bartimaeus’s efforts were rewarded. Not only did Jesus hear him, but He had the crowd call out to Bartimaeus to come to Him.

**Jesus Changed His Life**

Read [Mark 10:49–52](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mk10.49-52).

The voices from the crowd changed. At first, there were ones who had just told Bartimaeus to be quiet. Now, voices encouraged him to come to Jesus. Crowds often change their ways from one moment to the next. Basing our actions on what the crowd has to say isn’t ideal. When they said that Jesus was calling for Bartimaeus, he jumped to his feet and ran to Him. Somehow, Bartimaeus knew that Jesus had the ability to make his impossible hope possible. He boldly asked Jesus for his sight, and his life was never the same.

When we struggle to believe boldly, we can remember what Jesus told the crowd at another time: “Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you.” ([Matthew 7:7](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt7.7))

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**What questions would you have asked Bartimaeus about his life and experience? |

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**How do you think the crowd was impacted by what happened in Bartimaeus’s life? |

**Reflect**

**Boldly petition God even if others object or discourage you.**

The faith of Bartimaeus challenges us to grow in courage and boldness in our own faith. Bartimaeus had likely heard of Jesus’ teachings and miracles, and that likely gave him the faith to boldly ask Jesus for the impossible. Today, we have the Bible! And from it we can learn about all the miraculous things God did for some who have sought Him. We also have the benefit of our faith communities, where we can learn about the wonderful things God still does for people today. Knowing and seeing all that God has done, we can be encouraged to ask God boldly for things that seem impossible.

**Listen to God**

Let’s pause and listen to what God might want to say to us about what we have read and shared. Be silent for a few moments and reflect on the following questions. Respond to the one that most resonates with what God is saying to you now. Then complete the others during Day 1 of your devotion time this week.

**Personal Reflection Questions**

*Record your answers to the following questions in the space provided or in your personal journal.*

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**If Jesus came to your town today, what would you ask Him for? |

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**What have you heard about Jesus that gives you courage to believe and ask boldly? |

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**What situation in your life seems impossible? |

**Activate**

Learning to ask God boldly, especially when people or circumstances are discouraging us, takes time and experience. We can learn to bring all our cares and needs to God.

**Challenge**

In your family or with a close group of friends, compile a list of one or two prayer requests for each member of the group. Commit to pray for each other's needs each day this week. Then, meet again at the end of the week to discuss how God worked in each of the needs. When we ask God to help, He moves. When we pay attention to how often He actively helps in life, our faith is increased.

**Prayer Requests**

|  |
| --- |
| Note any requests from the group and pray together. Also remember to pray for them during the week. |

Learning to live boldly for God happens in community and also on our own. The devotions are designed for you to be able to spend some time this week studying the Bible on your own. Each devotion will look more closely at trusting God in spite of discouragement or pushback, and will help us learn to believe and ask God boldly.

**Live on Your Own**

*Before you begin each devotion, pray and ask God to speak to you through His Word. Record your answers to the following questions in the space provided or in your personal journal.*

**Day 1: Blind Bartimaeus Calls to Jesus for Healing**

Read [Mark 10:46–52](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mk10.46-52).

Look back over Live in Community and complete your responses to the Personal Reflection Questions. Plan how to complete the Activate component if you haven’t already done so. If time permits, reread the Scripture too.

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**What is God saying to you about boldly asking Him for what you need even if others object or discourage you? |

**Live on Your Own**

**Day 2: A Leader Asks God**

Read [Exodus 32:1–14](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ex32.1-14).

In this incredible passage, we see one man who interceded for a whole nation of people. Moses had led the Israelites out of their captivity in Egypt. After over a month of receiving God’s Law on a mountain, Moses came back to find the Israelites worshipping a statue of a calf. They had all seen God do amazing miracle after miracle. They had left Egypt with great wealth and health. They had crossed through the sea to safety while their enemies were destroyed. But over time, they seemed to forget the goodness of God and chose to worship a lifeless idol.

This Scripture gives us an unusual insight into the close relationship Moses had with God. God actually told Moses that He would wipe out the people and start over through Moses. But Moses wasn’t selfish or prideful, so he humbly asked God to spare the people from that total judgment and to remember the promises He had made to Abraham. Moses loved and trusted God so much that he boldly asked God to turn from His fierce anger and not bring total disaster on the people. Moses’s prayer impacted God himself. Its inclusion in the Bible helps us understand how God really hears when His people pray. God truly does want us to ask boldly, even if no one else does.

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**Why do you think the people went to worshipping an idol so quickly? |

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**How does this situation in the Bible challenge you to talk to God? |

**Live on Your Own**

**Day 3: A Wife Asks God**

Read [1 Samuel 1:1–20](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Sa1.1-20).

Hannah was suffering from deep shame and disappointment. She was one of two wives, but she couldn’t conceive. Hannah felt the sting of being taunted by her husband's other wife. Each time their family went to worship, her rival rubbed it in that she was the one who had children. It probably took an already demoralizing reality and made it worse for Hannah.

At one time, Hannah was deeply moved and crying out to God for a child. Her prayers were so intense that the priest even accused her of being drunk. Despite her challenging circumstances, Hannah trusted that God could change her situation. She asked God for a son and promised to dedicate the boy to Him. God responded to her prayer and remembered her. Hannah gave birth to her son, Samuel, who became a wise prophet and judge over Israel. Her willingness to boldly ask God for a child in the midst of discouragement caused her whole nation to be blessed.

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**How have you been discouraged by family or people close to you when you were boldly asking God for something? |

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**When has God met you in the middle of a discouraging situation? |

**Live on Your Own**

**Day 4: A Prophet Asks God**

Read [1 Kings 17:7–24](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Ki17.7-24).

The people of God had largely forgotten to love and serve Him. As a result, it appeared that they were seeing some of the things come true that God had warned them about ([Deuteronomy 28:15–24](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Dt28.15-24)). Elijah was a prophet who still listened to God and obeyed Him. He was the one who told the king and all the people that it would not rain for years because of their rebellion. Just as he said, the land experienced a terrible drought.

No rain meant no crops, and no crops in that day meant many people would starve. But God spared Elijah, a widow, and her son from starvation in a miraculous way. After God’s miraculous provision, everything seemed to be going great for the widow and her son until the woman’s son suddenly died of an illness. She seemed angry at God and Elijah. These circumstances threatened deep discouragement for the prophet.

Even in the midst of death, Elijah asked God to bring another miracle into that house. He’d seen God do many great things before, and he believed that nothing was impossible for Him. Elijah’s boldness and faith to ask God for the impossible kept light and truth burning for the whole nation during a time of great darkness and disobedience.

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**Which part of this story stirs you most deeply? |

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**When have you seen someone believe for something impossible? |

**Live on Your Own**

**Day 5: A Father Asks God**

Read [Mark 9:14–29](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mk9.14-29).

This man had a son who was in great danger of death from an evil spirit. The man had heard somewhere that Jesus might be able to help. But he could only find Jesus’ disciples, and they turned out to be no help at all! When Jesus joined His disciples, He helped the man learn that everything is possible for someone who believes.

The father was honest and confessed, “I do believe, but help me overcome my unbelief!” This is something so many of us can relate to. We do love and trust God, but sometimes circumstances discourage or scare us deeply. Jesus heard this man’s request for his son, and He saw the man’s faith. He met the man and his son where they were and delivered the boy from the evil spirit. Later Jesus taught His disciples (and us) that some things only come through prayer. We can be persistent ([Luke 18:1–8](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk18.1-8)) and bold in what we ask God. Jesus said so!

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**What do you think the disciples learned from this experience? |

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**How is God helping you overcome unbelief? |