

September 6, 2015

Standard LESSON  
RESOURCES

# SEEK<sup>®</sup> THE ABUNDANT LIFE



Be Bold

# Praying Boldly

by Joan Walker Hahn

Peter and John had walked with the Lord. They had been a part of His ministry from the beginning and had seen all of the signs and miracles Jesus had performed. They witnessed His death and resurrection. When they preached in the name of Jesus, they were speaking with firsthand knowledge and were giving eyewitness accounts. When the chief priests and elders charged them not to preach anymore in the name of Jesus, their reply was, “For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).

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## Pray boldly and speak boldly as God leads.

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The apostles were not making up stories. They were not talking about things that someone else had shared with them. They had personally experienced everything they were preaching. As believers, we may not have been on this earth when Christ was living in the flesh, but we have had a personal experience with Him. We don’t have to have some flowery, deep theological message to share. We can simply tell others about our personal relationship with the living Son of God. We can talk with others with boldness because we have met the Savior personally.

## Be Bold by Praying Personally

When we become a child of God, we have the ability to go before Him and commune with Him in prayer. God wants to have that one-on-one relationship with us. In Galatians 4:6 we are told, “And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” We don’t have to rely on someone to pray to our Father for us. We can go before Him face to face.

When we spend time in prayer, we praise God for who He is. One example of this is Acts 4:24, believers prayed, “Lord, thou are God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is.” They acknowledged God’s power to do “whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done” (v. 28).

We can be assured when we pray that the perfect will of God will direct our circumstances to fulfill His plan for our lives. We can pray remembering the things He has done for us. We can pray knowing He will hear our every word. And we can be confident that the future is in His hands.

## Be Bold by Praying Purposefully

After Peter and John shared their interrogation experience with the other believers, they all with one voice began to cry out to the Lord. They were unified in their prayer and were of the

same mind. They were praying for the same purpose.

God is there when we come together to pray in agreement over a specific request. Jesus said, “Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:19, 20).

The believers in Acts 4 began their prayer with praise. They knew that God, who had already told them of the persecutions they would face, was in control. They could rejoice in the fact that God was all-knowing. So they prayed for the power to be manifested in the works that were still being performed in the holy name of Jesus. They asked for boldness to continue to speak the truth of salvation.

We need to remember that nothing we face ever takes God by surprise. He knows what we will face and He knows what we need as we face those circumstances. For this reason we can cry out to Him in praise and ask for the boldness to continue the work He has for us to do. We can take comfort in the fact that we are not tackling any situation alone, but that He is with us and will strengthen us.

### **Be Bold by Praying Powerfully**

Not only do we have the right to come before our Heavenly Father, but we can “come boldly unto the throne of grace” (Hebrews 4:16). When we have had that personal encounter with Christ and call out to Him in

prayer, then His Holy Spirit within us is activated to fill us with the very power of God. We are told in 1 Corinthians 4:20, “For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.” The words we speak to others are not just words with nothing behind them. Our words of witness are backed up with the power of God to prove the truth of Christ.

Paul wrote, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Philippians 4:13). As we seek God’s face in prayer and strive to do His will, He will give us the words to speak with all boldness and power. The strength is His, not ours.

We can be bold because we have a personal relationship with our Lord. We can be bold as we join together with other believers in one accord. We can be bold because God fills us with the power to perform the plan He already has for us. Pray boldly and speak boldly as God leads.

*What aspects of God’s character encourage you to be bold in speaking to others about Him?*



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# Making Connections

by Karen Ward Robertson

Fear stirs in my heart at the very idea of evangelism. I know I'm not the only one who feels that way. I've heard many Christians express such a sentiment: "Be bold? I'm a new Christian. I wouldn't know where to start!" "Be bold? I've been a Christian for decades, but it's not my nature to be bold."

In spite of my fear, I have learned to pray, "Father, please open doors today for conversations that may lead to relationships. Remind me of what I know, and help me to see needs as You see them."

I intentionally pray for those who walk alongside me. I made a scrapbook journal that includes their pictures, lists of verses I pray for each of them, and their specific needs.

When someone close to me is struggling, I place her photo in my kitchen window where I am reminded to pray for her through the day. I let her know this so we're learning together the power of prayer.

I pray for God to cause me to bear Spirit-fruit in my life. Love motivates and gives me courage to seek out those who are lost or broken. Joy is a magnet, drawing others to me for conversation. Peace is a comfort to those who are bruised or broken.

Patience as I wait in line at the store provides a chance to encourage someone rushed and stressed. Kindness softens hearts for hearing the good

news, so I pray for creative ways to be kind. Goodness fills me with generosity and hope, urging me forward to become more and more like Jesus.

Faithfulness notices people who need a helping hand and an encouraging word. Gentleness causes me to take a step back and discern readiness for the gospel in an angry or hardened heart. Self-control means discipline for traveling long, hard roads for ministry.

One morning I stopped by the church where several young women were meeting together for lunch. I could sense awkwardness as I entered the church kitchen.

As they were sitting to eat, a young woman, recently released from prison, had stopped by the church for directions. Though she had walked several miles that morning, their conversation revealed she had many more to walk.

I immediately saw that she was uncomfortable and my friends were unsure what to say next.

"Have you had lunch?" I asked her. "I'm sure there is food to share. I haven't had lunch either. After lunch, I'd be glad to give you a ride." Quickly food was being distributed from individual sack lunches until both she and I had a lunch. The ice broken, we visited, and deeper conversation followed.

Later that week one of the young women in attendance said, "I'm so glad you dropped by. We wanted to

help Shannon, but we just didn't know where to start. I had been praying to know what to say and do. It seemed easy once you got there."

I try to find ways to connect with people. Fred is the man who welcomes me every time I walk into Walmart. I thanked him one day for his cheery attitude and asked him if he's a Christian. He responded that he believed in God as a child, but lost his faith during a tour of duty in war. I asked if I could buy him a cup of coffee, and we shared a cinnamon bun and our life stories.

I passed the home of a teenager every day on my evening walk. I noticed she was always alone. I started up a conversation that continued periodically through the weeks. I invited her into my house to eat scones on a fancy china plate, and I told her stories about Jesus. When it was time for her to leave, I handed her a bouquet of daisies to take home.

"I never had a tea party before," she told me. "Can we do it again?"

God has blessed me so much through my encounters that now I'm hooked. I want to reach out for Him all the time. I challenge you to step out of your comfort zone. Visit a widow. Take magazines to the nursing home and find a new friend. Introduce yourself to a neighbor. Invite that coworker's family for a hot dog and Oreo picnic.

God has a plan for your life. For me, His plan is an action adventure changing the world one person at a time.

*What keeps you from being bolder in reaching out to strangers?*

## Where You Live!

by Michael C. Mack

Questions and Activities for Small Groups Based on the International Sunday School Lesson Text.

### 1. What observable evidence do you have that God has heard your prayers?

#### Read Acts 4:23-31

2. How did these believers view God? Jesus? themselves?
3. How did the psalm quoted in the prayer relate to their recent and current circumstances?
4. What did the believers ask God to do in the midst of their current situation?
5. In what ways was the believers' prayer different from how people today often pray when in the midst of difficult life situations?
6. In what way(s) does this passage give you boldness in a situation you find yourself in right now?
7. If you were to pray about a difficult circumstance in your life as the believers did in this passage, how would you pray?

For more Small Group ministry resources visit [www.smallgroups.com](http://www.smallgroups.com).

# Speak Boldly

by Tammy Darling

When I am faced with sharing God's Word with nonbelievers, boldness is not in my vocabulary. While I'm confident in other areas, talking about my faith causes butterflies in my stomach.

I know that telling people about the Lord is important. I know that there are people in my life who are waiting for me to speak God's Word to them. I need boldness. I need the courage and conviction of the early Christians described in the book of Acts.

The believers prayed for boldness to share the gospel, knowing they would face hostile hearers. They received boldness by being filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:31).

God didn't call you and me to be spiritual invertebrates. No, we were born with physical backbones and were meant to live with spiritual backbone. Without spiritual backbone, we succumb to fear.

Elisha could speak and act with boldness because he saw with spiritual eyes. His faith enabled him to see that there was reality beyond what his physical eyes could perceive. When Elisha and his servant were trying to leave a city surrounded by an enemy army, the servant was afraid. Elisha told him, "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed . . . Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain

was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha" (2 Kings 6:16, 17).

Recognizing the ultimate reality of God's presence in our lives is where boldness is birthed. Ask God for boldness. Ask Him to open your eyes to the reality of the unseen forces that are backing you up. These are requests He loves to answer.

When Moses sent a dozen men to check out the promised land, 10 men returned with a fear-filled report. Their mistake was comparing themselves to the giants they saw with their physical eyes. Their boldness vanished along with their backbones.

Only Joshua and Caleb reported true reality. In their faith they looked not at the size of the giants they encountered, but at the power of their God. And as a result, Caleb had the boldness to say, "Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it" (Numbers 13:30).

Remember: What we see with our physical eyes is not the reality of the situation. Study Scripture. Learn the character of God. The more we do, the more true reality will sink in.

Any prayer for boldness will be answered with an opportunity to be bold. The Holy Spirit is with us. He is in us. He goes before us. But we still have to take a step of faith and act or speak or do whatever the situation calls for.

Stepping or speaking out in boldness may seem scary, but it also brings

blessings. There is amazing power in spiritual boldness, and God can change the lives of many people—all because we obey God’s call and trust Him with the outcome.

The Bible is full of people who eventually exhibited boldness. When God called Moses to lead the Hebrew slaves out of Egypt, Moses made excuses to get out of the job. But ultimately he boldly confronted Pharaoh, depending entirely on God through the process of liberation (Exodus 3–14).

Gideon was called by God to lead Israel against the marauding Midianites and defeat them. Gideon couldn’t see it happening. When God promised to be with him, Gideon was infused with courage and went boldly into battle (see Judges 6, 7).

Peter was anything but brave when he denied knowing Jesus three times (see Matthew 26). However, Peter went on to boldly and passionately preach at Pentecost, lead the church in Jerusalem, and stand up to the Sanhedrin.

Every day we have opportunities to be bold for Jesus. Realize that God is giving you an opportunity to respond with boldness and bravery.

With God, all things are possible (see Matthew 19:26). As we believe, call on His name, and trust in His character, we are infused with all the boldness we need.

God’s presence is far more real than anything we can see, hear, or touch. Receive it. Believe it. Act on it. It’s the ultimate reality.

*When has God given you boldness to speak for Him?*

## SEEK<sup>®</sup> Him Daily

### Monday, September 7

Rescuing the Weak

*Psalms 82*

### Tuesday, September 8

Living Blamelessly

*Psalms 26*

### Wednesday, September 9

Sharing Generously

*1 Timothy 5:11-19*

### Thursday, September 10

Sharing with All

*Isaiah 1:15-18*

### Friday, September 11

Sharing Troubles

*Philippians 4:1-14*

### Saturday, September 12

Sharing Out of Abundance

*Luke 3:10-16*

### Sunday, September 13

Sharing All Things

*Acts 4:34-5:10*

### Lesson for September 13

Sharing with Sincerity

*Acts 4:32-5:11*

## Key Verse

When they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness (Acts 4:31).

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Volume 139, No. 4

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## Praying for Boldness

### Acts 4:23-31

23 And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.

**24 And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is:**

25 Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?

**26 The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ.**

27 For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast

anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together,

**28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.**

29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,

**30 By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.**

31 And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.



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