

PRAXiS

What
are you
afraid of?

PRAXiS

HOW TO USE

This discussion guide is designed for you, leaders, to guide your group through this Praxis video series. This series is structured as a conversation based around engaging questions intended to promote thought-provoking discussion throughout each episode. When these questions pop up on the screen, hit pause and turn the question to the group. **Each episode includes the following:**

BIG IDEA

We highlight the big idea behind the episode, emphasizing key scriptures or quotes, to give you and your group an idea of what will be covered in the video. Feel free to share this before pressing play, or after to summarize what was taught into a concise thought.

SUPPORTING QUESTIONS

If the video question does not invite participation, use these questions to promote further interest. These questions are simply reworded to present the idea in a different way. We invite you to be creative and present the questions in a way that engages your group.

DISCUSS

The video questions are created to encourage conversation and to allow the formation of thoughts and ideas – inviting participants to wrestle with and begin sharing their beliefs and experiences. This is just the beginning. The discussion questions exist to go deeper and to invite more intimate and transformational conversation.

CONTEXT

IN A CHURCH OR LARGE GROUP SETTING

This guide is designed to be used by a leader, so begin by identifying those leaders and getting a guide into each of their hands. If you are watching the episodes with more than 20 people, we would advise identifying multiple leaders and having them focus on a section of the group. When the video questions arise, have them turn to their “small group” and discuss the questions openly. Time dependent, ask each smaller group to share with the larger group what was shared. This invites more people to share without the intimidation of a large group setting. Whether you keep these groups consistent from week to week, or you mix it up, remaining the same for the discussion portion of each episode will allow for greater depth and increased transparency.

IN A SMALL GROUP SETTING

Every leader in the room should have one of these guides prior to beginning the video. It can be helpful to identify one leader as the facilitator, and others as helpers. The facilitator can guide the video question time, with helpers stepping in as needed based on the direction of conversation. Come discussion time, gathering into small groups where one or two leaders oversee a small group can invite quieter participants to engage and allow for greater depth of conversation.

AS AN INDIVIDUAL

While this discussion guide is designed with group participation in mind, the content is something we believe is valuable for every individual. We advise watching these episodes with a pen in hand and paper before you. Have your Bible handy and get ready to pause the video. You get to take this at your pace! When Scripture is referenced, open your Bible and read along – when questions are asked, hit pause and write out your answer. If questions arise in your mind that you are unable to answer, write them down to ask later.

GET READY

Take a breath, the pressure is off. We are not asking you to teach, or to have the answer to every question. Your role is to guide, facilitate, but most importantly to **listen** and **invite**.

Invite questions. Invite conversation.

This discussion guide was created to provide direction for the conversation, but not to limit or harness the group. During the video, listen to what the participants say. Do not feel the need to answer the question yourself. Be comfortable with silence. Give it fifteen seconds before you use a supporting question. Let them think.

“When will I know when to press play again?” Trust me, you’ll know. Conversation will end, or you may even have to re-focus the group if they go down a rabbit trail. If a valuable question or topic is sparked during the video, write it down and say you will return as a group to it during the discussion time.

When it comes time for discussion, follow the pace of the group. Let them naturally guide the conversation around what content stuck out from the video, or what questions were sparked for them. You are not confined to the questions in this guide. Pick the ones that stand out to you or add your own. This time will look different for each group and that’s intentional.

Listen and Invite.

WHAT ARE YOU AFRAID OF?

THREE EPISODES | PRAXIS SERIES 4

BIG IDEA

Fear cripples us. Whether we can identify it's influence over us or not, it is there; because we are all afraid of something.

So, what are you afraid of?

Do you lose sleep at night thinking about the uncertainty of the future?

Does the latest mistake or failure you made ring in your mind on repeat, tormenting you?

Or do the thoughts and opinions of others write a dialogue that strips you of your confidence and self-image?

Regardless of what you're afraid of, this three-week series will help you discover the freedom that comes with your trust in Jesus in the face of fear.

WHAT ARE YOU AFRAID OF?

EPISODE 1 | WHAT IF I FAIL?

BIG IDEA

When you learn to focus your eyes on Jesus, the way you experience and view failure shifts. Step out in faith, and trust that Jesus will always have your back.

KEY TERMS & SCRIPTURE

Matthew 14:22-33: Immediately after this, Jesus insisted that his disciples get back into the boat and cross to the other side of the lake, while he sent the people home. After sending them home, he went up into the hills by himself to pray. Night fell while he was there alone. Meanwhile, the disciples were in trouble far away from land, for a strong wind had risen, and they were fighting heavy waves. About three o'clock in the morning Jesus came toward them, walking on the water. When the disciples saw him walking on the water, they were terrified. In their fear, they cried out, "It's a ghost!" But Jesus spoke to them at once. "Don't be afraid," he said. "Take courage. I am here! "Then Peter called to him, "Lord, if it's really you, tell me to come to you, walking on the water." "Yes, come," Jesus said.

So Peter went over the side of the boat and walked on the water toward Jesus. But when he saw the strong wind and the waves, he was terrified and began to sink. "Save me, Lord!" he shouted.

Jesus immediately reached out and grabbed him. "You have so little faith," Jesus said. "Why did you doubt me?" When they climbed back into the boat, the wind stopped. Then the disciples worshiped him. "You really are the Son of God!" they exclaimed.

SUPPORTING QUESTIONS

- **What's one new thing that you've tried lately?**
 - When is the last time you tried something new? What was it?
 - If you haven't tried something new, why not?

- **Do you have a moment like that? A moment where you feel like you totally blew it?**
 - When is the last time you totally messed something up?
 - When you reflect on your life, what would you consider your biggest failure or mistake?
- **We've all failed before. We can all be afraid of failing again. What are you afraid of failing?**
 - What is something you are avoiding doing or trying because of fear of failure?
 - How has fear of failure influenced your decision making?
- **What are some other practical ways to remind ourselves that we are not defined by our failures?**
 - If we are not defined by our failures, what are defined by? How can we remind ourselves of this?
 - Sometimes we allow ourselves to be defined by our mistakes, by our failures – what can we do to shift this train of thought?

DISCUSS

- **Re-read the story of Peter and Jesus in Matthew 14:22-33 together. What thoughts do you imagine were going through Peter's head throughout this experience?**
 - **What are the “wind and waves” in your life? The things, thoughts, and feelings, that take your eyes off Jesus?**
 - **Amidst Peter's failure, Jesus still had his back – He did not abandon or leave him. How has Jesus been present for you amidst your failures or shortcomings?**
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NEXT STEPS

Start each day this week with a prayer reminding you who is in control.

WHAT ARE YOU AFRAID OF?

EPISODE 3 | AM I GOOD ENOUGH?

BIG IDEA

How often do you find yourself wrestling with the fear of not being good enough? Your confidence is robbed, relationships are impacted, and your self-image can be negatively influenced. Great freedom and confidence comes when you place your identity in who Jesus made you to be.

KEY TERMS & SCRIPTURE

Romans 3:10-12: As the Scriptures say: “No one is righteous - not even one. No one is truly wise; no one is seeking God. All have turned away; all have become useless. No one does good, not a single one.”

2 Corinthians 12:9: My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness. So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me.

Psalms 139:13-14: For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

Isaiah 64:8: And yet, O Lord, you are our Father. We are the clay, and you are the potter. We are all formed by your hand.

Video Quote – AJ Crocker: “When we place our identity in who Jesus has made us to be and who He says we are the fear of not being good enough fades away.”

SUPPORTING QUESTIONS

- **What is one thing that you wish you hadn’t done? Describe why you made that choice?**
 - What is one decision you regret making? Why did you make it?
 - What decision have you made that then defined your self-image? (ex. *Not studying, so failing a test and feeling like a failure*)

- **What makes you feel like you're not good enough?**
 - What type of thoughts ring through your mind making you think you're not good enough?
 - Is there an experience(s) you can think back to that led to you believing you are not good enough?
- **This next week, what are some ways that we can be more like Jesus and less like the world?**
 - How are the ways of Jesus and the ways of the world different?
 - What is one thing you can do this week that would reflect Jesus?

■ DISCUSS

- **How does this belief, that we are not good enough, influence and shape our future?**
 - **Rather than regret, what can we learn from our poor decisions and challenging experiences?**
 - **We read in Psalm 139 of how God made us, knit us together - just as we are. AJ said God made him to be a funny goof. In one sentence, who would you say God made you to be?**
 - **How can we embrace the truth that we are sons and daughters of God? How do we position ourselves to remember this truth, rather than be overcome with feelings of inadequacy?**
 - **Why does the fear of not being good enough fade away when we place our identity in Jesus?**
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■ NEXT STEPS

How can we, as a community, encourage one another to live out the truth of who we are in Christ?

WHAT ARE YOU AFRAID OF?

EPISODE 3 | WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?

BIG IDEA

Does your fear of the future have you so afraid that you are silent – both in shame and fear? You don't have to live like that. Regardless of the road your life takes, your experiences are valuable for other people. You can find clarity for the future by trusting Jesus with both your life experiences and your future.

KEY TERMS & SCRIPTURE

The Parable of Talents: Matthew 25:14-30

Video Quote – AJ Crocker: “If we are focused on loving Jesus, helping others, and trusting the passions and loves that God has given us, our future starts to look a little clearer.”

Video Quote – AJ Crocker: “What if these bags of silver are not only your unique life experiences, but also your unique skills and abilities, unique personality, and your unique spiritual gifts.”

SUPPORTING QUESTIONS

- **Who was your favorite band when you were younger?**
 - What was your favorite song when you were a kid?
 - Who was your first ever live concert?
- **What is one thing that has happened to you that has changed your life?**
 - What is the most life changing thing that has happened to you?
 - Is there an impending change in your life that you're afraid of? What is it?

- **Is there a time that you remember where you felt like you should've done something, but you were too scared to put yourself out there?**
 - How has fear held you back from doing something?
 - Have you ever been paralyzed by fear of the future? What thoughts were running through your mind?
- **What are some of your experiences that could be helpful to other people?**
 - Why is it valuable we share our life experiences - good and bad?
 - Share a time you learnt something from someone else's experience.

■ DISCUSS

- **Reflecting on the parable found in Matthew 25:14-30, why was it significant that the servants were given money proportionate to their ability? What does this teach us about God?**
 - **Do you wrestle with what God's will is for your life? What type of thoughts do you have? How do you feel?**
 - **Have you ever wondered, "what if God's plans for my life are different than the dreams I have?" If so, how does this thought influence your thoughts, and actions?**
 - **How can we focus on Jesus rather than fear of the future?**
 - **Why does helping others bring clarity to our future?**
 - **What does it look like to trust the passion's, gifting, and skills Jesus has given us?**
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■ NEXT STEPS

What is one thing you are going to do this week to shift your focus from your future, to Jesus?