

# INTERSECT

## *College Chat Discussion Starters*

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College Chat: Life Skills

### SESSION 1: DEALING WITH FEAR

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#### **Intersect the Word**

Matthew 14:22-31; 2 Timothy 1:7; Hebrews 13:5-6;  
1 John 4:18

- Fear sometimes causes us to be scared of good things, such as the disciples being afraid of Jesus walking on water. How do the disciples overcome their fear, particularly Peter, in Matthew 14:22-31?
- Read 2 Timothy 1:7. What is your immediate

reaction to this verse? If you really followed this, how would your life be different?

- Does Hebrews 13:5-6 give you confidence for your day-to-day life? Why or why not?
  - How can perfect love cast out all fear? Give an example.
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#### **A Contradiction?**

Paul wrote to the Philippian church: Do not be anxious about anything (Philippians 4:6). In that same letter he also wrote, Work out your salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12).

- How does one reconcile these seemingly contradictory bits of advice?

- How do you define fear? What might be other definitions?
  - Do the various definitions help you reconcile these two statements? How?
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#### **“The Jonah Syndrome”**

Why are so few people truly courageous? Abraham Maslow coined the term “Jonah Syndrome” to point to people’s “fear of doing what [he or she] is capable of doing.” In his words: “We fear our highest possibility (as well as our lowest ones). We are generally afraid to become that which we can glimpse in our most perfect moments . . . We enjoy and even thrill to the godlike possibilities we

see in ourselves in such peak moments . . . and yet simultaneously shiver with weakness, awe and fear before those very same possibilities.”

- Can you give examples of how this may be true?
- What makes a person cowardly?
- What makes a person courageous?

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## PhoboPhobia?

See if you can guess the following curious phobias:

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|------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Agoraphobia   | 5. Verbophobia    |
| 2. Octophobia    | 6. Neophobia      |
| 3. Koniophobia   | 7. Phalacrophobia |
| 4. Lilapsophobia | 8. Ambulophobia   |

(Answers: (1) Fear of open spaces or crowds. (2) Fear the figure 8. (3) Fear of dust. (4) Fear of tornadoes and hurricanes. (5) Fear of words. (6) Fear of anything new. (7) Fear of becoming bald. (8) Fear of walking.

Respond to the following questions:

- Why do you think humans have fears?
- Are they sometimes helpful or not? Give examples.
- Often in dark, fearful times people recite Psalm 23. Read it aloud.
- What comfort does the Lord provide? How does that apply to your life?

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## Fear What?

Everyone worries about something from time to time, because it's part of who we are. However, a more serious condition, known as clinical anxiety disorder, is much different. Listed below are a few anxiety conditions.

1. Generalized Anxiety Disorder: excessive anxiety occurring most days for six months.
2. Specific Phobia: extreme fear of a specific object or situation.
3. Panic Disorder: recurring, unexpected attacks of acute anxiety.
4. Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder: Preoccupation with particular ideas or images usually accompanied by elaborate rituals.

5. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: repeated reliving of a terror-filled event over a long period of time.

These are just a few of the disorders that can occur, revolving around anxiety or fear. Obviously our bodies and minds are a complex part of God's creation, but God provides for our fears. Read Psalm 27 and respond to the following questions:

- What things do you fear most? Why?
- How do you deal with your fears?
- Does Psalm 27 give you any peace and comfort? Why, or why not?

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## Fears and Famous Folks

Six years before the start of World War II and eight years before the attack on Pearl Harbor, Franklin D. Roosevelt made his first inaugural speech, which contains the following famous line. The fear he was speaking about was the fear of the economy—The Great Depression. People had a lot to worry about with the Stockmarket crash in 1929. Read FDR's quote and then respond.

"The only thing we have to fear is fear itself—nameless, unreasoning, unjustified, terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance."

—Franklin D. Roosevelt, First Inaugural Address, March 4, 1933

- Do you agree with Roosevelt's statement? Why, or why not?
- If all people had to fear was fear itself, how would the world be different?