

SCARV EARTH COMMUNITY PARTNERS

CONVERSATION GUIDE

CHAPTER ONE



Tidal Waves

We all seek comfort. We want a comfortable home, a comfortable car, a comfortable life. But what if the life God is calling us to isn't comfortable? What if it's a life full of adventure? That's what Jesus invited Peter to. He invited Peter to leave his everyday life of fishing as well as the security of the biggest catch he ever had. Leave it all and follow Jesus into a life he knew nothing about. And that's the invitation Jesus is extending to all of us: to follow Him and find the life we never imagined.

- 1. What is something that you are afraid of? Why?**
- 2. When is a time that God asked you to do something that scared you or didn't make sense? What was your attitude towards it? What happened?**
- 3. "Faith is not just a *framework* for our theology, it's a pair of shoes for our feet." What action can you take this week? Could you start to volunteer at your church or start a conversation with that neighbor you've only waved at?**

TAKE A STEP:

God always has a next step for you, even if it makes you uncomfortable. Maybe you already know what that is. Maybe you are feeling like you don't have a clue. Either way, commit now to start to pray about that next step. As God begins to bring clarity to that next step, share it with someone to help keep you accountable. Now take even a baby step toward it this week!

CHAPTER TWO



The Invitation

When we find ourselves in a storm, our response is usually to seek safety, to hide in the boat and do everything we can to survive. That's what the disciples were doing in the middle of the Sea of Galilee. When we find ourselves in storms or facing a life-changing decision, fear can cause us to shrink back, too. Just as Jesus invited Peter to step onto the water, He is saying the same thing to us... "Come".

1. When has your faith been like Peter's? When has it been more like the rest of the disciples?
2. After reading this chapter, how would you define faith? How is that different from what you've thought in the past?
3. Think of someone that is full of faith. How would you describe them? What actions do you see them taking?

TAKE A STEP:

Ask and listen. Follow the suggestions at the end of the chapter and write down what you hear. What did God speak to you? Share it with a friend.

CHAPTER THREE



Field of Dreams

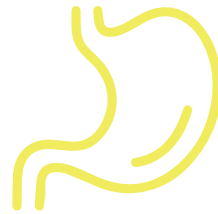
Dreams. We have all had them. As children, we have lots of dreams but then life happens and for many of us those dreams fade away as impossible or impractical. But God is calling us to a much bigger life than what we imagined; that is His purpose for each of us. Dreams stay dreams unless we take steps to make them happen. Finding your purpose *is important but unless you take a step it will stay just a dream.*

1. “Dreamers see a picture of what could be. Builders *create* the picture they see.” What dreams do you have that you have acted upon? What did you do and what has happened? What dreams do you have that you have not acted upon? What is stopping you?
2. God wants to use you to make a difference in your world! Have you asked God what His plan for your life is? If you have, what is it? If you have not, what has stopped you from asking?
3. “Just because you build it doesn’t mean they will come.” How does that statement make you feel? How do you define success? How do you define failure?

TAKE A STEP:

What dream(s) has God given you? Figure out just one step you can take towards building that dream. Write it down and then share it with someone who will hold you accountable. This week, do something that moves you one step closer toward it.

CHAPTER FOUR



God or Gut

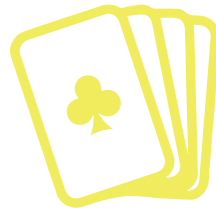
Wouldn't it be great if when God spoke to us He introduced Himself first so we would be positive it's His voice we are hearing? The disciples felt the same way when Jesus called out to them as He was walking towards them on the water. Peter was the only one who replied. And then Jesus spoke one word, "Come." One. Word. Not a guarantee that he would be able to walk on water and not sink, just "Come." Jesus speaks that same way to us. No 100% guarantee. Just an invitation to be obedient to His voice.

1. **Have you ever sensed God speaking to you? What was He asking you to do? Why did you think it was His voice? How did you respond?**
2. **What would you attempt for God if you knew you couldn't fail? What would you attempt if you had no assurance but felt God was calling you to do it?**
3. **Is being successful important to you? How do you feel when something doesn't go as you planned?**

TAKE A STEP:

"In God's eyes, true success is obedience, regardless of the outcome." Do you have a mentor or someone who can help you discern God's voice? If you do, share with them what you feel God is speaking to you about and ask them what next step you should take to fulfill it. If you do not have a mentor, ask God to show you who you need to ask and then do it!

CHAPTER FIVE



Blackjack Faith

Unfortunately, it's not unusual for Jesus followers to think that following Him means we will be prosperous, safe, and comfortable--that that's the goal of the Christian life. But scripture shows us over and over that comfort is not what Jesus invited His disciples or us into. Following Jesus is costly. He has called us to follow Him and that means that He will ask us to do things that involve risk. Faith is spelled **R-I-S-K**.

- 1. How does the thought of taking a risky step make you feel? What about the thought of failing? How have you become too comfortable in your walk with Jesus?**
- 2. When was the last time you took a big risk in your faith? (Think giving more than you feel comfortable with, stepping into leadership when you don't feel qualified, etc.) Why did you do it? If you never have done this or it's been a long time since you have, what is preventing you from taking that risk?**
- 3. "When the fear of loss is greater than the pain of remaining where you are, you will rarely take risks." In what ways do you see this in your life? In what ways are you living a lukewarm life?**

TAKE A STEP:

Spend a few minutes thinking about the last true risk you really took in life. How long has it been? What area in your life have you been afraid to step into something uncomfortable? Try to do one hard thing this week that makes you uncomfortable (i.e. forgive someone who hurt you and let them know, run toward an uncomfortable conversation, talk to a complete stranger about faith, invite someone to church that you don't know, etc.)

CHAPTER SIX



Opportunity Doesn't Knock

“I just want to be in the center of God’s will.” That’s something we have all said. The problem can be seeking what we believe is God’s exact plan for our life to the point that we are paralyzed by the fear of doing the wrong thing. Instead, God asks us to seek Him in prayer, in godly counsel and then know that when we take a step, whatever we do and wherever we do it, we can have the assurance that He is with us.

1. **What are your thoughts on this statement: “Faith lives in uncertainty”? What examples of this can you think of? Are you uncomfortable with uncertainty? Why?**
2. **Have you used the “open door” method of discerning God’s direction for you? Why have you done that? What are the problems with only looking for open doors? What is the problem with thinking God’s will is a bullseye we must hit?**
3. **“The only way to truly fail is to never take that first step.” Do you fear failing? Why or why not? How has that fear kept you from taking a step of faith?**

TAKE A STEP:

What do you have a passion for? Share those burdens with a friend, family member, or someone in your circle. Then, work together to find an opportunity to volunteer with an organization that operates in that area.

CHAPTER SEVEN



Opposition Is Knocking

You would think that if we are doing what God calls us to do that we would experience smooth sailing. But reality is that opposition will come, and we should expect it. Peter faced the intense opposition of the storm, the wind and the waves. We have a spiritual enemy who will oppose us when we are moving forward with advancing the Kingdom of God. And that can be scary and discouraging. But we cannot live in safety and follow Jesus at the same time. When opposition comes, keep listening for His voice.

1. **Opposition will come. How does that make you feel? Does that intimidate you? How have you experienced opposition when you have stepped out in obedience to God?**
2. **Why is being in community important when you are facing opposition?**
3. **Is the reality of your spiritual enemy a new concept for you? What are the ways the enemy discourages you, intimidates you or causes you to fear?**

TAKE A STEP:

When your faith starts to sink, your doubts can get loud. Talk to God about your doubts, find a scripture that encourages you, write it down and put it where you can see it. Memorize that verse and quote it every day for one week until it is locked into your spirit.

CHAPTER EIGHT



When the Gap Gets Bigger

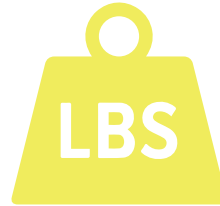
A step of faith is a step into the unknown. We can expect God to stretch that step into a leap of faith, and the gap we need to leap over will get bigger. Abraham faced that kind of gap as years went by without God fulfilling His promise of a son. Just as God reassured Abraham that He was still with him by showing him the stars and the dark sky, God reassures us that He is also with us in those places because He made it all. He is God of the Gaps.

1. Why did God tell Abraham to get out of his tent and look up at the night sky? When has He asked you to do the same? How do you deal with discouragement?
2. Where do you feel the gap? How is God stretching your faith?
3. Is it difficult for you to trust God about things you cannot see? God's timing often isn't what we expect or want. How do you handle being disappointed in God?

TAKE A STEP:

On a clear night get out beyond the city lights and look up at the stars and the night sky. As you look at the gaps between the stars, talk to the God of those Gaps. Share with Him your disappointments and fears in your faith journey. Then quietly sit there for at least 5-10 minutes and listen for His voice.

CHAPTER NINE



The Weight of Faith

Dreaming with your eyes open means having a vision for what can be. And God has that kind of dream for each of us. The weight of that dream--whether it's starting a business, leaving a career to stay at home with your children, or volunteering--is heavy because our dream doesn't just affect us; it affects others, too. That's the reality of stepping out of the boat.

1. Our most precious possession is *time*. What are the time wasters in your life? When do you indulge in them? Why?
2. When your steps of faith affect others, you feel the weight of it. What weight do you feel leading your family or leading others at work? What fears do you have about failing them?
3. In the past or currently, what are circumstances that God is using to build your faith? Is it comfortable? How would you describe the process you are in or have experienced?

TAKE A STEP:

Recognize the weight of what God has impressed upon your heart. It's real. Now, find at least one person that you trust enough to open up and share your vulnerabilities and fears. Ask them to pray with you for the courage to keep pursuing that dream.

CHAPTER TEN



The Anatomy of Fear and Faith

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. Hebrews 11:1

The opposite of faith is not fear. The opposite of faith is certainty. Feeling fear does not mean that you are lacking or failing at faith. You can move in faith and still have fear. The point is, which one are you listening to? Scary Faith is taking the step God is asking you to do despite your fear. That kind of faith grows when we walk with God daily, getting to know Him and His character.

1. “You can have faith and still be afraid.” Prior to reading this chapter did you think that fear was the opposite of faith? Why? Faith is “...a bold confidence in God’s ability, proclivity, and sovereignty *without* any certainty.” Express that statement in your own words.
2. “What ifs” can be expressed in faith or fear. What are all the “what ifs” you have about the step of faith God is asking you to take?
3. On a scale of 1-10 how would you rate your relationship with God? How consistent are you in connecting with God? How does consistent connection with Him build your faith? How can you pursue your relationship with Him more?

TAKE A STEP:

“Your walk with God determines how much you walk by faith.” Do you have a daily time set aside to pray, read, and meditate on His Word, to listen for His voice? What can you do to grow your relationship with God? Try adding something fresh to your daily time with God (i.e. journaling, listening to worship music, get together with a friend regularly to share what God is doing in your life.)

CHAPTER ELEVEN



Embrace the Mystery

Living the life of faith is living in the mystery, the uncertainty of not knowing what is going to happen. If it isn't scary, it probably isn't faith! The reason we can get out of the boat is because even though we don't know the outcome, we know that if God has asked us to step out *He is with us and He won't let us drown*. So put your name in the blank: _____, the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go!

1. What do you think God's bucket list for you is? What kind of legacy do you want to leave? What makes you feel wonder?
2. When was the last time you exercised your faith? What was the uncertainty you faced? What fear did you have? How has God been with you?
3. How does the possibility of failing when you take the step God is asking you to take make you feel? Is success important to you? Why or why not? Is it the most important thing to God? Why or why not?

TAKE A STEP:

Write out a spiritual bucket list. Put down some pinnacle moments you hope to experience following Jesus (i.e. take a mission trip to a third-world country, lead a small group one day, become a mentor to a younger parent, adopt a child someday, etc.)

CHAPTER TWELVE



Live a Better Story

We all have regrets about things we wished we had or hadn't done and that past can fill us with shame and the belief that God couldn't possibly use someone like us. God in His grace hasn't just saved us from our sin; He has saved us for His purpose *for* our life. God wants to use you to change your world.

- 1. What does being a trophy of God's grace look like in your life? When was a time you felt you had done something that disqualified you from being used by God?**
- 2. Are you making this world, your world, a better place? Does what you are doing right now matter? If you died tomorrow, would you be satisfied with the life you've lived? What regrets would you have?**
- 3. What bigger story is God asking you to take a step into?**

TAKE A STEP:

Write down the better story God is calling you to. Share it with a mentor, pastor, small group leader or a good friend. Tell them what your first step out of the boat will be. Be accountable to them.

EPILOGUE

TAKE A STEP:

Over the next six months, write down the steps you are taking and how God has been with you, how you have seen Him move, the fear and faith you have experienced, the bigger Scary Faith life you are living. Share your story with your pastor, mentor, small group leader or a good friend. Then keep walking!