

**Instructions:**

Group leaders, take some time before your gathering to look over these questions. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you pick 3-5 questions to discuss that pertain to your group's unique style and needs.



**Series: Courageous**

Our world often tells us that being courageous is about strength, bravery, and heroic acts. To be courageous means to be tough in the face of adversity. But scripture gives us a different model. We are called to be courageous, but often that doesn't look like success, strength, or winning. This January we explore how courage helps us raise others up, transform our communities, and face new and challenging situations. Because together in Christ, we can do hard and courageous things.

**Message description:**

What comes to mind when you hear the word courage? Courage is celebrated in our culture today, but often with focus on the mighty side of things: the strength, the valor, the grit, and the success. But did you know that you cannot have courage without vulnerability? Or that to even be vulnerable with our lives, relationships, church is a courageous thing? The good news is that Jesus shows us exactly how to be vulnerable. As people created for connection with God and others, Jesus shows us the way to true love and belonging through his own courageous example of humility, service, and death all for the sake of love.

**Key Scriptures**

*Philippians 2:1-12*

**Check out these additional resources with your group or on your own:**

- > "A Call to Courage" by Brené Brown on Netflix

**Questions Related to This Week's Message:**

1. Why do you think it is so hard for people to show vulnerability in our culture today?
2. In her teaching, Rachel shared the definition of vulnerability as the feeling of uncertainty, risk, or emotional exposure (Brené Brown, A Call to Courage). Can you think of one example of courage in your life, or that you have witnessed in someone else, that did not involve uncertainty, risk, or emotional exposure?

3. What stood out to you about Jesus' example of vulnerability from the teaching on Philippians 2? Have you ever thought of Christ in this way?
4. In these uncertain and vulnerable times, what have you seen people do to avoid or numb the discomfort of feeling vulnerable?
5. What are you tempted to do when feeling vulnerable?
6. What can vulnerability look like for this house group?

### Going Deeper:

#### Re-read Philippians 2:5-12 in multiple translations (consider ESV, NRSV, NIV, CEB, other others).

- What phrases stand out to you differently in these translations?
- In the context of this letter, in the early 60s CE written to the church in Philippi, we know that Paul was trying to encourage the Philippians to be unified in their faith, to stand firm against false teachers, and to find strength in a moment of persecution (which was a very vulnerable time of uncertainty and risk, to be sure). In this context, what do you think it means to have the *same mind* that was in Christ Jesus? Though we make think differently, how can we as church community still have "the same mind" as Christ?
- We live in a very vulnerable work. We face uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure every day. We often see loved ones, church friends, and sometimes even ourselves, turn to world leaders, speakers, conspiracy theories, other faith communities, and even unhealthy behaviors to cope with our loss, grief, and vulnerability. What can this call to courage from Paul to the Philippian church say to the church today?
- Where do you find hope and courage in this passage?

#### Watch "The power of vulnerability" Ted Talk by Brené Brown from TedX Houston in 2010 (~20 min):

[https://www.ted.com/talks/brene\\_brown\\_the\\_power\\_of\\_vulnerability?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_the_power_of_vulnerability?language=en)

1. Brené shares many powerful statements in this talk. Statements like:
  - Connection is why we are here, to have meaningful relationships and connections in life.
  - To have connection we have to allow ourselves to be seen; that is excruciating vulnerability.
  - Those who have a strong sense of love and belonging believe they are worthy of love and belonging.
  - A fear of not being good enough, of not being worthy of connection, keeps us from feeling connected.

These statements in part, reveal what it means to be human: vulnerable, limited, emotional, social, spiritual beings who were made to be in relationship. How can you connect these statements with the gospel story?

2. Brené also goes into detail at how we as humans numb or avoid vulnerability. Beyond addictive behaviors, we also make everything certain, we perfect, and we pretend. Did any of these avoidance strategies resonant with you? Do you ever do these things, maybe without even realizing it?
3. What is a healthier approach to our moments of vulnerability? What role can this group play in helping us feel connected, especially in moments of discomfort?