



Study Guide

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Unsung Heroes

Study Guide

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Purpose of This Guide

The “Unsung Heroes” series celebrates lesser known heroes of the Bible. These heroes demonstrated supernatural faith and saw supernatural results when they faced heroic challenges. We can learn how to unleash the hero within us as we follow God as part of His “One Story.”

You may choose to use this guide:

- for personal study and reflection.
 - as a discussion guide with any group of people interested in knowing more about unsung heroes in the Bible.
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1-Joseph of Arimathea: Heroic Generosity

Icebreaker: Brave Heart

Tell about times when you or someone you know has received criticism for being generous.

Discussion Questions

Mark 15:42-47

- Joseph was a prominent member of the Sanhedrin. He kept his belief in Christ secret [[John 19:38](#)].
 - ▶ Have you ever hidden your faith? If so, what were the circumstances?
 - ▶ Under what circumstances is being reserved about your faith a good idea?

- Consider what Joseph risked by asking for Jesus' body. He would likely lose his position on the Sanhedrin. His friends might shun him. By touching a dead body, he would not be allowed to participate in Passover. When the Holy Spirit prompts you to do something risky, which of the following would be most difficult for you to sacrifice [[Rom 12:1-2](#)]?
 - ▶ Financial security
 - ▶ Opinion of your friends and family
 - ▶ Status or reputation

- When has the generosity of a gift you gave or received changed a relationship you had with someone?

- What can we each do to become more heroic in our generosity?

Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the Lord your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you (Deu 31:6).

Going Deeper: Your Life

Read the following verses and think about how they apply to your life.

- [1Peter 4:10-11](#)
- [Matthew 6:1-4](#)
- [Matthew 6:19-21](#)
- [Luke 6:38](#)
- [Acts 20:35](#)

Application Exercise: Your Generosity

Think about where you have spent your time or money so far this year. Do you think God is pleased with the choices you have made? How generous have you been? What is your biggest barrier to being more generous?

2-Stephen: Heroic Truthfulness

Icebreaker: Truth or Dare?

When you play the game “Truth or Dare?” are you more likely to choose “truth” or more likely to choose “dare”? Why?

Discussion Questions

Acts 6:8-8:4

The courage to speak the truth is rooted in character, revealed by conviction, and reflected in Christ.

- There is much about life we cannot control; however, we choose our **character** ([Acts 6:5](#)).
 - ▶ Are you “full of faith,” believing God completely?
 - ▶ Are you “full of the Holy Spirit,” allowing Him to control your life?
- The measure of a person is not how he reacts in times of comfort, but where he stands in times of challenge. Are you firm enough in your **convictions** to lovingly stand up to others who need to hear the truth ([Acts 6:9-10](#))?
- When times are tough, how well do you reflect **Christ** ([Acts 7:57-60](#))?
 - ▶ Think about trials you have experienced. Over time, have they made you bitter or better?
 - ▶ What are ways we can learn to reflect Christ during trials?
- What are some circumstances that make it difficult for you to be heroic in your truthfulness?

Prayer: Speaking the Truth in Love

*Ephesians 4:14-16 that we should no longer be children...but, **speaking the truth in love**, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—from whom the whole body, joined and knit together...*

Ephesians 4:25 Therefore, putting away lying, “Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,” for we are members of one another.

Spend time praying individually or in your group. Include some of these:

- Praise God that He is Truth.
- Thank God for providing truth through His Word.
- Ask God to guide each of us in speaking the truth in love.
- Ask God to help us keep our thoughts on things that are true.

Application Exercise: His Help

Begin each day this coming week by asking God to help you speak the truth in love. End your day by telling God how well you did in speaking the truth in love, thanking Him for patience with you, and asking Him to continue helping you speak the truth in love.

3-The Rope Holders: Heroic Anonymity

Icebreaker: Call Me Anonymous

Consider things you have done anonymously and why you wished to be anonymous.

Never answer an anonymous letter.
-Yogi Berra

Discussion Questions

Acts 19:13-25

- What can you tell about the people who let Paul down through the wall in a basket?
 - ▶ In what ways were the rope holders different from other people?
 - ▶ In what types of circumstances is it good to be anonymous?
 - ▶ In what types of circumstances is it better not to be anonymous?
- What skill did it take to be a rope holder? How difficult do you think it would be to hold a rope attached to a basket with a man inside and slowly lower the basket down a wall? What would have happened if they had given up or let go of the rope?
- Conduct an informal risk benefit analysis of the actions of the rope holders.
 - ▶ What type of **risk** did the rope holders take?
 - ▶ What was the **benefit** of their action to Paul and to the church?
 - ▶ What would have happened if no one was willing to serve as a rope holder?
- If you were one of the rope holders, what would be your motivation to take this risk?

Prayer: Thank God

Spend time praying individually or in your group. Include some of these:

- Thank God for giving us all time, talents, and treasures specially designed to serve Him and others.
- Ask God to show each of us where we may be heroically anonymous in our serving.
- Thank God for those in our church and in our families who inspire us with their heroic anonymity.

Application Exercise: Are You a Rope Holder?

Are you a rope holder? In what ways are you heroically anonymous? Take this short self-assessment and reflect on any changes God wants you to make.

	<i>not true for me - - - - true for me</i>
Who: I'm an ordinary person willing to do extraordinary things for God.	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
What: I do small things that are not glamorous, but help others be a success.	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
When: I am consistent in helping with small things.	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
How: I roll up my sleeves. I don't give up when things are difficult. I don't seek credit.	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
Why: I do it to please God and because He encourages me to serve others.	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5

4-Stephanus' Family: Heroic Family Ministry

Icebreaker: Shoulder to Shoulder

Consider the kinds of things a family can do shoulder to shoulder. In what ways does doing things together strengthen a family?

Discussion Questions

1Corinthians 16:13-16

- From a practical perspective, what would it take for a family to “devote themselves to the ministry of the saints”?
 - ▶ How much time in a week would it take to be “devoted”?
 - ▶ What could a family do to rearrange their schedules to serve others?
 - ▶ In what ways could they take initiative to find ministry opportunities for their family?

- What are some good opportunities for families to serve together in your church and with their local outreach partners?

<i>Serving with Church</i>	<i>Serving with Local Outreach Partners</i>

- Besides physical serving, what are some other ways your family could minister to others?
 - ▶ **Colossians 4:2**
 - ▶ **Psalm 147:1**

Going Deeper: Addicted to Ministry

What would it be like to be “addicted” to ministry?

<i>Aspect of Addiction</i>	<i>Ministry Equivalent</i>	<i>Question</i>
Craving: strong need or compulsion	Burden for your ministry [Acts 4:13-20]	When have you felt so compelled to serve God that nothing else mattered?
Loss of Control: inability to stop	Deep commitment [Jer 20:7-9]	How easily do you give up on your ministry?
Physical Dependence: withdrawal if you try to stop	God's chastisement if you think about quitting [Pro 3:11-12]	How has God been trying to get your attention regarding commitment to your ministry?
Tolerance: need increasing amounts for same effect	Zeal to increase involvement [1Cor 9:16-23]	What are you willing to sacrifice so you can devote more to your ministry?

Application Exercise: Serving Together

- If your family is not currently serving in a church ministry or with one of their local outreach partners, explore the possibilities and pick one to try.
- If your family is already engaged in serving as a family, pray for the ministry as a family and thank God for working through you.

5-Onesiphorus: Heroic Support

Icebreaker: Helping Hand

Share stories of those you know who are good examples of offering a helping hand to those who need it.

Discussion Questions

2Timothy 1:15-18

Onesiphorus [ahn-ay-SIF-or-us] = profitable, one who brings help

- Onesiphorus was not afraid of Paul's imprisonment. It can be uncomfortable being around others who are suffering. How have you stood by and comforted friends in their own prisons such as:
 - ▶ Sickness?
 - ▶ Failure?
 - ▶ Rejection?
 - ▶ Grief?
- How can we provide heroic support by being dependable regardless of the difficulties [2Tim 1:16]? What are some practical ways to reach out to people who need support?

<i>Ways to Meet Physical Needs</i>	<i>Ways to Meet Emotional, Spiritual Needs</i>

- Sometimes our friends hesitate to ask for help. To provide heroic support, you may need to be the one to take initiative [2Tim 1:17]. What are some warning signs or indicators that a friend may need help?

Going Deeper: Refreshing Cup of Encouragement

How does God view those who serve as refreshing cups of encouragement?

■ **Proverbs 11:25**

■ **Hebrews 6:10**

Application Exercise: Minister of Encouragement

How are you being a minister of encouragement?

	<i>not true for me - - - - true for me</i>
Unselfish: Make other's needs a priority.	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
Available: Give of your time.	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
Sensitive: Sense what a person needs.	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
Hopeful: See beyond present circumstances.	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
Compassionate: Show tolerance and mercy.	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5

Pray, thanking God for working through you as a minister of encouragement. Ask Him to strengthen you in the areas where you need to grow so that you can be more effective.

Notes

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