

Characteristics of a Kingdom Revolutionary:

Session #4 - Embrace Uncertainty

Session Objective: What can we control? Can we control the economy? Can we control our parent's marriage? Can we control the bully at school or the rain on our wedding day? Every young person lives with real uncertainty, and as leaders we have the privilege of redirecting this uncertainty towards God. We are not in control, BUT God IS in control – and that is an even more important truth!

Session Intro: Following the events of 9/11, radio commentators and government officials coined a new term. They called every day after 9/11 “the new normal”. What this term means is that it is now normal for people in the U.S. and in a real sense, all over the world to live in a state of uncertainty. Now, for most people in most of the world, this is not new – this is simply “normal” but for us in North America, we had been lulled into a sense of false security and safety.

Young people tend to believe they are immortal. Very seldom are our young people truly touched by uncertainty about their lives. Columbine maybe more than 9/11 truly impacted our young people. In my youth ministry, young people came together and wept – they wept cause Columbine was just like their school, and they wept because the people in Columbine school were just like themselves, or people they knew at school. This “teachable moment” was invaluable in our youth ministry. Our focus this week is the idea that life is all about uncertainty.

Minimum Prep: Chapter 3 in McManus' book. Read through the questions following. Question One requires music and paper for students.

Extended Prep: Basic Prep plus: Do you have video footage of 9/11, or of Columbine...a music video, or the video of a funeral. I use clips from a video that has been priceless in my ministry. It is a video of Dave Busby's funeral. You can purchase this video by emailing resources@reach-out.org. At the end of this lesson there is the suggestion of a powerful prayer experience, read through the suggestions carefully.

Can you find still images, music or video, to prepare your students for this topic of uncertainty – even a collage of recent news clips will work.

Session Outline

Small Group Questions:

Leader Note: In preparing for question one, have some subdued music (not depressing) ready to play during this time of silence. Give each person a half sheet of paper and let them take time to write out a eulogy. If they are courageous enough, ask a student or two to share their eulogies. You have the opportunity to spend extra time preparing your eulogy. Share what you have written. This can be such a powerful experience, be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit – should you spend some time in prayer...should you have each person share their eulogy, and then surround them – put them in the middle, lay hands on them, and pray that God might allow them to live a life of impact in the midst of life's uncertainty – reinforce the positives in their eulogy, potentially pray against negative things they may share. (i.e. "God, in Mark's eulogy he mentioned his struggle with cheating, and how that so negatively impacted his whole life. Father we pray that together as a community we could come around Mark, and with your spirit's strength, that he could overcome this sin, with our love and support.

1. **"You have no control over when you die or (most often) how you die, but you do have control over how you live." (p.62) Take time to write a paragraph that would be a eulogy you would want someone to say about you some day.**

Read I Samuel 14:1 and then 14:6

2. What was Jonathan sure about? What was he uncertain about?

Leader Say: *What Jonathan was basically saying was: "Let's go and pick a fight. Maybe God will help." Jonathan knew that things aren't always going to be certain, that even after you have gained all the information, there are things you can know, and things you will never know. But he knew that God was powerful enough, if He chose to work on his behalf! Both Saul and Jonathan had heard the words of God through Samuel (I Sam. 7:3 – "if you are returning to the LORD with all your hearts, then rid yourselves of the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths and commit yourselves to the LORD and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines". Jonathan heard the word of the LORD and believed!*

Were the odds against Jonathan – YOU BET – HUGE. But Jonathan knew that odds are irrelevant to God.

Leader Note: If you like, you can at this point make reference to the story of Gideon – remember how God asked Gideon to go to war against the same Philistines, greatly outnumbered? Why would God do that?

- 3. Some people are always asking, “God – what is your will for my life?” But it seems in Jonathan’s case that he was more asking himself, “How can I give my life to fulfill God’s will?” What is the difference in these two statements?**

Leader Note: An overhead projector with the two statements written, one below the other would help since the wording is somewhat tricky. Again, the issue here is focus – are we to remain static, or are we to be a people of action, even in the uncertainty?

Leader Say: *Jonathan understood that to move with God is to accept a life full of uncertainties.*

- 4. In your study of the Bible, how have you seen this truth played out in the lives of other biblical characters? In your own life, or in the lives of other Christians that you know...how has this been true?**

Read I Samuel 14:12-14

- 5. Put yourself in this story – close your eyes and imagine this battle. It’s not a pretty scene. Jonathan is carving his way through the entire Philistine outpost – there is blood, and there is chaos. What does Jonathan’s condition look like in your mind at the end of this battle?**

Leader Say: *Certainly Jonathan was not clean, he was likely covered in blood and dirt and sweat. Likely he wasn’t unscathed either – blisters from wielding the sword, certainly utter fatigue as the adrenaline wore off, and likely a good number of cuts, and scrapes and bruises. Jonathan experienced a victory in this story – but not without a price. He was likely dirty, scraped up and exhausted. I imagine that for weeks, maybe years he would replay this scene in his dreams.*

Jonathan wasn’t choosing to die, but he was choosing how he would live. He left the consequence of his actions in the hands of God. He chose to do what he knew was right. God was doing something in history and Jonathan gave his life to it.

It is in this realm of uncertainty where miracles take place. When you are in control, when you control the outcome of something, how often are you surprised with the miraculous (not often right)? But when you leave the outcome to God – then there is a pretty high chance that the outcome will be in the realm of the mysterious – in the realm of the miraculous!

- 6. It has been said “You cannot speak about faith without talking about obedience.” Why do you believe this statement is true? Why is obedience and faith so closely linked together?**

Leader Note: At this point, it would be effective to move into a time of prayer.
Say: "Faith is all about character, trusting in the character of God, being certain in who God is and following Him into the unknown."

"Let's spend some time in quiet reflection. Over the next few minutes, why don't you try talking to God? Ask Him to help you become certain of His character. Learning about God's character means studying the Bible, and discovering for ourselves. In the next few minutes let's discover for ourselves, some things about God's character. Ask Him to reveal some truth about himself to you, and then, why not ask him about one area of your life, that he is leading you into the unknown. Where do you need to trust God as you step into uncertainty?"

Follow-up: After your prayer time and silent reflection, ask if any of the students want to share. Again, this is a sacred moment. Students may share some deeply personal things. This is of course AWESOME in the true sense of the word. Protect this time – your environment, the safety of your ministry, all of this is important to the success of this kind of sharing. But what normal, just like me students share with one another can be transformative. Those students are Kingdom Revolutionaries, and as they share, they will play a part in the transformation of one another.

At the end of this time of sharing it would be appropriate for you to end with a doxology" – I would do it like the old preachers used to (or maybe still do in your church) – I would raise my hands over the students and say, one of the doxologies from Paul, "and now may the grace and peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you..."

This doxology is an act of authority and of submission. It is a powerful symbol. Often as leaders we are afraid of exercising authority, but as a leader, you are a spiritual authority and your unwillingness to act in such authority is an abdication of the role you are in as leader. The symbolism of such a moment can be powerful. You may feel a little silly, maybe some of your students will think it is a little silly.... But probably not.

At Blizzard II last year we had the Excalibur Sword as a symbol of power. It was amazing to watch the students come forward to hold the sword as they shared about holy moments, or scripture passages of deep meaning in their lives. Holding a sword in the wrong environment would look silly. But in that environment, it was neither silly nor simple. It was a powerful moment! Your students have just been studying about uncertainty in their walk of faith. They are about to enter into their world again, and without a spiritual covering, without the authority of Christ in their lives, it is not just going to be a tough week, but a week of despair. Moving into our world with uncertainty is tough – a spiritual covering is a necessity!

Comments and Feedback

Leader Note: This is your place each week to record significant sharing or growth in the lives of your students for subsequent follow up. You can also use this space to provide feedback on the material. All suggestions are welcome.

Please see the following handout. You have permission to reproduce these handouts for your group.