



THE CAMPUS CHURCH
LOVE AND SERVE GOD AND PEOPLE

Campus Group Discussion Resource

Chase the Lion!

When Dreams are Devoured

Welcome to this edition of the Campus Group Discussion Resource!

In order to help us focus as a church we are engaging in a short 3-week study called “Chase the Lion”. The concept is loosely based off of Mark Batterson’s book of the same name.

This teaching series is more topical and inspirational in nature. In October we will begin a new series on the life of Jesus.

Part One – Chase the Lion

1. As usual, begin your session in prayer and ask God to give each one inspiration where they need it.

2. Reflect on this quote by Batterson.

When the image of a man-eating beast travels through the optic nerve and into the visual cortex, the brain relays an urgent message to the body: run!

That’s what normal people do, but normal is overrated. Lion chasers don’t run away; lion chasers run to the roar. They don’t see a five-hundred pound problem; they seize opportunity by the mane. They don’t take flight; they fight to the death for their dreams. Mark Batterson

3. Batterson roots his thoughts in a short passage from 2 Samuel 23:20

*²⁰ There was also Benaiah son of Jehoiada, a valiant warrior from Kabzeel. He did many heroic deeds, which included killing two champions of Moab. **Another time, on a snowy day, he chased a lion down into a pit and killed it.***

2 Samuel 23:20

Have you ever read that verse before?

Benaiah was one of King David’s mighty warriors. He was a very brave soldier. And, as the text plainly says, on one snowy day he **chased** a lion into a pit and killed it. Talk about how incredible that is.

4. Although the metaphor of a lion can be used positively of God, who is sometimes called “the lion of Judah”, **for our purposes we are using the metaphor of a lion as being a threat, a fear, an obstacle, an enemy, or something that is standing in the way of you living victoriously in life.** Right now, share some 500-pound problems you may be facing.

- Financial problems
- School challenges
- Relational struggles
- Rebellious kids
- Medical issues
- Marriage conflict
- Emotional or mental health challenges
- Other?

5. Reflect on this quote from Batterson. “God doesn’t always call us to win. Sometimes he just calls us to try. Either way it is obedience that glorifies God”. Batterson

6. Another lesser known Bible character is Shamgar. There are only a couple of verses pertaining to him. Read and reflect on these verses.

After Ehud came Shamgar son of Anath, who struck down six hundred Philistines with an oxgoad. He too saved Israel. Judges 3:31

“In the days of Shamgar son of Anath, in the days of Jael, the highways were abandoned; travelers took to winding paths. Villagers in Israel would not fight; they held back. Judges 5:6-7

Whenever there is a weakness, there will be an enemy to exploit it. And such was the case for Israel. The Philistines were their arch enemy. With Israel being so divided the Philistines started to take over more and more land and more and more of the roads and transportation routes. They were **systematically oppressing God’s people**. The people of God could not come and go as they pleased but lived in terror of being killed by the Philistines if they showed their faces. They stayed far away and had to shamefully take all the back roads to where they wanted to go, always in fear of being attacked. They took to winding paths and could not travel on a straight path or the main roads. Their fear of the Philistines (those lions) drove them to this kind of shameful behaviour. And as it says in verse 7, “Villagers in Israel would not fight; they held back”.

Is there any correlation to our experience today? How have God’s people been oppressed in Canada?

7. Do most Canadian Christians retreat or run to the roar? What is the danger of either option?

8. Reflect on what we know about Shamgar:

- Shamgar's leadership followed Ehud's. He was the third judge of Israel.
- He was the son of Anath
- He killed 600 Philistines with an ox goad.
- Shamgar saved Israel.

9. In the teaching we stressed two helpful principles:

Start where you are and use what you have.

Develop a plan and go at it incrementally.

Illustrate this from the life of Shamgar and then discuss how we could apply these principles here and now in chasing lions.

10. Reflect on the truth of God from Hebrews 12. How does this relate to our discussion?

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. ² We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith.^[a] Because of the joy^[b] awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne. ³ Think of all the hostility he endured from sinful people; then you won't become weary and give up. Hebrews 12

11. Read the Lion Chaser manifesto personally and then together as a group.
What lines impact you?

The Lion Chaser Manifesto

Quit living as if the purpose of life is to arrive safely at death.

Run to the roar. Set God-sized goals. Pursue God-given passions.

Go after a dream that is destined to fail
without divine intervention.

Stop pointing out problems. Become part of the solution.

Stop repeating the past. Start creating the future.

Face your fears. Fight for your dreams.

Grab opportunity by the mane and don't let go!

Live like today is the first day and last day of your life.

Burn sinful bridges. Blaze new trails.
Live for the applause of nail-scarred hands.
Don't let what's wrong with you
keep you from worshipping what's right with God.
Dare to fail. Dare to be different.
Quit holding out. Quit holding back. Quit running away.
Chase the lion.

Part Two - When Dreams are Devoured by Lions: In praise of Plan B

We all have dreams of how we want our lives to be. But often the lions in our lives can devour those dreams. Is there anything in your life history, that didn't quite turn out the way you dreamed it would? Are you all living happily ever after?

Stop and pray right now that God would bring each person in your group comfort and perspective as they process some of their wins, hits and losses.

1. In the church service we watched a video clip from Les Mis about a character named Fantine. Reflect on the lyrics to this song. Can any of you relate to these sentiments?

*I dreamed a dream in time gone by
When hope was high and life worth living
I dreamed that love would never die
I prayed that God would be forgiving
Then I was young and unafraid
And dreams were made and used and wasted
There was no ransom to be paid
No song unsung, no wine untasted
But the tigers come at night
With their voices soft as thunder
As they tear your hopes apart
And they turn your dreams to shame
And still I dream he'd come to me
That we would live the years together
But there are dreams that cannot be
And there are storms we cannot weather
I had a dream my life would be
So different from this hell I'm living*

*So different now from what it seemed
Now life has killed the dream, I dreamed*

2. Perhaps in the past, a lion devoured your dreams, or perhaps even right now, you feel a lion pulling you down from the ideals of what could be to the despair of broken dreams. And you wonder, can I ever recover from these wounds? If anyone feels comfortable being appropriately vulnerable, share a dream you had that was devoured by a lion.
3. Reflect on the various types of types of dreams we have and give examples.
 - Unrealistic dreams.
 - Well intentioned dreams.
 - Realistic and achievable.
4. In the message the phrase “In Praise of Plan B” was used. This means that sometimes God’s plan B for us is better than our plan A. Reflect on how this might be true of the following Bible characters.
 - Ruth and Naomi
 - Mary and Joseph
 - The apostle Paul
 - Jonah
 - Moses
 - Peter
5. For the remainder of our discussion we want to focus on the life of Joseph from Genesis 37-50. Read the beginning of this story and share thoughts that impact you.

Joseph, a young man of seventeen, was tending the flocks with his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father’s wives, and he brought their father a bad report about them. ³ Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made an ornate^[a] robe for him. ⁴ When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him.

⁵ Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more. ⁶ He said to them, “Listen to this dream I had: ⁷ We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it.” ⁸ His brothers said to him,

“Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?” And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said.

⁹ Then he had another dream, and he told it to his brothers. “Listen,” he said, “I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me.” ¹⁰ When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, “What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?” ¹¹ His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

So Joseph went after his brothers and found them near Dothan. ¹⁸ But they saw him in the distance, and before he reached them, they plotted to kill him. ¹⁹ “Here comes that dreamer!” they said to each other. ²⁰ “Come now, let’s kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns and say that a ferocious animal devoured him. Then we’ll see what comes of his dreams.” ²¹ When Reuben heard this, he tried to rescue him from their hands. “Let’s not take his life,” he said. ²² “Don’t shed any blood. Throw him into this cistern here in the wilderness, but don’t lay a hand on him.” Reuben said this to rescue him from them and take him back to his father.

²³ So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe—the ornate robe he was wearing—²⁴ and they took him and threw him into the cistern. The cistern was empty; there was no water in it. ²⁵ As they sat down to eat their meal, they looked up and saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead. Their camels were loaded with spices, balm and myrrh, and they were on their way to take them down to Egypt. ²⁶ Judah said to his brothers, “What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood? ²⁷ Come, let’s sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him; after all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood.” His brothers agreed.

²⁸ So when the Midianite merchants came by, his brothers pulled Joseph up out of the cistern and sold him for twenty shekels^[b] of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt. ²⁹ When Reuben returned to the cistern and saw that Joseph was not there, he tore his clothes. ³⁰ He went back to his brothers and said, “The boy isn’t there! Where can I turn now?” ³¹ Then they got Joseph’s robe, slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in the blood. ³² They took the ornate robe back to their father and said, “We found this. Examine it to see whether it is your son’s robe.”

³³ He recognized it and said, “It is my son’s robe! Some ferocious animal has devoured him. Joseph has surely been torn to pieces.” ³⁴ Then Jacob tore his

clothes, put on sackcloth and mourned for his son many days. ³⁵ All his sons and daughters came to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. “No,” he said, “I will continue to mourn until I join my son in the grave.” So his father wept for him. ³⁶ Meanwhile, the Midianites^[c] sold Joseph in Egypt to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh’s officials, the captain of the guard.

6. In Chapter 39 and following, the story continues. Joseph is serving a government official named Potiphar. Joseph is framed by this man’s wife and spent years in prison. Eventually he is released and actually climbs the ranks and becomes a successful VP for the Pharaoh of that day. God reveals to Joseph that there will be a famine so he prepares a detailed plan of storing food, enough even for the neighbouring countries who may be in need. And low and behold, who comes asking for food, but all of his brothers. So, Joseph is put in a position to actually save all of his countrymen. Reflect on what you remember about this story.

7. Joseph makes a beautiful summary statement of his life story in Genesis 50, where he says –

²⁰ You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. Genesis 50:20

His dream of plan A did not come to pass. But God’s plan B did. Which plan was better?

8. When facing a broken dream, it is helpful to reflect on how you got to where you are. Whys is this so? Speculate as to the reflections of Joseph.

9. Reflect on this quote from Batterson. *Everything in your past is preparation from something in your future. Batterson*

How have you found this to be true?

10. When facing broken dreams, it is helpful to resist the urge to become overwhelmed or defined by your brokenness. Why and how was this true for Joseph? Why and how is this helpful for us?

11. Isn’t it inspiring when you see someone who is going through broken dreams who is getting better not getting bitter? Share a few examples that come to mind.

12. When facing broken dreams, it is helpful to remember you may have lost a battle but Jesus has won the war.

The lions we face are reflective of the spiritual battles we are facing. And in any war, you win some battles and you lose some, but it is the end goal that really matters. Reflect on the following verses:

- *⁸ Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings. 1 Peter 5:8-9*
- *Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. James 4:7*
- *The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. John 10:10*

13. When facing broken dreams, it is helpful to give God the chance to help you chase the lions away, redeem your story, and renew your dreams.

How was this true for Joseph? We don't see Joseph dropping into a "woe is me" phase. He still is trusting in God and is in hope that God will redeem, renew and restore his life. He seems to resist the urge to keep his eyes on the here and now and instead lifts his gaze upward to the God who is all sovereign, and compassionate. He kept looking for God's restoration of his life, probably wondering how God was going to redeem his situation. And can you imagine the stirring in his heart as he saw his brothers riding into town in need of food. Here the story was coming full circle. Joseph did not hold a grudge or fall into despair when he saw his brothers. I bet he was excited to see God on the move. That is why he was able to say:

²⁰ You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. Genesis 50:20

14. Although a common verse, this one is a beauty!

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Romans 8:28

How has that been true in your life?

15. Reflect on this quote from Batterson.

The will of God is not an insurance plan. The will of God is a dangerous plan. But regardless of whether your dreams are fulfilled or not, if God's gets the glory through your life, then that is success. In the grand scheme of God's good,

*pleasing and perfect will, eternal gain infinitely offsets earthly pain. God doesn't promise us happily ever after. He promises so much more than that – happily **forever** after. Mark Batterson.*

16. Once again, read the manifesto and then spend some time in prayer.

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