Peacemakers	
Session 4: What Happens When Our Group is Threatened?	
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SESSION GOALS	
Every session has specific goals—things you want your group to walk away knowing, feeling, and committing to do.	
Main Idea: Transform defensive reflexes into moments of worship.	
Head Change: To recognize our defensive reflexes.	
Heart Change: To turn our focus from self to God.	
.ife Change : To rest in Christ no matter the circumstance.	
DPEN	
Danger! A warning like this should arrest our attention. We should feel the need to boost security and assess our surroundings should something be wrong. Have you ever been in a situation that threatened your safety?	
Sometimes we let our defensive reflexes get the better of us. We might feel a rush of fear or anger when a moment before we were cool as a cucumber.	
Sometimes this shift in defensive reflexes can cause us to harbor unkind feelings toward someone else and can even lead us to treat someone badly when they were not to blame.	
n this session, Brandon Cleaver, shows how we can shift wrongly directed emotions and bring our focus back to the kingdom of God and to our ultimate defender, Jesus Christ.	
READ	
Read Hebrews 12:28.	
WATCH	
Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in Brandon Cleaver's teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how he answers the following questions:	
How can fear, anger, and disgust lead down a path dividing us from others who we are meant to love and serve?	
As a Christian we sometimes feel threatened because of our faith. In what way does the promise of God's kingdom help	
edirect those feelings?	
Show Session 4: What Happens When Our Group is Threatened? (6 minutes).	



DISCUSS Brandon shares a story about hiking in the woods. When he comes across a sign indicating Mountain Lions are in the area, he immediately shifts from enjoying his excursion to defensive feelings of fear and worry. We all know the feeling when worry creeps into our hearts and fear assaults our minds. When have fear and worry kept you from enjoying the world around you? **AVOID DEFENSIVE RESPONSES** We often do not respond as we should when we feel threatened. Sometimes our feelings might be justified, but often we have misguided responses. These responses can lead down a sinful path, often hurting those around us. Perhaps a comment is taken out of context. Or someone leaves our church, and our feelings are hurt by their departure. We let our feelings get in the way of truth and transform the situation to be different from reality. During Jesus' years of earthly ministry. He often helped the people who were neglected and misunderstood. The outcasts of society or the underdogs are the people with whom Jesus spent most of His time. Read Matthew 20:29-34. Jesus was leaving Jericho, followed by a large crowd. When two blind men stop Him, what is their request in verse 31? The blind men asked for Jesus to restore their evesight, and Jesus does. In verse 34, what feeling came over Him that led them to grant their request? Compassion is something that our Savior demonstrates over and over in Scripture. If these men were sitting outside of the city gate, they were probably considered outcasts of society and possibly thought to be unclean. Brandon points out that disgust is a common reaction when we feel our purity is threatened, but Jesus did not see people in that way. When have you seen an act of compassion transform someone in a significant way? JESUS IS OUR GREAT DEFENDER Read Matthew 21:12-15 When Jesus went to the temple, what happened that angered Him? Brandon explains that "Jesus' anger over the financial exploitation and corrupted worship" was righteous anger. What was happening in that holy place was evil, and Jesus was not going to allow that. But immediately following that, Jesus begins to set to rights what should have been happening in the temple. What does verse 14 tell us Jesus did while He was there? That same verse tells us that the people He healed came to see Him in the temple. Jesus had a reputation for caring for the sick and injured. He is our Great Healer. Jesus provides comfort and care. Jesus does not turn away the lowly or downcast Who was upset by the wonderful things Jesus was doing? Nearby children were shouting praises to Jesus. Why did this anger the scribes and chief priests? The Jewish leaders felt threatened by Jesus. Although they had been waiting for the Savior to come, they refused to believe Jesus was the Son of God. To them Jesus was a threat to their way of life and status among the people, and they did not want to give that up. TURN OUR DEFENSIVE RESPONSES INTO WORSHIP Read Hebrews 12:28 This verse tells us our focus should always be on God's kingdom, which is steadfast and unwavering. Knowing this, what should our posture be no matter our circumstance? Brandon points out, "If your faith is in Jesus, you are heir to a kingdom, and that kingdom can never be threatened because the risen Lord Jesus sits on the throne." Read 1 Chronicles 16:23-31. This is a beautiful passage filled with praise. Why do you think it can be difficult to shift our focus from ourselves to praising God? God has always proven Himself faithful. He does not want us to live in fear, intimidation, anger, injustice, or disgust. These are not righteous emotions to carry in response to fear. But rather, God wants us to put all our trust in Him. The admonition to trust God also comes at the beginning of the book of Joshua, when God is preparing Joshua to lead His people. Fear seems to have come over Joshua as God instructs Him to be "strong and courageous." And God never disappoints. For every command of strength and courage, God lays out His track record for Joshua declaring who He is and how He has always been faithful. Note: To study God's instructions for Joshua in more depth, go to the Go Deeper Section at the end of this study. And this is the reason we praise Him. God essentially says to Joshua, "Stop looking inward. Look at Me. Do just as I say, and I'll do everything else. In what way have you experienced a shift from fear to worship? How did it transform your perspective?

LAST WORD

The differences we face in society seem very pronounced and polarizing, but treating people as individuals first helps us become a people of peace. Living out Christ's peace is a calling that God has placed on Christians' lives.

The only way to minimize our differences is to be peacemakers who let Christ's peace rule in our hearts. It allows us to see people with God's love and recognize that our differences matter little when it comes to showing love to each other.



GO DEEPER

The Go Deeper section has two potential functions. It can supplement your small group discussion by providing extra discussion material. We've highlighted a place where each of the following segments could fit in the Discuss section of the study guide.

But you can also use these sections as short devotionals to carry you through the week until your next group meeting.

JOSHUA

Read Joshua 1:1-9.

Fear is a natural response to a threatening or unstable situation. In the beginning of Joshua, we find Joshua at the beginning of his time as the leader over Israel. He had to follow in the footsteps of Moses, and although he had watched God provide and protect for many years, the job was a little intimidating.

• In these verses, how many times does God tell Joshua to have strength and courage?

God is a God who loves and cares for His people. He tells Joshua not only to be strong and have courage but also why Joshua should trust Him.

- What reason does God give Joshua to trust Him in verse 5?
- . What reason does God give Joshua to trust Him in verse 6?
- What instruction does God give Joshua in verse 7?
- Why does God instruct Joshua to do this?
- · What careful instruction in verse 8 assures further success?

In verse 9, God once again tells Joshua to have strength and courage. What encouragement does He give Joshua?

Read Isaiah 41:10. In this powerful verse, God gives reasons why we never need to fear. Our God is a God who is with us. He is our God. He will strengthen us. He will help us. He will uphold us with His righteous right hand. Verse after verse in the Bible gives the same type of encouragement from God that any fear we have is squashed by who He is.

- What need do we have to fear if our God has been so faithful?
- Why do we have trouble trusting that God will take care of us even though He has proven Himself worthy over and over?

