

Living Your Best Life: Make Faith Declarations

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SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. SERMON RECAP

Jesus came to give us real, abundant life -- better than we've ever dreamed -- but experiencing that life requires us to actively partner with God's Word rather than passively waiting for blessings to arrive. I shared that God's promises are declarations He has already spoken over our lives, and He calls us to align our mouths and hearts with what He says, even when the evidence in the natural world tells a different story. Just as God changed Abram's very name to "Father of Multitude" so that every time Abraham spoke his own name he was declaring God's promise, we too are called to speak boldly over our circumstances and call those things that do not yet exist as though they already were.

2. KEY SCRIPTURE

John 10:10 (The Message)

> "A thief is only there to steal and kill and destroy. I came so they can have real and eternal life, more and better life than they ever dreamed of."

3. ICE BREAKER

Think of a time when someone spoke something encouraging over you -- a parent, a coach, a friend -- and it genuinely changed how you saw yourself or your situation. What did they say, and why did it stick with you?

4. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Getting Honest About Where We Are

I talked about a man I met who was sharing all his family problems with a kind of hopelessness -- like he just had to survive whatever the enemy was throwing at him. Can you relate to that feeling? What does "just surviving" actually look like in everyday life, and how is it different from the abundant life Jesus promised?

2. The Pool of Bethesda -- A Mirror for Us

In John 5, the man at the pool had been in his condition for 38 years and, when Jesus asked if he wanted to

be healed, he responded with a list of excuses. Why do you think Jesus asked "Do you want to be made well?" rather than just healing him outright? What does that question reveal about our own responsibility in receiving God's best?

3. Names, Declarations, and Identity

God changed Abram's name to Abraham -- "Father of Multitude" -- before a single child had arrived. Every time Abraham introduced himself, he was making a faith declaration. What is it about speaking a promise out loud, regularly, that does something different in us compared to just thinking about it or praying it once and moving on?

4. The Difference Between Prayer and Declaration

I made a distinction between praying the same request over and over versus making bold faith declarations based on what God has already said. This can feel confusing -- we're taught to "keep praying!" How do you personally understand the difference between persistent, faith-filled prayer and the kind of repetitive praying that can actually reinforce doubt? Where is the line for you?

5. Real-Life Examples

I shared stories about people in our own congregation -- someone who rebuilt after divorce, someone who came out of prison and built a business, someone who serves families in need -- all of whom chose to rise rather than remain victims of their circumstances. Which of those stories connected with you most, and what specific choice did that person make that you think made the biggest difference?

6. What Is Dead in Your Life Right Now?

I asked this directly in the sermon: What's dead in your life? A career dream? A relationship? A financial situation? A hope for your children? This is not a shame question -- it's a faith question. What would it look like for you to stop rehearsing that dead thing and start making a specific declaration over it based on God's Word?

5. APPLICATION CHALLENGE

This week, identify one specific area of your life where you have been praying the same discouraged prayer, or where you have simply gone quiet and given up. Write out one faith declaration over that area -- keep it short, keep it anchored in a specific scripture, and write it on a notecard or in your phone. Speak it out loud every morning and every evening for seven days. It doesn't have to feel powerful when you say it -- just say it. Come back next week ready to share what you noticed, even if it's small.

6. PRAYER POINTS

- For Boldness in Our Speech: Pray that each person in the group would have the courage to align their words with God's Word this week, especially when their circumstances are shouting the opposite.
- For Specific Breakthroughs: Take a moment to let anyone share one area -- just one -- where they need a declaration spoken over them. Pray specifically and boldly over those situations together as a group.

- For Those Who Feel Like the Man at the Pool: Pray for anyone in the group, or someone they love, who is worn down, hopeless, or has been in the same difficult place for a long time -- that Jesus would meet them right where they are and speak "Get up" into their spirit this week.

7. MEMORY VERSE

Romans 4:17b (NKJV)

> "God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did."

Leader's Note: Don't rush Question 6 -- that's often where the real conversation happens. Give people space to be honest, and model vulnerability yourself if the group needs permission to open up. You've got this!