

FACILITATOR / TEACHER GUIDE

EMPOWERED

Session 3 – Empowered to Remember, Empowered to Move Forward

Acts 4:23–35

SESSION PURPOSE

This session explores how the Holy Spirit strengthens believers during seasons of fear, pressure, uncertainty, and opposition. Participants will examine how the early Church responded to difficulty—not with panic, avoidance, or self-protection—but through prayer, dependence on God, and renewed courage.

The central focus of this session is not merely “being brave.”

It is learning how the Holy Spirit helps believers remain faithful when life feels difficult, uncertain, or emotionally exhausting.

Acts 4 reveals that Spirit-led courage is not rooted in personality, confidence, or emotional strength.

It grows from:

- remembering God’s faithfulness,
- remaining rooted in prayer,
- and continuing forward together in dependence on the Holy Spirit.

This session intentionally helps participants connect:

- fear and faith,
 - memory and hope,
 - and prayer and courage.
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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants should be able to:

- Understand how the early Church responded to opposition and fear
- Recognize the role of prayer in Spirit-dependent living
- Explore the connection between remembering God’s faithfulness and present courage
- Reflect honestly on fear, uncertainty, and spiritual pressure
- Identify ways the Holy Spirit strengthens believers in difficult seasons

- Understand that courage is not the absence of fear, but faithfulness within it
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KEY PASSAGES

Primary Passage:

- Acts 4:23–35

Supporting Passages:

- Psalm 2:1–2
 - Isaiah 41:10
 - 2 Timothy 1:7
 - Hebrews 10:23–25
 - Romans 8:31–39
 - Philippians 4:6–7
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SESSION LENGTH

60–75 minutes

(Adaptable depending on discussion depth and group dynamics.)

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Bible (print or digital)
 - Participant Study Guide
 - Pen or journal
 - Comfortable discussion setting
 - Optional notepad or whiteboard for themes
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FACILITATOR PREPARATION

Before leading this session:

- Read Acts 4:23–35 slowly several times
- Reflect honestly on seasons where fear, uncertainty, or discouragement affected your faith
- Prepare for participants carrying:

- anxiety
- exhaustion
- disappointment
- church hurt
- fear about the future
- or spiritual discouragement

Important:

This session is not about:

- emotional hype,
- pretending fear does not exist,
- or pressuring participants into boldness.

The focus is:

- dependence,
- prayer,
- remembrance,
- and Spirit-produced steadiness.

Allow participants space to be honest without trying to “fix” every emotion too quickly.

SESSION FLOW (60–75 MINUTES)

1. WELCOME & OPENING PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

Welcome participants and reconnect briefly to the previous session.

Suggested transition:

“Last week we explored the kind of community the Holy Spirit forms. This week we look at what happens when that community faces pressure, uncertainty, and fear.”

Open with prayer.

Suggested prayer focus:

- peace
- courage

- honesty
 - attentiveness to God
 - and openness to the Holy Spirit.
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2. OPENING REFLECTION: FEAR & UNCERTAINTY (10 MINUTES)

Invite gentle and honest discussion.

Discussion prompts:

- What kinds of things create fear or anxiety for people today?
- How do people typically respond when they feel pressure or uncertainty?
- What happens spiritually when fear begins shaping our decisions?
- Why is courage often difficult?

Facilitator Guidance:

Keep the conversation grounded and reflective rather than overly abstract or political.

Allow honesty.

Avoid simplistic “Christian answers.”

The goal is helping participants recognize how fear affects spiritual life.

3. READING THE PRIMARY PASSAGE (5 MINUTES)

Read Acts 4:23–35 aloud slowly together.

Encourage participants to notice:

- emotional tone
- repeated themes
- how the believers respond
- and what stands out most strongly.

Optional Reflection Prompt:

“What part of this passage feels most important or surprising to you?”

4. MOVEMENT 1 – THE HOLY SPIRIT HELPS BELIEVERS REMEMBER GOD’S FAITHFULNESS (10 MINUTES)

Teaching Focus:

The early Church responds to fear first by remembering who God is.

Read Scripture:

- Acts 4:23–28
- Psalm 2:1–2

Key Truths:

- Prayer reorients believers toward God’s presence and sovereignty
- The believers remember Scripture and God’s faithfulness
- Fear narrows perspective; remembrance restores it

Key Emphasis:

The early Church did not pretend opposition was not real.

But they also refused to let fear become the center of the story.

Facilitator Insight:

Memory is deeply connected to spiritual endurance.

Throughout Scripture, believers repeatedly strengthen faith by remembering:

- God’s character
- God’s faithfulness
- and God’s past work.

Discussion Questions:

- Why is remembering God’s faithfulness important during difficult seasons?
- What happens when fear becomes the loudest voice in our lives?
- What helps people remain spiritually grounded during uncertainty?

5. MOVEMENT 2 – THE HOLY SPIRIT PRODUCES COURAGE THROUGH PRAYER (10 MINUTES)

Teaching Focus:

The believers respond to fear through prayer rather than panic.

Read Scripture:

- Acts 4:29–31
- 2 Timothy 1:7

Key Truths:

- The believers pray for boldness, not escape
- The Holy Spirit strengthens believers within difficulty
- Prayer creates dependence rather than self-reliance

Key Emphasis:

Spirit-led courage is not personality-driven.

It grows through:

- prayer
- surrender
- and awareness of God's presence.

Facilitator Guidance:

Some participants may feel guilty for struggling with fear or anxiety.

Avoid presenting courage as:

- emotional toughness,
- constant confidence,
- or absence of struggle.

Biblical courage means continuing toward faithfulness while depending on God.

Discussion Questions:

- Why do people often pray for comfort more than courage?
- How does prayer change the way believers respond to fear?
- What is the difference between reacting fearfully and responding prayerfully?

6. MOVEMENT 3 – THE HOLY SPIRIT FORMS COURAGEOUS COMMUNITIES (10 MINUTES)

Teaching Focus:

The believers do not face fear alone.

Read Scripture:

- Acts 4:32–35
- Hebrews 10:23–25

Key Truths:

- Christian courage is strengthened through community
- Isolation often intensifies fear and discouragement

- The Spirit forms communities marked by generosity, encouragement, and shared purpose

Key Emphasis:

The Church becomes a place where believers strengthen one another spiritually.

Facilitator Insight:

Many people today feel:

- emotionally isolated
- spiritually exhausted
- or disconnected from meaningful support.

This section should gently reinforce the importance of shared spiritual life.

Discussion Questions:

- Why does isolation often increase fear or discouragement?
 - How can Christian community strengthen people spiritually?
 - What characteristics make a church emotionally and spiritually safe?
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7. MOVEMENT 4 – THE HOLY SPIRIT EMPOWERS BELIEVERS TO MOVE FORWARD (10 MINUTES)

Teaching Focus:

The Holy Spirit empowers believers not merely to survive fear, but to continue participating in God's mission.

Read Scripture:

- Isaiah 41:10
- Romans 8:31–39

Key Truths:

- The mission of Jesus continues even during uncertainty
- Fear does not have to control believers' lives
- The Holy Spirit empowers faithful movement forward

Key Emphasis:

The goal is not:

- emotional invulnerability,
- denial,
- or perfection.

The goal is continuing to follow Jesus faithfully through every season.

Facilitator Guidance:

This section should feel hopeful but grounded.

Avoid:

- triumphalism,
- emotional pressure,
- or minimizing suffering.

Discussion Questions:

- What helps believers continue moving forward during difficult seasons?
- How does dependence on the Holy Spirit change the way people face uncertainty?
- Where do you most need courage right now?

8. SUMMARY & KEY INSIGHT (5 MINUTES)

Key Insight to Emphasize:

The Holy Spirit does not remove every difficult circumstance.

But the Spirit continually strengthens believers through:

- prayer
- remembrance
- community
- and awareness of God's presence.

Key Takeaway:

Spirit-led courage is not the absence of fear.

It is continuing toward faithfulness while depending on God.

9. FINAL REFLECTION & PRACTICE (5 MINUTES)

Final Reflection Question:

What would it look like to respond more prayerfully and dependently in the areas where fear currently affects your life?

Practice for the Week:

Encourage participants to:

- Read Acts 4:23–35 daily
- Pay attention to moments where fear shapes reactions
- Pause briefly before reacting and pray:

“Holy Spirit, help me remain faithful here.”

- Reflect on past moments of God’s faithfulness

Encourage attentiveness, not pressure.

CLOSING PRAYER (FACILITATOR-LED)

Pray for:

- peace
- courage
- endurance
- wisdom
- and deeper awareness of God’s presence

Suggested emphasis:

Ask God to help participants remain faithful during uncertainty and attentive to the Holy Spirit’s strengthening work.

FACILITATOR REMINDER

This session should feel:

- honest
- calm
- hopeful
- and spiritually grounding.

Do not:

- glorify fearlessness,
- minimize struggle,
- or pressure emotional vulnerability.

The goal is helping participants recognize:

- they are not alone,
- fear does not have to define them,
- and the Holy Spirit remains present in difficult seasons.

If participants leave:

- more aware of God's presence,
- more thoughtful about prayer,
- and more open to depending on the Holy Spirit during uncertainty,

then the session has succeeded.

Keep the tone:

- pastoral
- reflective
- grounded
- and centered on Spirit-dependent living.

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