

# ***Brave Enough* Participant's Guide**

This guide is not just words on a page. It's an invitation. The invitation is from God, who's always looking for people who desire to seek him with their whole hearts. It's an offer to make you brave enough for the life you are living *right now*. It's about being brave enough to move toward freedom in him.

I believe you are taking a courageous step by choosing to be *Brave Enough* with a group of friends, in a book club or through a Bible study. I think that's the very best way you can grow—in your own personal time with God, and with the encouragement and challenge of being with women who, just like you, are seeking to live out their brave-enough lives.

I've designed this group not just for learning, but as a way to *experience* God together. It's not just a book club, not just a Bible study; it's an intentional journey you take together to help you grow in your relationship with God as well as with one another. Here's how the study works:

**Prepare:** I'll give you a heads-up about which chapters in *Brave Enough* correspond with the session each week.

**Listen (20 to 25 minutes):** I'll share a short teaching that's designed to dig deeper into some of the concepts from *Brave Enough*. In this guide, you'll find some teaching points and room to take notes if you'd like.

You'll also watch a short clip or interview with the women you see around the living room during the teaching. Everyone has a brave-enough story, and I am delighted to introduce you to these brave women. I hope their words will inspire you to tell your story too.

**Experience (5 to 25 minutes):** Each week, I'll include an exercise or reflection to help you take the truth from the study and apply it in your own life. Sometimes these experiences are self-reflections, and sometimes they are group conversations. I've included a variety of experiences because we all learn differently. You might feel that some of them stretch you to be more honest, more real—and that might be uncomfortable. That's okay. Your leader is there to help the whole group give one another time and space to share. When you begin to open up to your group, it will be like a real-life experiment in being brave enough!

**Respond (20 to 25 minutes):** You'll be given time to talk together in your group and encourage one another as you explore your own brave-enough lives. Usually, but not always, this will be the last part of your session.

The *Brave Enough* Experience includes eight sessions. Make sure you review the “Prepare” sections so that you can read the corresponding chapters in *Brave Enough*. Many women have asked me if the book is mandatory with my video teaching. You’ll get the very most out of the experience if you read along in *Brave Enough*. The prep time is minimal each week, and it will give you the chance to be thinking about the concepts introduced before you meet as a group.

If you are the group facilitator, please download the leader’s guide, which you can grab at <http://GetBraveEnough.com> or on my website, <http://nicoleunice.com>. I would love to know how your group goes! Feel free to contact me via Facebook, Twitter, or e-mail ([Nicole@takeheartministry.com](mailto:Nicole@takeheartministry.com)).

Every Bible study I’ve read closes the same way, but now I know why: I really am praying for you, that God would use these words to plant truth within your heart and that your time in your group and in Scripture would grow that truth into a bold life of courage—for wherever God is meeting you right now!

# Session 1: Jesus Courage

## Prepare

Read the Introduction and chapter 1 of *Brave Enough*

## Listen

Session 1

What is courage?

Truth #1: Your life requires courage.

Truth #2: Jesus courage is imparted to you, not found within you.

Take courage. You are free from sin.  
Matthew 9:2

Take courage. You are healed.  
Matthew 9:22

Take courage. I am with you.  
Matthew 14:27

Take courage. Follow me.  
Acts 23:11

Can you be just brave *enough*?

## Notes

## Experience

Take a few quiet minutes in your group for a brave-enough inventory.

Give yourself a “courage rating” in the following areas, using the following scale:

1 = I have no courage at all in this.

2 = There are very few times that I can be courageous in this area.

3 = I sometimes can be brave here.

4 = I feel bold and free in this area of my life.

Believing and trusting God

Listening and obeying God’s direction

Letting things go and forgiving friends

Letting things go and forgiving coworkers

Letting things go and forgiving my spouse or family members

Letting things go and forgiving myself

Standing up and speaking up for myself

Engaging in healthy conflict

Trying new things as I explore my calling

Saying no

Embracing my own limits

Pursuing God daily

Are there any other places and/or relationships in which you feel you need bravery?

## Respond

1. How would you answer the question, “What makes a woman brave?”
2. Take a moment to look back at the inventory above. Share with your group one area in which you feel confident and brave, and one area in which you don’t. What are some factors that make you brave? What are some factors that make you feel scared?

3. Each encounter we've looked at in the Bible involves a close-up story of a spiritual encounter with God. Do you feel like you've had encounters with God in your life? If yes, what is one story you can share with the group about a moment when you felt that Jesus was close?
4. Close your time by having different group members read the following verses aloud. As you listen to them, jot down any words or phrases that stand out to you and that you can take with you this week.

Isaiah 57:15

Matthew 14:27

Philippians 1:20

Hebrews 6:18

Feel free to add to the verses here, if you have one to share with the group.

## **For Session 2**

Read chapters 2 and 3.

## Session 2: Our Daily Brave

### Prepare

Read chapters 2 and 3 of *Brave Enough*.

### Listen

Session 2

Conformity is a default setting in our souls.

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Romans 12:1-2\*

Jesus has a daily invitation for each of us.

Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.

Revelation 3:19-20

Spiritual survival skills make space for God to make us brave.

### Notes

### Experience

Take a moment to think of a person who has had a powerful impact on your life. Share with the group one thing that person has said or done that's memorable to you. In what way(s) would you like to be more like this person?

## **Respond**

1. Are you a conformist? In what way? What kinds of “patterns of this world” are you prone to conform to?
2. Turn to the list of spiritual survival skills provided in *Brave Enough*. What resonates most with you?  
Which skill do you want to practice this week?
3. The Brave Enough challenge of the week was to ask a “heart question” to some friends in an effort to become more honest and vulnerable in the real stuff of life. I’ll go first. My question for your group is this:
4. We all know that change doesn’t happen overnight. But if you had a magic wand and could wave it over your life tonight, what would you want to be different tomorrow?

## **For Session 3**

Read chapter 4 of *Brave Enough* and 1 John 1.

## Session 3: True Grace

### Prepare

Read chapter 4 of *Brave Enough*.

Read 1 John 1.

Today, before you watch the video, take five minutes so that each woman can complete this exercise:

### Experience

As I point out early in chapter 4, “Most of us don’t like that we need grace.” Listed below are several common ways that we can avoid our need for grace. On a scale of 1 to 4, rate your use of these tactics:

1 = I never do this.

2 = Sometimes I respond to my weakness this way.

3 = I often respond to weakness this way.

4 = This describes me every day!

### *Denial*

*I have a hard time facing painful feelings. Despite evidence to the contrary, I live with “I am fine” as my standard mind-set.*

Score: \_\_\_\_\_

### *Displacing*

*I often take my failures and weaknesses out on something or someone else. (For example, you might shout at a slow driver when you are actually angry about a fight you had with your roommate.)*

Score: \_\_\_\_\_

### *Compartmentalizing*

*I keep separate mental files for life so I can hold on to competing values and beliefs. My life feels fragmented into “spiritual life” and “everything else.” Sometimes I wonder if I’m talking the talk but not walking the walk.*

Score: \_\_\_\_\_

### ***Intellectualizing***

*I overuse logic and thinking as a way to avoid pain, confusion, and hardship. No matter the scenario, I try to think my way through it. Having lots of information usually makes situations better.*

Score: \_\_\_\_\_

### ***Overcompensating***

*I try to “undo” actions or feelings by going overboard in the other direction. (For example, you might lose your temper with one of your kids and then spend the next hour praising this child or being extra nice. This is an attempt to “undo” the damage without addressing or apologizing for the damage directly.)*

Score: \_\_\_\_\_

What do you generally tell yourself when you’ve made a mistake or done something wrong? Record a few of those statements here:

## **Listen**

### Session 3

“Giving ourselves grace” doesn’t work.

You light a lamp for me. The LORD, my God, lights up my darkness.

Psalm 18:28, NLT

True grace comes in the life and person of Jesus.

This one who is life itself was revealed to us, and we have seen him. And now we testify and announce to you that he is the one who is eternal life.

1 John 1:2, NLT

You cannot overestimate the power of grace.

He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, but not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

1 John 2:2

## Notes

### Respond

1. Review your answers from the beginning of the session as well as the answers to your “Fake Grace” quiz in *Brave Enough*. Do you see any patterns in the ways you respond to weakness?
2. Chapter 4 describes grace as generous, edifying, righteous, and powerful. Which of those characteristics resonate with you right now?
3. Together, read aloud 1 John 1. As you listen to the passage, underline or circle any words or phrases that stand out to you. You can use a study Bible to find cross-references to other related verses. (Cross-referenced passages appear in the margin or notes in study Bibles.) See what you can learn together with a little treasure hunt through Scripture.
4. Let’s practice our spiritual survival skill of prayer. As you close out your time together, can you be brave enough to pray for the person to your right? I know—you might not think you have the words. But that’s okay; your prayer doesn’t need to be perfect, spiritual sounding, or lofty. Just be honest. Think of something the person has confessed or shared that you can pray for on her behalf. Your prayer could be as simple as this:

*Dear God, you know [name] inside and out. You see the things we can’t see. Would you strengthen [name] in [areas of weakness] and help her know true grace.*

### For Session 4

Read chapter 5 of *Brave Enough*.

# Session 4: Grace Effects

## Prepare

Read chapter 5 of *Brave Enough*.

## Listen

Session 4

Giving grace takes courage.

This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.

Matthew 18:35

In God's light, our inner world is no different from our outer world.

Even in darkness I cannot hide from you. To you the night shines as bright as day. Darkness and light are the same to you.

Psalms 139:12, NLT

The experience of love makes us brave.

A person who is forgiven little shows only little love.

Luke 7:47, NLT

## Notes

## Experience

Turn to the "Let It All Out" exercise from *Brave Enough*. If you haven't completed the exercise yet, take a few minutes to do so. If you did complete the exercise, review your notes. What did you learn about your responses to your own anger? What other feelings were revealed? Are there places of unforgiveness in your heart?

## **Respond**

1. How do you tend to express your anger? Do you tend to be passive or active? Does forgiveness come easily for you, or is it difficult?
2. What do you think are people's general reasons for bearing grudges or not forgiving?
3. Are forgiveness and reconciliation the same thing? Why or why not?
4. Consider this statement: "There is a direct correlation between experiencing grace for yourself and discovering the courage you need to give grace to others." Have you found that to be true for you?
5. Are there times where you feel "overcome" by something other than Jesus? Can you think of a time that you did feel overcome by Christ? What were the feelings associated with that?
6. If you were explaining the benefits of forgiveness to someone, what would you say?

## **For Session 5**

We become brave by placing ourselves in the presence of God. You can do that through song, nature, silence, solitude, art . . . anything that creates a sacred space for you to focus your attention on God. Attempt at least two intentional worship times this week. Plan on sharing with your group something from that experience (song lyrics, a picture of a place that inspires you, etc.). Read chapter 6 for next week.

# Session 5: Fight

## Prepare

Read chapter 6 of *Brave Enough* and bring your reflections from your worship this week.

## Experience

Open your time together by briefly sharing something you've learned or experienced through worship, Word, prayer, or partnership this week.

## Listen

Session 5

### Brave enough for questions

I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity.

1 Chronicles 29:17

### Brave enough for conviction

I do nothing on my own.

John 8:28

### Brave enough to change

Our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

2 Corinthians 4:17

We continue to shout our praise even when we're hemmed in with troubles, because we know how troubles can develop passionate patience in us, and how that patience in turn forges the tempered steel of virtue, keeping us alert for whatever God will do next. In alert expectancy such as this, we're never left feeling shortchanged. Quite the contrary—we can't round up enough containers to hold everything God generously pours into our lives through the Holy Spirit! Christ arrives right on time to make this happen. He didn't, and doesn't, wait for us to get ready. He presented himself for this sacrificial death when we were far too weak and rebellious to do anything to get ourselves ready. And even if we hadn't been so weak, we wouldn't have known what to do anyway. *Romans 5:3-6, The Message*

## Notes

### Respond

1. Have you experienced conviction that led to change? Explain.
2. Consider this quote from chapter 6: “I believe every single one of us has something in our lives—*right now*—that requires us to engage in conflict.” Is this true for you? Are there any troubled waters in your heart when it comes to relationships?
3. In what ways do your patterns in conflict feel unhealthy? What’s one thing you’d like to do differently in one of those close relationships?
4. The definition of an adversary is a “person who opposes you.” Sometimes (often!) our adversaries are also people we love. If you have an adversarial relationship, would you commit to pray for the good of that person for one week? Brainstorm together about what you can pray for as a way to “love your enemy.” Pick a partner to be accountable to during that time. Perhaps you can text one another as a reminder throughout the week to “PFA” (pray for adversary!).<sup>2</sup>

### For Session 6

Read chapter 7 on calling.

# Session 6: Calling

## Prepare

Read chapter 7 of *Brave Enough*.

## Experience

Before we watch the video today, let's take a few quiet minutes to write down our immediate responses to this question:

“Who am I becoming?”

Don't overthink what comes to your mind—your answer might be related to career or responsibilities, or your character and relationships. Just write the first things that come to mind.

## Listen

Session 6

We are all gifted, but we are not the same.

Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us.

Romans 12:4-6

Charisma is the result of grace.

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them.

1 Corinthians 12:4

Calling is bigger than category.

Calling is the intersection in your life of God's glory and your design.

By the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace in me was not without effect.

1 Corinthians 15:10

## Notes

### Respond

1. Begin your time together by reviewing your notes from the chapter and from the session. What are a few thoughts that stick out to you from this week?
2. Parker Palmer says, “Before I can tell my life what I want to do with it, I must listen to my life telling me who I am.”<sup>3</sup> Answer the following question and share it with the group, “What is my contribution to the Kingdom of God?” with your group. It’s okay if your response is tentative or unsure. Can you be brave enough to speak it out?
3. Spend a few minutes encouraging group members as you share what you’ve noticed so far about one another. Have you seen someone light up when talking about a certain aspect of her life, her story, or her relationships? Have you noticed anything about the specific gifting of another? Your observations will help provide insight and confirmation to the women in your study.

Inevitably someone (or everyone) in your group won’t feel like she’s found that calling. Close your time by praying together, asking God to refine your passions and use all of you for his glory.

To be brave enough to explore our territory, we must be brave enough to listen to God’s voice.

Consider memorizing a verse this week to focus your heart and attention.

Use a verse from the chapter or from the lesson, or do a quick search for one on a Bible app or at a website such as <http://biblegateway.com> or <http://biblestudytools.com>. You might search for the word *trust* in the New Testament as a place to begin. Once you find a verse that captures your attention, write it on an index card and place it in your car, on your mirror, or in your phone case. When you find yourself becoming worried or distracted this week, return your mind to that one verse.

### For Session 7

Read chapter 8 from *Brave Enough* and bring your focus verse to share with the group.

## Session 7: Limits

### Prepare

Read chapter 8 of *Brave Enough*.

Bring your focus verse to share with the group.

### Listen

Session 7

We live in a world that equates freedom with a boundaryless existence.

God has given us boundaries and calls them good.

The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places.

Psalm 16:6

God has given us two great gifts: capacity and fragility.

We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.

2 Corinthians 4:7

Sabbath-rest allows for communion with our heavenly Father.

There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest.

Hebrews 4:9-11

Time with God sets our priorities and perspective.

To become strong, first we must be still.

This is what the Sovereign LORD, the Holy One of Israel, says: "In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it."

Isaiah 30:15

## Notes

### Respond

1. A description of different kinds of limits is listed in *Brave Enough*. Do one or two stick out to you as places where you tend to live outside your limits?
2. What frustrates you about your own limits? What is God teaching you in that frustration?
3. Richard Foster says that “one reason we can hardly bear to remain silent is that it makes us feel so helpless.”<sup>4</sup> Do you believe that God can strengthen you in stillness and silence with him? Why or why not?
4. The fruit of Sabbath-rest is a sense of a stillness in our soul and an ability to experience joy. What brings you joy? If you had complete freedom from your responsibilities for an entire day, what would you do?

### Experience

Share with your group one way you can cultivate Sabbath-rest this week. How can you “make every effort” to find that space in your week? Challenge one another to make a change this week that allows for this space.

### For Session 8

Read the final chapter of *Brave Enough*. Prepare a “verbal gift” of encouragement for the others in your group. What’s one encouragement you would give as a way of calling the other members forward in confidence? Where have you seen each person grow? Record it in your journal to share next week.

# Session 8: Brave Enough

## Prepare

Read chapter 9 of *Brave Enough*.

Bring your “verbal gift” of encouragement for the others in your group.

## Listen

Session 8

Being loved makes us brave:

His love has the first and last thing in everything we do.

2 Corinthians 5:14, *The Message*

Brave enough for holiness

We have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Hebrews 10:10

Brave enough to persevere

Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who has promised is faithful.

Hebrews 10:23

Brave enough to believe in God’s all-encompassing promises

Romans 15:13: Overflow

1 John 5:4: Overcome

2 Corinthians 9:8: Abound

## Notes

## **Respond**

1. What has God been teaching you throughout this experience?
2. What is an area in which He has challenged you?
3. As you consider God's comprehensive promises of overflowing hope, overcoming power, and abounding work, what most resonates with your daily need?

## **Experience**

As you close this time together, offer each other the verbal gift of encouragement that you've prepared in advance. What is it that you see in a woman in your group that perhaps she doesn't see in herself? Consider sharing a verse that you've prayed for her. Consider passing each woman's journal around and writing a note and verse in it as a marker of your time together.

Finally, if your group is brave enough, pray for one another. James 5:16 says, "Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results" (NLT). Second Corinthians 10:4 says we "use God's mighty weapons, not worldly weapons" (NLT), and our primary weapon is prayer.

One way to pray is to split into groups of three (if your group is large) so that each woman has a moment or two to share her heart and then be prayed for by the other two.

## **And Now, Begin**

We did it! I hope this time in God's Word has been as encouraging and challenging for you as it has been for me. Just like the women interviewed on camera, you, too, have a brave-enough story. I hope that you've had a chance to share that with your group and that perhaps you've come to realize at a deeper level God's great love for you and his desire to make you brave.

God's love for you is deep and wide. It's more patient than we can fathom and more kind than we deserve. His grace is ever-increasing as you lean more deeply into him with your thoughts, hopes, hurts, and dreams. Committing to Jesus daily isn't easy—it's the hardest work you'll ever do. But it's also the path to freedom, to joy, and to the dug-deep strength that comes from your heart going deep with God. It's a commitment you'll never regret. So go—let's all be brave enough.

## Endnotes

1. All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the Holy Bible, *New International Version*,<sup>®</sup> *NIV*.<sup>®</sup> Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.<sup>®</sup> Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide. Scripture quotations marked NLT are taken from the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2007, 2013 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved. Scripture quotations marked *The Message* are taken from *THE MESSAGE* by Eugene H. Peterson, copyright © 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002. Used by permission of NavPress Publishing Group. All rights reserved.
2. For further reading: If you struggle with engaging in healthy conflict, I highly recommend Henry Cloud and John Townsend's book *Boundaries*.
3. Parker Palmer, *Let Your Life Speak* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 4.
4. Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988), 100.