FACING THE GIANTS

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NEVER BACK DOWN.
NEVER LOSE FAITH.

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BIBLE STUDY

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AS DEVELOPED WITH
Nic Allen

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About the Authors

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Nic Allen serves as the Family/Children’s Pastor at Rolling Hills Community Church in Franklin, Tennessee. He loves movies because he loves good stories. Nic loves helping people encounter Christ and understand how their stories connect to God’s bigger narrative.
Facing the Giants is an action-packed drama about a Christian high school football coach who uses his undying faith to battle the giants of fear and failure.

In six years of coaching, Grant Taylor has never led his Shiloh Eagles to a winning season. After learning that he and his wife Brooke face infertility, Grant discovers that a group of fathers are secretly organizing to have him dismissed as head coach. Devastated by his circumstances, he cries out to God in desperation. When Grant receives a message from an unexpected visitor, he searches for a stronger purpose for his football team.

Coach Taylor challenges his players to believe God for the impossible on and off the field. When faced with unbelievable odds, the Eagles must step up to their greatest test of strength and courage. What transpires is a dynamic story of the fight between faith and fear.

INTRODUCTION

Facing Your Giants

Head Coach Grant Taylor isn’t just facing one giant; he’s facing an army of giants. In his own words, he is a failing coach with a failing record. He is facing his own infertility and inability to provide for his wife. In a middle-of-the-night moment of rock-bottom weakness, Grant turns to the Bible and his wife Brooke hits her knees. They realize that turning to God at their weakest moment is perhaps the strongest thing they can do.

The Shiloh Eagles haven’t finished with a winning record in six seasons. After revival hits the school and the team, the boys realize that with God all things are possible. For the final game, the boys aren’t just facing one giant. They are facing an army of Richland Giants whose sights are set on a fourth consecutive state championship title. The Giants are bigger and stronger than the Shiloh Eagles, but not bigger or stronger than their God!

But this movie isn’t about football. It’s about faith.

We all face giants. Perhaps you were under the impression at one time that the life of the believer in Jesus Christ was always easy. Perhaps you drew the conclusion at one point that “all things work together for the good of those who love God” (Romans 8:28) means the Christian life should be pain free and void of challenges. But by now you’ve probably realized just how far from truth those assumptions were. Life happened and you had to make a choice about whether you would trust and love God when it was tough. That’s the foundation of this film. That’s the essence of faith. That’s the purpose of this study.

Your challenges may be similar to the ones highlighted in the film:

- career adversity
- infertility issues
- lack of coworker support
- financial burdens
- losing games
Or perhaps you face a host of different giants:
- market trouble
- marriage woes
- rebellious kids
- massive debt
- sudden death of a loved one
- bleak diagnosis

The list goes on. If you find yourself in Grant Taylor’s cleats, you realize that it isn’t just one giant you’re up against but an army of giants; one new problem piled on top of an already insurmountable lot of difficult life issues. Sometimes, our problems aren’t even that big … on their own. It’s when they all come at once that we get overwhelmed.

If this is your story, this Bible study is for you.

If this is not your story, this Bible study is still for you. At one point in life, you’ll certainly be stuck under an avalanche of difficult life situations and be in need of stronger faith.

WARNING: The pages in this study are not designed to make your problems go away. They are designed to help you reorient your faith. The steps you take as part of this study are not like medicine, designed to fix an ailment or a symptom. They are more like exercises to stretch, grow, and strengthen your muscles. Muscles grow when resistance or pressure is applied and they learn to respond.

It is time to conquer your fear, face your giants, and grow your faith. Nothing is impossible with God. Whether you win or lose, you must praise Him. Will you? By that measure, your faith is defined. In that manner, your giants are faced … and they will fall!
How to Use This Study

The *Facing the Giants* 4-week Bible study is organized into sections and can be used for small-group or personal study. Allow 45 to 60 minutes for group sessions.

**READ** The introductory section of each session contains an illustration to focus your thoughts on the topic of the session. Learners should read the excerpt and be prepared to note and apply transferable principles when prompted by questions in group discussion.

**WATCH** The Bible Study DVD contains clips from *Facing the Giants* to accompany each of the four sessions. Each clip is 1 to 6 minutes in length and is supported by several discussion questions based on the content of the clip.

**DISCUSS** This section will be the primary focus of each session. Learners will read Scripture and be prompted to discuss questions related to the Bible passage and study theme for the week. It is most beneficial for each member to prepare with a quick review of the content and Scripture passages prior to the group meeting.

**LIVE** This section includes a lesson summary and a reflection activity/challenge to live faithfully in the area of study for each session. Every session includes a Scripture memory challenge and ends with a prayer experience.

Ideally, LIVE is processed as a small group that has experienced all other parts of the session together. This will probably take place most naturally at the beginning of the next week’s group session after members have had some time to process the material individually. Yet some activities may be better done privately. However you do it, commit to make meaningful application within your context to conquering your fears, facing your giants, and growing your faith.
Guidelines for Small Groups

The following keys will help to ensure that your group Bible study experience is as meaningful and impactful as possible. **Leader:** Take time during the first meeting to go over all four and ask each participant to commit to the guidelines.

**Confidentiality**
As you dive into small-group Bible study, group members will be prompted to share thoughts and feelings related to personal struggles they endure. All of these expressions are made out of trust and should be kept with the strictest confidence by the group.

**Respect**
As trust forms and participants begin to open up about their personal lives, it often becomes easy to offer quick advice. Scripture teaches us to be quick to listen and slow to speak. Listening is the key to respect. Even well meaning advice can be ill received if it isn’t requested.

It is important that participants commit to respect one another’s thoughts and opinions and to provide a safe place for those thoughts and opinions to be shared without fear of judgment or unsolicited advice.

**Preparation**
To get the most out of this Bible study, each group member should attend meetings having read through the study and answered questions, ready to discuss the material. Each participant can respect the contribution of the other members by taking the time to be prepared for each session.

**Accountability**
The goal of the small-group experience is transformation. Each session will help learners identify things about their walk with Christ and their lives that need attention. Each week participants will be asked to commit to take the next step of faith in their lives. As a group, commit together to the accountability necessary to stay the course and grow your faith.
A Letter to Leaders

Thank you for leading this study. While you will view the movie clips as a group each week, learners should take time to engage the study on their own throughout the week. Encourage participants to spend time reading the Scriptures and responding to prompts so they are prepared to gain the most from the group experience.

Some may ask: why a faith-based film? Or why a Bible study that pulls its illustrations from a movie? It’s because of one word: story. Stories are as old as civilization. When you think about it, every legend and fairy tale, novel and film have similar elements. There are characters, settings, and a plot. Within the plot there is an element of conflict and some sort of resolution. There is a purpose, meaning, lesson, or value that can be derived.

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, God in flesh, used stories to communicate valuable truths about Himself and how we are to live in relationship to God. Stories teach us history and tell us truth. They inspire and challenge us. We are motivated and moved by stories. Stories can make us angry and cause us to cry. Stories shape us; they give us a way to tell others who we are.

Movies tell stories with characters, settings, and plots. They make us laugh and cry. They make us angry and motivate us to change ourselves or work harder to change the world around us.

You could easily win an argument about the negative effects of movies today. What was once an undertone of immorality has become the essential element of many top box office hits. In spite of that, you can’t argue the power of a popular film. Why wouldn’t we celebrate the advent of a faith-based film that not only offers a moral alternative but also tells a great story?

_Facing the Giants_ is your story. It’s my story. It’s every Christian believer’s story at one point or another. Why? Because our faith gets tested. And we can all use one more challenge, one more example, and one more motivation to exercise our faith when faced with life’s giants.
Encourage your group to think of the movie as a diving board and God’s Word as a swimming pool. The clips you will view help you jump into Scripture and from there swim deep in the wellspring of life, all the while growing your faith. As you facilitate this experience, I encourage you to evaluate your own faith, eliminate your own fears, and battle your own giants. The members in your group will likely only go as deep and be as brave as you are willing to be.

You may be a seasoned leader or this may be your first experience facilitating a group like this. In either case, the following tips will aid your experience:

1. **Consider launching your group with a movie-viewing party.** Even if members have seen the film already, watching it again as your study begins will familiarize everyone with the characters and key plot elements.

2. **Silence can feel deafening in a small-group setting.** Far worse, however, is not allowing enough time for people to process and share. Some group members might just need time to process the question or someone’s response before taking their turn. Don’t be so stressed about silence that you seek to fill every moment with your own sharing. Give people time to think.

3. **There is usually at least one person in a group who tends to dominate conversation and at least one who is reluctant to participate.** One of your jobs as leader is to help the outgoing member listen more and to elicit participation from the more reserved member. As you guide the discussion, look for ways to inspire a response from the more reserved members but avoid any action that might embarrass them or leave them feeling singled out.

4. **Start and end on time. It’s not essential to answer every question.** If healthy dialogue is taking place, allow that to continue and skip a few questions if necessary. While conversational tangents can steal time, it’s typically a lack of preparation by the leader and members that bears the brunt of responsibility. Be prepared each week. Encourage group members to do the same.

As this work is being prepared for print, you are being prayed for. May God bless you and those you minister to through this experience!
“I don’t care.”

“It’s not that big a deal.”

“God will understand.”

“I just don’t feel like it right now.”

Have you heard these sentiments before? Have you uttered one or more of them yourself? Eleanor Roosevelt said, “So much attention is paid to the aggressive sins, such as violence and cruelty and greed with all their tragic effects, that too little attention is paid to the passive sins, such as apathy and laziness, which in the long run can have a more devastating effect.”

Maybe in our culture today it isn’t a matter of whether or not we are too hard on some sins but far too light on others. Maybe violence and greed are both too easy a target and apathy is the real culprit to watch. When it comes to a walk with Christ, it is lukewarmness that makes God sick (Revelation 3:16).

The burning question at the center of our faith walk is not whether or not we have any faith at all, but whether we are willing to exercise it wholeheartedly. When it comes to faith, there is no room on God’s team for the halfhearted. Apathetic, lazy faith really isn’t faith at all. True faith in God requires something from us and inspires something in us. The challenge at hand is to give it our all.
MOVIE CLIP
View Clip 1 from the small-group DVD and then use the following discussion to start your study.

SUMMARY
The Eagles are apathetic. They hate losing, but they don’t see a way to win. Defensive captain Brock Kelley, the Eagles’ most influential leader, expresses a defeatist attitude. Coach Taylor calls Brock out to do a death crawl drill and challenges him to give his absolute best. Blindfolded during the drill, Brock demonstrates wholeheartedness for the first time.

Brock had no idea how far he could go. He was filled with such doubt that he was unwilling to really try. The Eagles were certain that they couldn’t win games … so certain in fact that they accepted defeat before the games even began.
OPEN DISCUSSION

1 Have you ever thought that effort was futile? That no matter how hard you tried you couldn’t win the game, fix the problem, reach your goal, develop a solution? Describe the situation and your feelings.

Winston Churchill said, “Continuous effort—not strength or intelligence—is the key to unlocking our potential.” Coach Taylor knew that. It wasn’t about Brock’s intelligence, or at least his knowledge of what was going on in that moment. The blindfold took care of that. It wasn’t about his strength. He had the ability to carry Jeremy across that field all along. It was about Brock’s effort. Before this moment, he didn’t believe he could, so he wasn’t willing to try.

2 Do you believe you have unlocked all the doors of your own potential? Why or why not? If not, what is holding you back?

3 What is it that you know God desires for you to attempt but you are reluctant to try?

4 In what area of your life have you settled for less than your best? What do you think has made apathy possible in this area?