



the visual **faith** project

A Visual Faith Experience Do Not Lose Heart

By Dr. Dick Hardel

Theme: Do Not Lose Heart (Luke 21:34-38)

Intended Audience

Visual Faith Experiences work best in small groups of 4-5 for more discussion of all the participants. If your group is larger than that, divide them into more small groups. Diversity of age and ethnicity is a wonderful blessing to this exercise.

Outcome of Experience

The participants will focus on difficult times they have experienced accomplishing goals at work, at school, within an organization, within one's family, in sport activities, or with art and music. They will explore what side tracked their focus and energy. They will share the variety of emotions they experienced during those times and learn what strengthened them during those difficult times not to lose heart.

Introduce Experience

No matter how skilled individuals may be, how strong-willed they might be at accomplishing a goal, or what leadership role they might have, most people experience some difficult times staying on task and accomplishing the goal. During such difficult times it is easy to lose focus and become overwhelmed with a variety of emotions that pull us away from the goal and to become discouraged. What are some of those emotions? What does it look like to "lose heart?"

Image Selection

Think of a time you have experienced being discouraged and disheartened. Choose two images that depict what you were feeling or what affect it had on your direction in life or goal upon which you had been focused.

Image Packs

We recommend the People Pack (set of 100 printed images) for use with this experience or other images that you may already have. You can find the People Pack at: <https://vibrantfaith.org/shop/visualfaithcards>



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Facilitator Questions To Guide Group Discussion

1. Describe your goal.
How do the images you have selected connect to your experience of being discouraged or disheartened?
2. What blurred your focus or caused you to lose energy and motivation to accomplish the goal?
3. What did you choose to do about your situation?
4. Were you able to overcome what was disheartening you on your own? If so, how did you do that?
If not, what were some options for you?
5. Is it important to always accomplish your goal? What might you learn from not accomplishing a goal?

Scripture (Luke 21:34-38)

34 "Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, 35 like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. 36 Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man." 37 Every day he was teaching in the temple, and at night he would go out and spend the night on the Mount of Olives, as it was called. 38 And all the people would get up early in the morning to listen to him in the temple.

Image Selection

Give each participant a copy of this Scripture text. Ask one person in the group to read this section of Scripture and invite the others to follow along. After reading the text invite them to think deeply about what worries of life they have or had in which they felt trapped and ready to give up on life. Choose images that describe the entrapment you were experiencing or exhibit how you overcame that time or times.

Questions to Connect Chosen Image with Scriptures

1. Have you or someone you know well ever felt so disheartened and trapped that you or that person was ready to give up on life or even think of taking your or their life?
Using your images share what was that experience like?
2. Where was God for you or for your friend? Who or what got you or your friend through that time?
3. What is needed for a disheartened person to be healed? How long might that take?
4. In this text of Scripture what was Jesus so concerned about that we might miss in life?
5. What do the last two verses about Jesus teaching have to do with the previous verses of Jesus' warning to "be on guard?"
6. Are there differences in the feeling you have as you read verses 34-36 and when you read verses 37-38?
If so, what are those different emotions?



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Do Not Lose Heart continued...

Application

- Who is someone that you know you can safely discuss your deep feelings of losing heart on life?
- What strengths would you need from God to be such a safe person to others?
- What skills or training would you need?
- What gives you hope and what action can you do to bring hope of life to others who are struggling and discouraged in life?
- What are your strongest “go to” spiritual disciplines that keep you connected to God?

Prayer

As the facilitator create a holy space for the individuals and group to engage in prayer. Lighted candles often enhance a holy space. Place a cross in the midst of a table.

Ask the participants to think of a person who seems to be losing heart on life or a relationship. Invite the participants to use an image that has been chosen or find a new one that describes how this person is feeling. Or use emoji's on their phones that depict the feelings.

Use the following prayer formula to invite all to pray in silence for 2-3 minutes for each person presented:

Tonight (or Today), I invite you to pray with me for _____
(participants may choose to give a name or say "my friend" if it is best to not identify that person)
who is feeling _____ .
(show image)

When all have completed their prayer time, close by reading the Scripture lesson again:

34 “Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, 35 like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. 36 Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

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